

Express earn double gold in hometown tournament

By Jake Courtepatte

Defending home ice was top priority last weekend for the Minor Atom and Atom York-Simcoe Express, both of which came out on top of the annual YSE Steamtrain Shootout tournament.

After a 5 ? 5 tie with the Whitby Wildcats to open the tournament on Friday at the Stronach Aurora Rec Complex, the Minor Atoms rallied back from a Saturday morning loss to Toronto with a 4 ? 2 thumping of the Oshawa Minor Generals, earning a spot in Sunday morning's semifinal.

A 5 ? 0 shutout of the Markham Waxers set up a date with Whitby in the final at LaBrier Arena, where a 2 ? 2 tie was broken in the final few minutes of regulation to secure the win for the Express.

Colin Ellsworth was named tournament MVP for the Express.

"We are all very proud of the boys," said coach Ken Heinrich. "They were excited to play host at this tournament and to represent YSE well. This win is a great stepping stone for this group and it's a result that we hope will help propel this team on to strong results the rest of the season."

The Atom Express had a perfect round robin through the Friday games, taking down both the North York Rangers and Rideau St. Lawrence Kings. A loss to the Rochester Monarchs on Saturday morning sent the Express to the playoff as the number-two seed, where they once again met Rochester in the final after defeating the Toronto Nationals 2 ? 0 in the semifinal.

York-Simcoe avenged their loss to Rochester with a 4 ? 1 win, securing a hometown sweep of the tournament.

"For the YSE Atom teams to win this tournament in its first two years is a great accomplishment for the program, and something that I know the players will look back on with pride one day," said coach Darin Chapman. "It's a great feeling to host these teams in our rinks and show them first-hand why YSE is such a strong minor hockey association."