

Cougars hit the basketball court at Provincial finals

By Jake Courtepatte

While basketball tournaments across Ontario were dominated by the Caledon Cougars this season, the organization seemed to be taking on the role of 'always the bridesmaid, never the bride' in Provincials.

Over the past month, all age groups have been participating in the 2015 Ontario Cup, the provincial championship for minor league basketball.

A number of teams have come close to capturing a medal. The U10 novice boys squeaked into the third-place game in Burlington, where they were disposed of by a powerful team from Guelph. Most recently, the U13s breezed through round-robin play before falling by 13 points in the gold medal game this past Sunday in Toronto.

On the girls' side, the U12 major atom Cougars were also within reaching distance of provincial gold, when they lost a nail-biter by two points in their gold medal game in London a few weeks ago.

But while the U13s were coming up just short in Toronto, the U14 major bantam boys were in Kingston dominating their division. The Caledon Cougars Okazawa came in ranked fourth in their eight-team division, facing off against an eighth-seeded team from Oakville looking to open the tournament with a bang.

In reality, the game was certainly not a cakewalk. The Cougars salvaged a win by one point in the final seconds, taking it 52-51. It turned out to be their most difficult challenge of the tournament.

They faced a lower-seeded opponent again the following morning, cruising to a 49-38 win over Ancaster.

The afternoon held what should have been a decisive game for the Cougars, as they were set to take on the Durham City North squad, the number-one team in the division. What they faced was a deflated team that lost in a surprise upset in their Friday match against Ancaster, and who had barely eked out a three-point victory that morning.

The result was a strong defensive game by the Cougars, forcing the Durham players to shoot from long-range. The Cougars put up 46 points to Durham's 36, vaulting the undefeated Caledon team into the championship game.

They were met by the division's only other undefeated team in the round robin, the Oxford Attack Perryman. Once again their defensive play shone, putting up a 47-42 point victory to be crowned provincial champs.

The win was a major boost for the U14 squad, who came into the tournament having won only one game in their past seven played. Ontario Cup action resumes again this weekend with the U15 and U16 girls tournaments happening in London and the Niagara region.

While spring league is already up and running for the Cougars program, they are looking forward to their summer recreational camp for the twelfth straight year.

To learn more about the program, visit www.caledoncougars.ca



The U12 girls Caledon Cougars lost a nailbiter in the championship game of the Ontario Cup earlier this month. Photo courtesy of the Caledon Cougars