

Young basketball stars converge on York Region



By Jake Courtepatte

'We the York North?' was the slogan on a number of t-shirts worn this month at the Under-11 Boys Ontario Cup in York Region, a phrase borrowed from the Toronto Raptors.

It seems fitting, as any one of the participants could very well find themselves on the professional court.

The best of the best were spread out in games across York Region, with 56 teams putting over 700 players on the courts. The highest level Division 1 matchups were held at the Magna Centre in Newmarket, equipped with a state-of-the-art basketball facility able to handle the large crowds and the presence of Rogers Media, who broadcast the games.

The City of Brampton flexed its basketball muscle, sending two teams to the Div. 1 final for an all-Brampton game.

Bounce/CIA took on the Brampton Warriors, both residing only 30 kilometres or so from the high school that NBA phenom Andrew Wiggins attended.

The championship went to Bounce/CIA by a score of 56 ? 43, one of the highest scoring games of the tournament.

Regionally, York was represented by the York North Basketball Association in Division 6. They dropped their first game of the tourney to the Whitby Wildcats 41 ? 35, and lost by a single point on the Saturday to the East York Eagles.

They battled hard in the seventh-place game on Sunday, but ultimately fell short in overtime to a team from London.

All three matchups were held at Aurora High School.

Last year, the YNBA received a two-year, \$94,000 Trillium grant to help deliver long-term development to its players, as well as coordinate the annual championship.

'We're here to serve our guest families as they enjoy our local culinary opportunities, and welcome others and their business into the community,' said YNBA president Jason Scott at the tournament. 'Welcome to York North!'

Last year, the event brought approximately \$2-million into the region through restaurants, hotels, and other services.

Always supporters of grassroots basketball, the Toronto Raptors sent a friend of theirs to check out the tournament, their mascot 'Raptor'. When asked if he was having fun, he nodded yes.

There could be a lot more fun down the road. The tourney got the thumbs-up at Council last week as they laid the groundwork for Aurora's new Community Sports Plan. With over 1,000 families in attendance, Councillor Michael Thompson said this was a 'good indication' that events like these bring an 'economic benefit' to the community.'

To check out all the scores for the tournament, visit www.ontariocupu11boys.ca.