

SPORTS

Bantam Mustangs play best tournament of season

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The Castlerock Whitehorse Bantam Mustangs played their most successful tournament of the season, finishing with a winning record and just falling short of winning the bronze medal.

The team has continued to improve throughout the season and were able to achieve their goal of finishing in the top four at their most recent tournament, called the Edmonton Invitational Bantam Tournament of Champions, held from Dec. 27-31.

"They know they were really close and they were close in the tournament," said Jim Stephens, co-coach of the Bantam Mustangs. "It is important to have small successful steps in your program throughout the year, so this will definitely set us up well for our final push into March."

This was the team's third tournament of the season. Their 3-2 record was an improvement on the other two, which the Mustangs went 1-2-1 in Kelowna B.C. and 1-2-0 in Comox B.C.

The Mustangs played in the AA pool of the tournament and had a record of 3-1 after round robin play, which placed them in second in their division. They finished with 44 points in total with 22 goals and 22 assists.

The team got off to a great start, winning their first two games of competition. Steven Harlow played a great game in goal for the team and helped the Mustangs secure a 5-1 victory over the Sprucegrove Colts in the opening game of the tournament. Both David Stephens and Brett Roulston led the team in offense, each scoring two goals.

For the second game of the tournament, the Mustangs went up against the Yellowhead Honda, who at the time had an undefeated record in the season. Stephens once again carried the offense, scoring a hat trick, while Riley O'Connor put in the remaining goal. Brad Gustafson played great in net, making 25 saves in the win.

In the third game, the bantams went up against a very strong team from Sherwood Park, Alta. The Mustangs ended up losing the game 8-1, with O'Connor scoring the lone goal for the



Internet photo

TEAM SPIRIT – The 2007-08 Castlerock Whitehorse Bantam Mustangs pose for a team photo, along with co-coaches Jim Stephens, left, and Dave Pearson, right, and assistant coach Greg Hare.

team.

Despite their first loss of the tournament, the Mustangs were able to rebound for their next contest at the competition, winning 8-1. Stephens led the bantams in scoring with four goals, while Trevor Hanna finished with two goals and Bryden Cook scored once.

The victory secured second place for the team, which automatically put them in the consolation final against the Alaskan Wolves. Fatigue proved to be a factor in this game as the team fell behind early and just couldn't score on a couple of power play opportunities, losing the game 8-4. Cook led the Mustangs in scoring with two goals, while Roulston and Chris Vance scored the remaining two goals.

This was the first time all season the Bantam Mustangs played for a medal and despite the loss, the tournament still had a lot of positives for a team gearing up to play in both the Arctic Winter Games and the provincials.

Among the positives included the team's strong offensive, which had the team had been working on in practice

in an attempt to generate more shots on net.

The Mustangs also improved on working together as a team and made smart plays in all of the games including dumping it deep into their opponent's zone, chipping it off the boards and making quick line changes at the right moments. Another positive included the team's strong skating abilities, which were consistent the whole way through the Edmonton tournament.

Several players on the team had a breakout tournament, including Stephens, who finished the round robin with nine goals and won the Knights of Columbus Award - Most Valuable Player. At the end of round-robin play, Stephens was tied for first in goals and third in overall points. Among the list of names on the trophy includes Calgary Flames defenseman, Dion Phaneuf, whose name was placed directly below Stephens

"He deserves every bit of that accolade," said Dave Pearson, co-coach of the bantam Mustangs. "We knew he was a dominant player and if we gave

him a chance he would be able to show his stuff and he certainly did and the guys around him played very well."

Currently, the Mustangs are working on their power play and penalty kill as well as winning one-on-one battles in their own zone. Their next big challenge will be in February when the team will play an opponent from the Northwest Territories in Whitehorse, in what will most likely be a three-game series.

"They will be playing in front of their home crowd, which is pretty exciting for the kids," said Pearson. "It is not too often they get to play in front of friends and family, so we will see where we stack up against a potential foe in the Arctic Winter Games and then after that we are right into it."

