

# SPORTS

## Juveniles looking for home-ice advantage at Ontario finals

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The Stouffville juvenile Clippers were disappointed in not winning the Ontario Minor Hockey Association title after being swept by the Ajax Knights in the best-of-five final.

But it's not the end of their season.

The Clippers will have an opportunity for redemption and a bigger prize when they host the Ontario Hockey Federation AAA championships at the Stouffville Arena starting Friday at 9 a.m.

Joining the Clippers in the five-team competition are the Knights and Whitby Wildcats of the OMHA along with Humberview and West Mall from the Greater Toronto Hockey League.

The competition will continue Saturday at 9 a.m. and wind down Sunday with the semifinals at 8 a.m. and 10 a.m. and final at 3 p.m.

Clippers' head coach Andy Cartwright admits his club's objective of skating off with the OHF title won't be easy. His team is familiar with the opposition, having played each of them at some point during the season.

"The best of the best will be at the OHFs," Cartwright said. "We will have to be at our best every game."

Cartwright feels GTHL champion Hum-

berview might be the team to beat.

"They went undefeated in league and in the playoffs this season," he said. "They lost one tournament, the Silver Stick to West Mall, and I think they enter the tournament as the favourite with West Mall close behind."

If the Clippers are to have any chance at winning the title, with the last one being in 2002, they must get timely saves from netminders Sean Moffatt and Kyle Pontone.

*Big minor hockey weekend on tap in Stouffville rinks/page 21.*

"We also need to take away the other teams time and space to operate," he said. "All of these teams have speed and we can't let them attack us with speed built up."

Another important ingredient the Clippers had going for them during the season was their penalty killing, which accounted for 22 goals during the season.

Intangibles can also play a big role and Cartwright is hoping their familiarity with the Stouffville Arena will work in their favour.

What Cartwright would like to see is for a vocal gathering to come out and support his charges.

"I hope as coach it will give us an advantage. We know the rink and we don't have any travel. Hopefully our fans and the community come out to support us. That always pumps the players up," he said.

The Clippers play West Mall Friday at 11 a.m. and Whitby following the 6:30 p.m. open-

ing ceremonies. They play Saturday at 11 a.m. against Ajax and Humberview at 4 p.m.

**NOTEBOOK:** Ex-NHLer turned fitness guru Gary Roberts will speak at tonight's tournament banquet in Markham. Sun-Tribune editor Jim Mason will emcee ... weekend and daily passes will be on sale at the arena.

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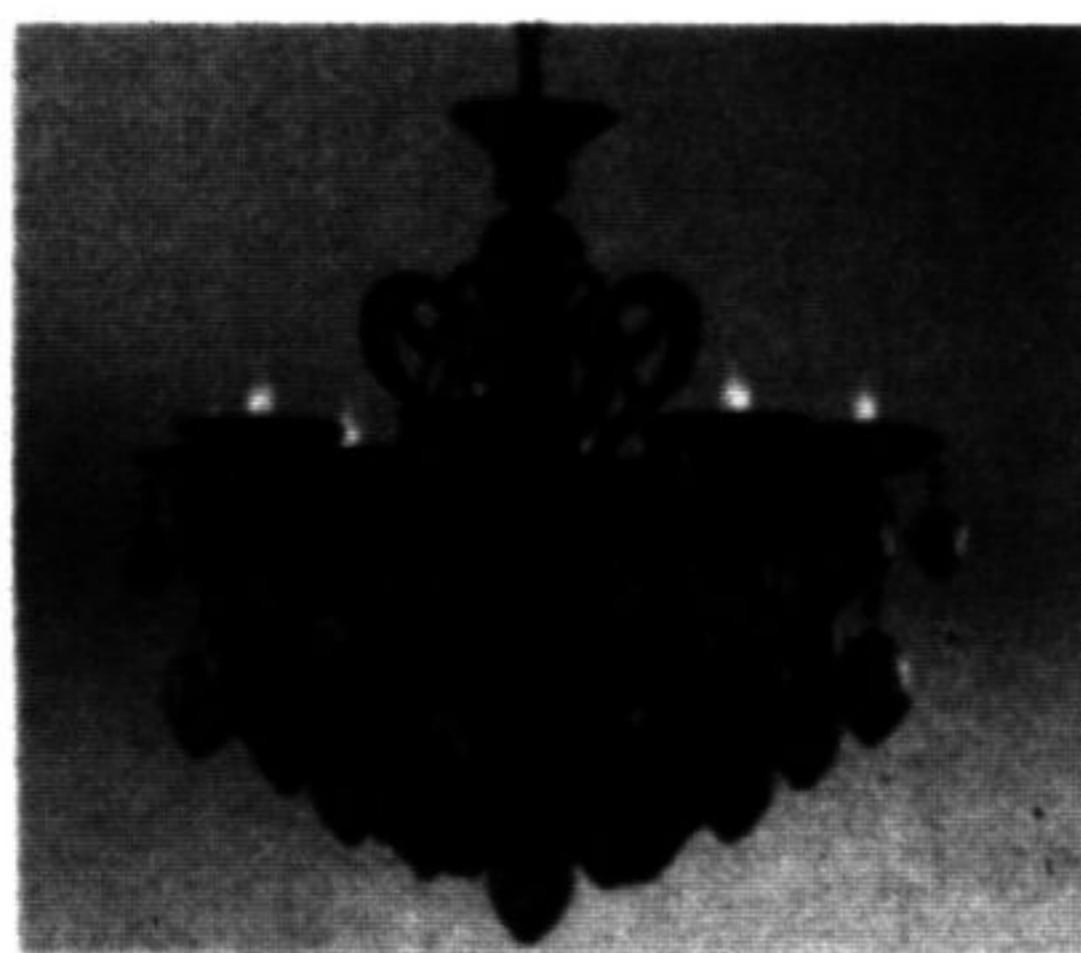
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