

## Atom AE Tigers win the ?Stanley Cup of Youth Hockey?



**Submitted by Chris MacEachern**

The Aurora Tigers Atom AE team entered the International Silver Stick Tournament in Pelham, ON, this month with the goal of making it to their fifth consecutive tournament championship game this season.

Often referred to as ?the Stanley Cup of Youth Hockey?, the International Silver Stick Tournament has been in operation since 1958.

Over 150 atom/squirt-aged teams from Ontario and the United States entered into Silver Stick Regional Qualifier Tournaments in the hope of advancing to the International Silver Stick Tournament in Pelham. The Tigers had been accepted into the final round of 16 teams as a result of their championship win at the Regional Qualifier in Georgina.

On January 8, Pelham welcomed 16 regional champions to the tournament, with teams coming from Alabama, California, Colorado, Indiana, New York, Pennsylvania, and Ontario, among others.

The Tigers were placed in a highly competitive four-team pool, as they began round tournament play. Game One was a well-played game that saw the team win, 4-0, against the Port Hope Phantoms.

Game Two featured a back and forth battle between the Tigers and the scrappy Flyers Youth Team (Philadelphia, PA).

Aurora earned a 5-2 win, setting up its final round robin game against one of the tournament favourites, Krivo (Colorado). In what became an exciting display of speed and skill between the two teams, the Tigers came out on top, 1-0, confirming its spot in the Tier I championships.

In the quarterfinal game, the San Jose Junior Sharks (CA) came out with high energy and took an early 1-0 lead. The Tigers tied it up and then took the lead. The third period was an exciting one as both teams had chances to pull away, but the Tigers were able to celebrate a 3-2 win at the final buzzer.

In the semifinal game, the Strathroy Junior Rockets exhibited excellent skating ability and strong goaltending. The Tigers, with solid goaltending and team play as their focus, earned a 3-0 victory, setting up a championship game between the #1 seed, Aurora Tigers, versus the #2 seed, TNT Tornados.

In a highly competitive and entertaining championship game, the Tigers and Tornados battled from end to end, period to period. Spurred on by vocal fans, family, and Aurora Minor Hockey executives, the Tigers showed impressive resolve against the full effort

play of the Tornados.

The Tigers scored an empty net goal late in the game and won the title, 4-2.

With the victory, the Tigers were recognized for their rare undefeated run in Silver Stick Regional Tournament play (5-0) and also in International Silver Stick tournament play (6-0).

The International Silver Stick Atom AE Championship banner will hang from the rafters of the Aurora Community Centre Arena, beginning in the 2015-16 season. In addition, the Aurora Tigers name will be inscribed on a Champions Plaque and put on display at the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, beginning in May 2015.

Congratulations are extended to the Aurora Tigers Atom AE team, families, and a coaching staff focused on fun, player instruction, and player development.