

Two titles in two weekends for atom AE Clippers

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When the Stouffville atom AE Clippers entered the Whitchurch Stouffville Minor Hockey Association's A and AE Tournament last weekend, head coach Peter O'Boyle expressed concern.

The weekend prior, the Clippers were in the midst of an emotional high after capturing the York Simcoe Hockey League championship.

Because of that O'Boyle wondered if his club could sustain that momentum into the year-end tournament.

YORK SIMCOE CHAMPS

As it turned out, O'Boyle and assistant coaches Steve Savage and Mike Thomas did not have to worry as the club captured its division title that culminated with a hard-fought 3-2 overtime win over Clarington in last Sunday's final at the Stouffville Arena.

Mitchell Butler accounted for all three Clippers' goals, with the game-winner deposited just eight seconds after the opening faceoff of the extra session.

Kevin O'Boyle earned two helpers and Josh Marshall, one.

Parker Strupp played a sound game in goal to help support the win.

"Going into the tournament I felt we had as good a chance as anyone," said O'Boyle, who served as an assistant coach last year. "We had just won the York Simcoe championship the weekend before and I wasn't sure how much gas we had left in the tank. However halfway through the first game, I knew

we still had enough focus and energy to give it a good run."

The Clippers opened the tournament on a positive note last Friday with a 3-1 win over Ajax.

Casey Shankland, Thomas Kroupis and Mitchell Butler each scored once.

Adam Belme and Jack Bender earned one assist apiece.

The lone blemish on the Clippers' tournament record came in their second game last Saturday when they came out on the short end of a 3-1 verdict against Clarington.

Shankland scored the lone goal for the Clippers.

Butler and Anthony Rustico earned assists.

But later that day, the Clippers rebounded to down Hespeler 4-1.

O'Boyle deposited two goals while Belme and Kroupis each had singles.

Butler collected two assists while Jack Bender, Thomas Olidis, Ruien Lidster and Rustico each had one.

Advancing to the semifinals, the Clippers received a solid goaltending effort from Nicholas Pelowich and had a goal by Belme stand in a 1-0 win over Georgina and a berth in the final.

Shankland and Rustico each earned one assist.

Reflecting on the club's success, O'Boyle attributed it to their overall balance and stamina.

"The key to our success is that we have a balanced team. We have eight forwards with over 30 points and seven forwards scored 20

goals or more.

"Both of our goaltenders had a goals against average of less than 1.50 per game and our defence is relentless. No other team had this type of balance.

"We were also in great shape as the boys work very hard in practice so we were able to play five games in two days with no problem."

'However halfway through the first game, I knew we still had enough focus and energy to give it a good run.'

"We have certainly come a long way and I am very proud of the boys for their accomplishments this year."

Other team members that contributed to the club's title run included: Luke Savage, Jacob De Roo, Jordan Kuetel, Ryan Taylor, Hunter Jolliffe and Jack Bender. Jan Dolby was the club's trainer.

In other tournament action, the novice A Clippers went undefeated and advanced to the finals only to lose to Newmarket by a score of 5-0.

Winning their loop handily, the Clippers were buoyed by a three-goal effort from Michael Hary to rout the Markham Waxers 11-5 in their first game. The Clippers then played the Clarington Toros and beat them by a score of 10-5 with Matthieu Kovac scor-

ing the hat trick.

In the third game, the Clippers faced their toughest opponent Newmarket and won by a score of 4-2 with Spencer Krabi scoring the hat trick. Goaltender Ethan Volpe had a solid game in goal to help preserve the win.

NOVICES FALL IN FINAL

Facing Hespeler in their semifinal, the Clippers received a goal from Aaron Kirkness in the shootout to emerge with a hard-fought 2-1 win.

Christopher Hallman played a stellar game on defence to help shut down the Hespeler forwards.

The Clippers atom A contingent advanced to the semifinals before being edged by Welland 4-3. Finishing second in their pool, the Clippers defeated Newmarket 3-1 and Uxbridge 3-2 and tied Port Perry 3-3.

In the final, Port Perry defeated Welland 4-1.

The minor peewee A's lost their three games against Markham 2-1, Oshawa 5-4 and East Gwillimbury 4-2.

Newmarket won the division crown with a 4-3 victory over Uxbridge.

In the minor peewee AE division, the Clippers lost games against Whitby 5-1, Stoney Creek 4-1 and Aurora 4-1.

Whitby claimed title honours with a 3-0 victory over Ajax.

In the minor atom AE division, the Clippers lost to Aurora 4-2 and Waterloo 5-0 and battled Oshawa to a 1-1 tie.

Waterloo won the championship with a 4-2 victory over Whitby.

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