

Atom BB Panthers cap off successful season with hometown gold

By Jake Courtepatte

Hometown pride was on the line this weekend for the Atom BB Aurora Panthers, looking to assert their position as a top team in the region and a contender all across North America.

The Panthers organization played host to the 16th Annual International Silver Stick Girls Finals over Valentine's Day weekend, welcoming almost 1,000 out-of-town guests to the Aurora Community Centre and Stronach Aurora Recreation Complex.

The defensive abilities of the Atom BB squad took the local spotlight, capturing divisional gold against a number of tough opponents.

The Panthers sent a wake-up call to their opponents in an early 7.30 a.m. start on Friday, kicking off the tournament against the Clearview Ice Cats.

They would give up one goal in a 2 ? 1 win, the only goal against the hometown team for the entire tournament.

Three shutout wins over the next two days put the Atom BB's in the championship game Sunday against the North Simcoe Capitals, beating the Capitals goaltender once to capture gold in a 1 ? 0 final.

The tournament win is the icing on the cake for an impressive list of accomplishments for this year's Atom BB's. After an undefeated regular season in which they finished atop the LLFHL (Lower Lakes Female Hockey League) Central East Division, the Panthers took home gold at the Orangeville Sweetheart Tournament a few weeks ago.

?I'm so proud of the girls and how far they've come,? said Coach Doug Lunney. ?Best of all, they all still come to (and leave) the rink with a big smile on their faces, which in the end, is what it's all about.?

With a handful of other local Aurora teams in action, all enjoyed limited success but could not break into their respective divisional championship matches.

The Panthers congratulate the winning teams from Oakville, Markham, North Halton, Clearview, and Mississauga.

As the Central York Girl's Hockey Association regular season comes to a close, the Aurora Panthers rep teams are preparing for playoff action.

Schedules will be posted at www.girlshockey-centrallyork.com.