

Junior Tigers take on coaches and show off skills in holiday tourney



By Jeff Doner

The Aurora Minor Hockey Association and Optimist Club of Aurora held its annual House League Showcase Tournament for players of all ages over the holidays with plenty of game action and activities last week.

There were 4-on-4 games, hardest shot competitions and the always entertaining relay race.

On Sunday night, coaches from the AMHA had the chance to square off against the Junior A Tigers in the marquee event.

A loud crowd cheered on as the Tigers' went up against some of Aurora's best coaches.

“The main event tonight is the coaches, who work so hard every night with the young kids spending time coaching and teaching them, where they play a game against the Junior A Tigers,” said AMHA tournament director Sam Speranini.

“It's a little bit of fun for all of them ? for the kids watching their coaches, who teach them every day and the kids enjoying it and getting a prize or reward for the games. This is getting everybody together to enjoy the weekend. We've got a pretty decent crowd tonight and we're excited about that.”

Relay races took place throughout the weekend, with the finals wrapping up on Sunday night during intermission, and the skills competition took place all day on Friday.

The young Tigers players also got some time on the ice with the Junior A squad during the weekend.

Mike Valenti, head coach for the atom 408 team, played in the game on Sunday night and said he was enjoying the event.

“Every year they have this showcase tournament to showcase kids that are in house league and the Junior A guys donate a bit of their time to play in this game, so we can show them a thing or two along the way and it's a great food drive,” he said.

“The community comes together and everybody brings in some food and the Optimist Club is involved in this with the Aurora Minor Hockey Association.”

Facing off against one of the best Junior A squads in the Tigers is no small feat, but the coaches definitely made a game of it as their players and families cheered from the stands.

“It's the best seat in the house. It's like 3D television out there,” he joked. “They're flying around and it's fun?They're toying with us for sure, but it's fun.”

Valenti also said it's something the players look forward to every year.

?The kids really love it. They've got the relay race going on tonight and the finals, they've got the hardest shot competition for the bantams and the whole 4-on-4 house league tournament over the Christmas break is a different format ? there's no whistles and it's just kind of go and chase the puck. The kids love it.?

For more information on the tournament or the AMHA, visit www.auroraminorhockey.net