

## Express Minor Bantam strike gold in Nashville



The final buzzer was music to the ears of the Minor Bantam York-Simcoe Express in the championship game of the CCM Nashville World Invite tournament earlier this month, signaling a gold medal victory.

Music City played host to the Express squad and fifteen other teams from across North America in the 2006 division, in a tournament which has risen to the premier ranks of the AAA programs over its three years running.

An undefeated record throughout the tournament's six games was not an unusual feat for the powerhouse Express, who entered the tournament having won four of their first five games to open the regular season.

The opening matchup on October 4 had the Express facing off against the Bay State Breakers, hailing from Kingston, Massachusetts. York-Simcoe managed a 5 ? 1 win, before earning a 2 ? 2 tie with another Massachusetts-based club later that day, in the Valley Jr. Warriors.

The Express continued to have the number of the entire state of Massachusetts into Saturday's action, besting the Islanders HC 3 ? 1, before topping the hometown Nashville Jr. Predators 3 ? 2 to stay undefeated in the round robin heading into Sunday's playoff rounds.

In a battle of the undefeated, the Express met with the Colorado Thunderbirds on Sunday morning, riding a 2 ? 1 win into the afternoon's gold medal match.

It was there that they met their first fellow Canadian club, the Sun County Panthers of Essex, toppling their fellow Canucks in a 3 ? 0 shutout to take home the gold medal.

YSE's Rylan Taid was named the tournament's most valuable player for the age group.

**By Jake Courtepatte**