

Victory over Halton is 'cherry on top' of Atom Tigers' dream season



By **Jeff Doner**

The Aurora Tigers atom AE rep team has finished off a dream season, defeating Halton Hills in four games to take sole possession of the OMHA atom AE championship title.

After winning multiple tournaments and games throughout the season, the championship win is the cherry on the top of a great season for the young squad.

'I was proud for the boys and proud for the parents,' said team manager Rommel. 'They all came together as a team from the start of the season. They were all picked back in May of 2013 and this gives such a sense of accomplishment for the kids. They have worked hard all year.'

In order to get to the finals, the Tigers first had to dispatch some other formidable opponents from Richmond Hill, Newmarket and Clarington.

In the best of five series final with Halton Hills, things didn't start off as planned, as the Tigers lost the opener by a score of 4 ? 3.

But, their determination and resiliency came through and the Tigers bit back for a dominant performance in Game Two.

Riley Pearl, George Rappos Jr., Ryan Weeks, Jordan Dimatulac, Kurtis Gipp and Lucas DePalma each scored a goal in the 6 ? 0 win, while Ben Charette notched the shutout in goal for the Tigers to tie the series up.

Game Three was back home in Aurora and the Tigers made sure to keep the momentum from Game Two.

Weeks scored two goals, while DePalma, Ryan Dunbar, Dimatulac and Rappos Jr. added goals in a 6 ? 1 win. This time it was Gianluca Pannozzo, who registered the win in net for the Tigers.

In fact, Rommel said his goalies were solid all season long, as they combined for 18 shutouts.

Then, up two games to one in the series, the Tigers headed back to Halton Hills for game four with the chance of nailing down the championship.

It was a back and forth game, but Halton took a 1 ? 0 lead just 14 seconds into the first period. However, the Tigers responded before the end of the first frame, with Tyler Cox scoring the equalizer.

Halton Hills took the lead again in the second period and held that lead before Riley Pearl tied the game at 2 ? 2 in the third period. With neither team able to score the winning goal in the final minutes, the game was sent into sudden death overtime.

Providing the heroics in overtime was George Rappos, Jr., who notched the championship winning goal at 4.24 in overtime.

?They worked their butts off and were completely exhausted,? Rommel said. ?They really left everything out on the ice and were ecstatic and very excited when that final goal went in and they realized all that hard work paid off to become champions.?

The team also praised their opponent for putting up a good fight in game four and not giving up.

?We played a really tough team in that one. They came out to win. Their backs were against the wall, really, and they came out hard to win.?

The team added the OMHA championship to their Motown Cup win in Detroit in September and their International Silver Stick qualifier win in December.

?It was an overwhelmingly successful season from the start and it was just the icing on the cake to take this home,? the manager added.