

Bantam AA Hawks take narrow win in Tri-County playoffs over Guelph

By Brian Lockhart

After an outstanding season, the Caledon Hawks bantam AA team missed a OMHA championship with a single loss to Oakville when the opposing team scored with just 5.2 seconds left on the clock.

That was a disappointment to the local squad, but they have now entered the Tri-County playoffs.

The bantam Hawks were one of eight teams in the province this season to win more than 40 games ? a stellar accomplishment for the young squad.

The Hawks were up against the Guelph Griffons in their second Tri-County playoff game Sunday at Caledon East.

After playing to a 0-0 tie in the second period, the Hawks got the edge on a goal from Landis Antione.

In the final few minutes of the game, the Guelph team found themselves in serious trouble when they were called on two minors and had to play two-men short. The Hawks set up an excellent power play and let loose with a few shots that missed the mark or were stopped by the Gryphons' goalie in a wild two minutes of hockey.

Caledon goalie Dalton Cooke got the shutout when the game ended 1-0 for the Hawks.

While the Hawks can score, head coach John Cooke said he stresses defence when working with the team.

?My big thing is, you look after your own end first,? he said. ?It's hard to teach defence ? it doesn't come naturally to a lot of kids.

Our goalies are strong ? they were the best in the division. Both goalies for the entire season have ?goals against' at under two. But it's not just our goalies, it's a defensive mind set. That's how we win a lot of games.?

Teams who are not in the OMHA championships, extend the season by going into the league championships that are played in a round-robin style format.

The Hawks bantam team has the benefit of having several key players who have moved up the ranks and played together for the past several years.

?We have four more games in this Tri-County,? Cooke explained. ?If we're in the final, we'll go into a best three-of-five series.?

The bantam AA team will be back on home ice tonight (Thursday) to host the Halton Hills Thunder at Caledon East. Game time is 8:45 p.m.



The Caledon bantam Hawks AA team took on the Guelph Gryphons during Tri-County playoff action at Caledon East. The Hawks played a solid defensive game to leave the ice with a 1-0 win over the visitors. Photo by Brian Lockhart