

## Midget Hawks claim OMHA championship in overtime

By Jake Courtepatte

One of the most successful teams in Caledon Minor Hockey history capped their season off with the ultimate prize.

The midget AA Hawks soared Monday to an OMHA Championship banner, the first in Caledon midget history, with an exciting overtime victory over the Whitby Wildcats.

After taking the first game of the first-to-six-points series 3-1 at Caledon East in early March, a nine-day hiatus for March Break did nothing to reduce the drive of either team, who put up a 4-4 tie in the second game last Thursday.

With the series shifting back to Caledon East Saturday morning, the Hawks had the opportunity to take a stranglehold on the series. Both teams came out flying, but it was Whitby who capitalized first just less than three minutes in after some heavy pressure on Caledon goaltender Dalton Cooke.

The Hawks bounced back just more than a minute later, when captain Landis Antonic made a nice solo rush into the Whitby zone to set up Max Grant from behind the net, who buried a one-timer to tie the game at one.

Grant gave his team their first lead of the game late in the first with a slick move to put the puck between a defender's skates, and slide it five-hole for a 2-1 score at the first intermission.

Both goaltenders were solid for their sides throughout much of the second period, until an unlucky bounce on a dump-in skipped past Cooke to tie the game. Yet the Hawks once again bounced right back, this time with Tyler Giancos tipping in a slap pass at the side of the net in the final minute of the frame.

Caledon added an insurance marker in the third for a final score of 4-2, needing only a tie in the fourth match to secure the provincial championship.

The home team was desperate to extend the series in Whitby Monday night, taking a 2-1 lead late into the game. Caledon took advantage of a late powerplay to tie it up with just 10 seconds left on the clock, then clinched the title with four minutes left in the overtime period.

The OMHA Championship, the Hawks organization's only one of the 2016-17 season, is the icing on the cake for a team with a long list of major accomplishments.

After capturing the Mississauga Early Bird Tournament in September, the midget Hawks went on to victory in both the Mississauga North Stars Scotiabank Tournament in October and Stoney Creek Tournament of Champions in November.

They qualified for the International Silver Stick Tournament in January with a win at Brampton Regionals, and successfully defended their International title in Sarnia later that month.

The team also finished the Tri-County Minor Hockey season with an outstanding record of 60-4-4.



The midget AA Caledon Hawks beat the Whitby Wildcats in overtime Monday night to capture their first OMHA Championship banner.

