

## Atom AE Tigers lauded here at home



By Jeff Doner

The Aurora Atom AE Tigers have had a season to remember and they haven't even reached the playoffs yet.

The team of 17 players began their season with a scorching 13-game unbeaten streak and haven't looked back, winning tournaments and accolades since.

One of the highlights for the 10-year-old players was a recent tournament win at the Motown Cup Championship in Detroit Michigan, representing Aurora.

The win ensured them a chance to play hockey on the historic Joe Louis Arena ice and they also met and received a special greeting from current Detroit Red Wings and Team Canada head coach Mike Babcock.

They also got involved in the community over the holidays by donating hundreds of dollars worth of toys and toiletries to local charities during the AMHA food/clothing drive.

Adding to the list of achievements, after the holidays they went on to become champions at the Regional Silver Stick qualifier in Georgina, which sent them to the International Silver Stick finals in St. Catherines.

And to cap it all off, the club was invited to the Aurora Council Chambers last week to meet with Mayor Geoffrey Dawe, who proclaimed January 9 to January 12 to be Aurora Tigers Atom AE Days.

?It's been good and it has been really fun,? said left winger Riley Pearl. ?The coaching staff is great, the players are always coming in with a positive attitude. It has been great and it's definitely fun to meet the mayor. It's a special thing to do, because not a lot of teams get to do it.?

It was hard for Pearl to pick one moment this season that he thought was better than all the others, but there was one that stuck out.

?Probably winning the Silver Stick tournament, because we played really hard and we all wanted to go to St. Catherines,? he said. ?When it went into overtime and coach Fred put me out, I felt really excited and I went down and scored the game-winning goal, which was really fun.

?Going down on that breakaway was a big one. Everyone wanted to score and I was really nervous, but we also went to Detroit for the Motown Cup and we won that tournament. That was really fun because the Red Wings are my favourite hockey team.?

Pearl said it has been a dream season for his team and that he isn't surprised the team has bonded so well.

?It's just because we all love hockey and we just all want to win, we just pass the puck and we want to win. Our team has improved from last year and we've been playing well,? he said.

Team manager, Rommel, couldn't agree more with Pearl.

?It's the dedicated coaching staff as well as the work ethic of the boys and the philosophy of skating hard and having fun, really,? he said. ?It's just a bunch of good boys that work well together and that's all melded together by the parents and the coaching staff.?

Rommel said the club was the only team from Aurora to qualify for a Silver Stick tournament this season.

They still have some season left to play, but are thinking they will face off against their rivals in Richmond Hill for the playoffs. With the way the season has gone so far, the players are confident in one another and hope to keep their dream season going.