

Minor Midget Express qualify for OHL Cup with OMHA title



By Jake Courtepatte

The York Simcoe Express came out on top as the most elite Minor Midget squad in Ontario hockey last weekend, cruising to victory at the OMHA AAA Championship in Clarington.

The Express, who play their home games out of St. Andrew's College's LaBrier Arena, went a perfect 5 ? 0 in the tournament to capture the prestigious championship.

Cameron Hillis, Matthew MacDougall, Ian Vucko, and Ian MacLean all notched three goals in the tournament for the Express, with Hillis also adding seven assists to lead the tournament.

On the back end, Andrei Berezinskiy was the only goaltender to earn three wins, leading the championship in goalie stats by allowing only seven goals over five games.

A 5 ? 2 win over the Clarington Toros and a 3 ? 0 win over the Barrie Jr. Colts on Friday was matched by a 4 ? 0 score over the Southern Tier Admirals and 4 ? 3 over the Hamilton Bulldogs on Saturday, setting up a rematch with the Bulldogs in the championship on Sunday.

Vucko got the Express on the board first, but Hamilton took a 2 ? 1 lead early in the second period. Three straight goals from Marshall Waters, Robbie Cranston, and Richard Whittaker before the end of the period secured the win for York Simcoe, while MacLean topped it off in the third for a 5 -2 victory.

The championship was the Minor Midget's fourth in their history.

The Express entered the tournament as the team to beat, leading the league in goal differential by a wide margin. The top four scorers in the Eastern AAA Hockey League (ETA) this season were all YS products, with Hillis leading the pack. He is expected to be a top pick in this year's OHL Priority Selection draft.

Carter Robertson, who just turned sixteen in January, led all defenseman in points throughout the season with 36 in 31 games.

With the win, the Express have qualified for the OHL Cup along with the second-place Hamilton Jr. Bulldogs, third-place Barrie Colts and fourth-place Southern Tier Admirals. The tournament works as a showcase for those entering their junior years, representing the top talent in the province this weekend in Toronto.