The Mustangs' goal is to win at least two out of the three games against the Northwest Territories' team. Pearson said he is pleased with how the team is progressing this season.

"We are moving along very well, we are progressing at the speed I think we want to be progressing," he said. "It disappoints me that we lost the final

game. I think we were quite competitive in that final game, but that is just one game and I think we know what we have to work on and the kids also know what we have to work on."

Stephens said playing for the bronze medal was a huge confidence boost for the bantam Mustangs.

"Just by the fact that you are in that game, I mean ideally you would like to win, but you are not going to win every opportunity you get into a medal game, hopefully you have other opportunities though and you get a few bounces," he said. "In hockey there is a lot of random events out there that you can't control."

Stephens thinks the team's speed was one of the reasons they did so well at the Edmonton tournament.

"We are not big, but we're fast. That is how we have to counter our lack of size against some of these bigger teams," he said. "We have three players who are under 100 pounds, we didn't see anybody that small at the tournament, but those three kids all have hearts as big as you can get, that is why we are competitive."

Dirt in pipelines forces delay at Mount Sima

Mount Sima is hoping to have the T-bar area of the hill opened to the public by Thursday after discovering dirt and rocks remaining in two of their three pipelines.

The hill made the discovery last Friday and hasn't been able to make snow since.

The problem originally started when two of their three pipe lines froze back in the 2005-06 season. Mount Sima attempted to fix the problem in the fall of 2006, but were unable to finish because of the colder temperatures.

However, they were still able to make enough snow during last season and then set out to fix the problem in the summer, which is the ideal time of the year to do this type of work.

The process of fixing a damaged

pipe involves running the water during the off-season to detect where the break has occurred. However, in doing this, dirt and rocks are then sucked back into the pipe when the pressure is turned off.

There is no way to remove the dirt and rocks other than flushing them out at the bottom of the line.

Once a malfunction is noticed in one of the hydrants located on a particular pipeline, a crew would then begin tests, which start in the parking lot and work their way up the hill to see if there are any other damages.

If the team notices any gushing water from the hill, they would then dig a hole using a backhoe and wield over the damage.

Before the hole can be covered up

they have to make sure the entire pipeline is reinforced.

There is no current dirt coming into the pipe, however not all of it was flushed out by the end of this summer's construction and because a lot of the damage occurred at the top of the hill, it was unnoticed until now.

Mount Sima hopes to have all of the dirt removed by the weekend and only needs a couple more days of snowmaking to have enough to open up the T-bar area.

"We have to set a target and we are going to shoot for a Thursday opening," said Ernie Berken, president of the Great Northern Ski Society. "If we experience any other problems we will inform the public about any changes to our proposed opening."

Edgewater topples Firth in Oldtimers Hockey League

The Oldtimers Hockey League resumed its schedule on Wednesday after a short holiday break over the Christmas season.

Edgewater Hotel managed to double up on the Firth Rangers by a score of 4-2.

Edgewater had balanced scoring in the game with three players scoring a goal for the team.

Edgewater Hotel 4, Kilrich 2

Scott Lowery scored one goal and added an assist for Edgewater, while Wayne Valevand and Morley Lessard, each scored a goal and added an assist.

Other notables on the team include John Grant, Brent Stokes and Guy Rook who each finished with an assist.

Rob Thompson and Joel Witten each scored the a goal for the Rangers in the loss.

Other notables include John Skilnyk, who finished with two assists, while Carl Burgess added one assist.

Klondyke Dental Molars 6, Kilrich 3

Adam Green scored one goal and added three assists, while Terry Jackson and Brian Eyolfson each scored two goals and added one assist.

Derrick Torgerson finished with one goal in the win.

Scorers for Kilrich included Ron Daub and Tim Turner-Davis who each scored one goal and added an assist. Woody Bennett finished with a goal.