

BLADES DONNED



STAFF PHOTO/SJOERD WITTEVEEN

Laura Bourne (from left), Marianne Wright and Carolyn Ratcliff skate at the Stouffville Arena during an adult skate last week. For skating information, call 905-640-1900.

OMHA final opens today

Both of Stouffville's qualifiers in the Ontario Minor Hockey Association finals are on the ice today.

The peewee AE Clippers open their championship series with Caledon at 3:10 p.m. at the Stouffville Arena.

The series shifts to Caledon for games tomorrow and next Saturday. If a fourth game is required in the best-of-five, it would be played March 21 in Stouffville.

Stouffville defeated Newmarket in the semi-finals. Caledon got by St. Thomas.

The midget A Clippers dropped their series opener with Amherstburg 8-5 last Saturday. The teams are in the Windsor-area town for games today and tomorrow.

If necessary, the series returns to Stouffville for games March 27 and 28.

Stars make championship weekend

The Stouffville Markham atom BB Stars captured their best-of-three Lower Lakes Female Hockey League divisional playoff series over the Durham West Lightning in two straight games that concluded with a 1-0 win at the Stouffville Clippers Sports Complex Wednesday.

Juliana Hutton scored the game's lone goal in the opening period.

Emily Boston was credited with an assist.

Francis Tenney posted the shutout.

With the victory, the Stars advance to the league's championship weekend March 27 and 28 in Oshawa to face two other division finalists.

Minor atom Clippers staying alive

The Stouffville minor atom Clippers staved off elimination in their best-of-five or first-to-six-point York Simcoe playoff series against Bradford after skating off with a 3-1 win in the third game at the Stouffville Arena Wednesday.

Sam Atanackovich scored twice, including an insurance marker into an empty net, while McKayla Major deposited the game-winning marker.

Nathan Wilson, William Keith and Tyler Ribi each earned assists.

Dalton Lehman played a solid game in goal to help preserve the win.

Trailing the series two games to one, the Clippers will play the fourth game in Bradford today at 6 p.m.

Minor bantams downed in Barrie

The Stouffville minor bantam Clippers came out on the short end of a 3-2 road verdict against Barrie to even their best-of-five or first-to-six-point York Simcoe semifinal series at one game apiece Wednesday.

Chris Cadaret and Robbie Armstrong scored for the Clippers, who trailed 2-0 before battling back to tie the score.

The third game of the series was to have been played yesterday in Stouffville.

The fourth game will be played in Barrie Sunday.

Fencer mixes strategy, stamina

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
mhayakawa@yrmg.com

When Sahil Bablani drew his epee at the recent Youth Fencing Tournament in Newmarket his approach was to just go out and have fun.

Winning matches and titles wasn't exactly a priority since the 12-year-old Stouffville resident had only been in one competition.

After more than 20 matches during the Newmarket tournament, Bablani had plenty to smile about. Heightening his enjoyment was a gold medal he claimed in the under-12-years category.

Also entered in the under-14 years division, Bablani came home with a bronze medal.

"I honestly had no idea that I would do this well because this was only my second competition. I went in with no expectations," he said. "But it certainly felt great because I had the opportunity to compete with the best players in Ontario."

His interest in the sport was sparked by watching youngsters fencing at a community centre when he lived in Markham. He asked his parents if he could try the sport.

He took classes from the Town of Markham before joining Sport Fencing Markham where he's been training for six months.

Citing epee as being his favourite fencing discipline and the only one for now which he participates in, Bablani said



SAHIL BABLANI: Stouffville fencer, 12, wins two medals in second-ever competition in Newmarket.

there's various aspects of the sport in general that maintain his interest at a high level.

"I like the strategy involved in it and it's a unique sport that requires skill and a lot of stamina," he said.

A Grade 7 student in the gifted program at John McCrae Public School in Markham, Bablani hopes his recent accomplishment is just the start of bigger things.

He'll compete at the Ottawa Junior/Cadet and Youth Competition next month.

"I would also like to get in the nationals for fencing and represent Ontario across Canada," he said.