

Minor bantams jump out

The Stouffville minor bantam Clippers drew first blood in the opening game of their best-of-five or first-to-six-point York Simcoe Hockey League final with a 3-2 win over Richmond Hill at the Stouffville Arena Thursday.

With just under one minute remaining in the opening period, the Clippers struck for two quick goals by Chris Cadaret and Spencer Roberts within a 30-second span to take a 2-0 lead.

After Richmond Hill scored the lone goal of the second period to cut their deficit, the Clippers restored their two-goal bulge part way through the final period on a goal by Robbie Armstrong.

PAIR SUSPENDED

Richmond Hill responded with a goal shortly after but could get no closer before time expired.

The series will resume today in Richmond Hill at 3:30 p.m. and return to the Clippers Complex Sunday for the third game at 12:30 p.m.

The Clippers are expected to be without Cadaret and Chris Jarrett for today's game after they were handed penalties in Thursday's game that warranted suspensions.

Pro hockey life suits newest Marlie

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Simon Gysbers says there's no life like it. In the case of the former Stouffville Spirit graduate and Richmond Hill native, living the life of a professional hockey player is a nice way to make a living.

At least that's what the 22-year-old, six-foot, four-inch defenceman has observed since inking a two-year professional contract to play for the Toronto Marlies of the American Hockey League.

SPIRIT JR. A GRADUATE

He made his debut with them last weekend after finishing his collegiate career at Lake Superior State University in Sault Ste. Marie, Mich.

"It's unreal, it really hasn't sunk in yet. But it's pretty amazing. All of the guys are great and the coaches are good too," Gysbers said of his time with the Toronto Maple Leafs' AHL affiliate. "I like the hockey. It's different. I know that I can fit in once I get used to things here. It's a good life playing hockey."

The Leafs were one of several National Hockey League clubs that showed an interest in signing him once his collegiate career concluded.

At the end though, he said the Maple Leafs came up with a firm offer, an entry level two-way contract to play with the

Marlies for two years.

Since joining the Marlies, Gysbers acknowledged he's just getting acclimatized to playing the game at the next level.

"The speed of the game is definitely faster here and everyone is more skilled and stronger," he said.

He had the butterflies in the early moments of his professional debut when the Marlies recorded road wins over the Chicago Wolves 3-0 last Friday and the Milwaukee Admirals 3-2 Saturday.

He anticipates they might be heightened this weekend when the team returns to the Ricoh Coliseum for a pair of home tilts against the Hamilton Bulldogs Saturday and Abbotsford Heat Sunday.

Especially with family members and friends expected to be watching his home debut.

COMPLETING DEGREE

While Gysbers is focusing his attention on a new career, he was quick to note he intends to complete his business management degree this year.

"I've talked with my teachers at Lake Superior State and exams aren't until late April. I figure our season will end in early April and I can get back to finish off my 15 remaining credits. That's all I need," he said.



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