

Clippers in Pittsburgh finale

The Stouffville minor bantam Clippers advanced to the finals of the Pittsburgh Steel City minor hockey tournament before falling 3-2 in overtime to the Niagara Falls Junior Canucks in last Sunday's championship final.

The Clippers jumped out to a good start after scoring the game's first two goals.

But the Canucks capitalized on a pair of Clippers' penalties to score power play goals to tie the game and force overtime.

Penalties would continue to haunt the Clippers in the extra session as the Canucks scored on a power play opportunity to win the game and gold medal.

Jeremy Hughes and Jordan Brillinger scored for the Clippers.

The Clippers opened the tourney by blanking the Canucks 6-0.

James Merksamer, Nic Rabito, Braydon McNeil, Hughes, Ryan Daniels and Nathan Watson scored. Adam Doren collected three assists while Ben Sear, Brillinger and Mitch Witherspoon each had one.

The Clippers' offence continued to fire on all cylinders in their second game against the Hamilton Tigers as they cruised to a 7-0 win.

Nathan Watson and Duncan Allen each scored twice while Witherspoon, Nic Rabito, Taylor Peterson and Brillinger each

added singles.

Doren, Peterson and Watson each chipped in with two assists while Liam McMahon, Peterson, Hughes, Rabito, Brillinger, McNeil and Sear had one apiece.

Facing the Whitby Wildcats in their third outing, the Clippers received a stern test and battled them to a 1-1 tie. Rabito scored the lone goal for Stouffville.

Entering their fourth game in first place, the Clippers blanked the lone U.S. entry, the Pittsburgh Predators, 5-0 to gain a berth in the final.

Merksamer, Sear, Allen, Peterson and Brillinger each scored once. Witherspoon contributed a pair of helpers.

Helping the Clippers reach the final was stellar netminding from Tyler Ryan and Andre Ward.

Minor bantam AE Clippers tie one on in Markham

Liam Timewell, Mario Rosano and Cody Leonard scored to help the Stouffville minor bantam AE Clippers battle the host Markham Waxers to a 3-3 tie in Ontario Minor Hockey action Tuesday.

Tyler Wright, Jason Mistelbacher, Justin Pelowich-Pickup and Chad Harbour each earned assists for the Clippers, now 9-8-3 on the season.

Spartans hope to make jump to basketball's upper tier

BY MICHAEL HAYAKAWA
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Conrad Hamilton feels he has the makings of a highly competitive senior boys basketball team at Stouffville District Secondary School.

He thinks they can compete at the York Region Athletic Association tier one level.

Working against the third-year Spartans' head coach is time.

In particular, to get in enough practices and conditioning work in between their games during the first two weeks of the season.

This past week, the Spartans made their league debut on the hardwood court and while being competitive, lost close games to two Markham schools, Markham District 63-54 Monday and Bur Oak 69-57 Wednesday.

Next week won't get any easier for the Spartans as they will play three games against Markham schools starting Monday at Brother Andre at 4 p.m., Tuesday when they host St. Augustine at 5:15 p.m. and Thursday at Pierre Elliott Trudeau at 4 p.m.

"It's hard to recuperate after our first two games to get conditioning and practices in that we need between our next games. It doesn't leave a lot of room for improvement," Hamilton said. "But all of the teams in the league are going through this and not just us."

Despite losing their first two games, Hamilton feels his team has taken some positive steps.

"We're competitive and we want to compete at the tier one level this year. We don't want to go tier two.

"We have the potential to be a tier one team. But it will depend on how we compete. Right now it's just a matter of having enough gas in our tank to finish off

games. Against Bur Oak, they made a pair of three-point shots late in the game that hurt us," he said. "It just boils down to conditioning."

Adding to Hamilton's positive outlook is the enthusiasm exhibited by his 15 players.

There's a good core of players who advanced to the tier two quarter-finals last year.

The returnees include guard Nicholas McEwan. A combo guard, the Grade 12 student scored a team-high 30 points in their loss to Bur Oak.

Also inserted into the club's starting lineup are forward Jeremy Brownridge, Patrick Laffan and guards Patrick Raymer and Atieq Wasim.

Expected to bolster the Spartans' chances will be the return of six-foot, five-inch power forward-centre Connor McDonald, who has been nursing an injured ankle he incurred during a preseason tournament.

The Spartans also have five players who moved up from the junior ranks last season, including guard Theo Grammenis and two new faces to the school in Grade 11 guards Aaron Tan and Jordan Russel.

"It's just a matter of our new faces blending into our system," Hamilton said.

The Spartans senior girls' volleyball team will make its tier one debut Wednesday when it hosts Pierre Elliott Trudeau and Bayview (Richmond Hill) starting at 3:30 p.m.

The Spartan junior boys' hockey team resumes its schedule Tuesday when it visits Bill Crothers (Markham) at Angus Glen Community Centre at 3 p.m.

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