

# Knights Squirt Minor 'AAA' lose to Wheatfield, 4-1

The Amherst Knights Squirt Minor "AAA" hockey team lost to the Wheatfield Blades, 4-1, on Sunday at the Wheatfield Hockey Outlet. Wheatfield center Collin Rutherford had three goals and an assist to lead his team to victory.

Amherst goaltender Mark O'Malley made the first big play of the game with a tough save off a strong shot within the first two minutes of play. At 7:48 into the first period, Wheatfield's Brendan Miller scored off a deflection of a shot by Rutherford to give his team a 1-0 lead. Just one minute later, Amherst forward Mitchell Spring powered his way down the left side, beat the Wheatfield defenseman through the center slot and let go a strong wrist shot on goal. Matthew Steffan went to the net hard and pounced on the rebound to even the game at 1-1.

Amherst finished the first period strong with some good scoring chances. Amherst winger

Matthew Ruggiero made a nifty backhand pass to Alex Dimitroff who broke in for a solid scoring opportunity. The Steffan-Spring-Luke Eberhard line kept the pressure on the Wheatfield defense and drew a penalty late in the first.

The power play unit put some sustained pressure on the Wheatfield goaltender. Owen Green quarterbacked the unit from the point and launched two rockets on the Wheatfield net, one which clanked off the far post.

The Knights found themselves short-handed early in the second. John Hazelet took control of the penalty killing unit, stifling the elusiveness of the Wheatfield forwards by winning the crucial corner board battles deep in his own zone.

Amherst came on strong after the penalty kill as defenseman Dylan Lock turned back multiple full-speed Wheatfield rushes with some

timely poke-checks and solid body positioning. Green followed suit with a swift moving deke and pass from the point that set up teammate Danny Tyczynski for a good shot. However, the Wheatfield goaltender was able to make a solid save and keep the game tied at 1-1.

Halfway through the second period, it appeared the Knights had taken a 2-1 lead. Dante Todaro rushed wide through the faceoff circle and passed the puck through the Wheatfield crease. With Dimitroff and MJ Bronsky smothering the crease, the puck lay on the goal line, then seemingly was pushed over the line before the Wheatfield goaltender covered it up. Amherst had thought they had scored but no signal came from the referee.

With four minutes to go in the second, Rutherford scored top-shelf with a back-hand from the side of the net. Wheatfield led 2-1.

The tightly fought battle continued in the

third period. Amherst goaltender Max Battistoni came in to relieve O'Malley and forced an early faceoff with a stretching pad save. Defensemen Ellis Smith and Chris Winiacki worked hard keeping the swift Wheatfield team bottled up through much of the third period.

Later in the period, Battistoni made a huge save off a clear breakaway. Following that save, the Ruggiero-Todaro-Brodzik line forced the play inside the Blades' blue line. Working hard, Brodzik and Todaro pushed the puck to the front of the net where Ruggiero deflected it off the post.

Rutherford scored his second back-handed goal of the game to give his team a two-goal lead as the third period started to wind down. As the game came to a close, Amherst picked up a late penalty and Rutherford scored off a deflected shot on the Wheatfield power play with just one second left in the game.

## Flyers slice through Gray Sabres, make Sharks go hungry

The Amherst Pepsi Center was packed on Sunday when the Squirt Flyers put away a 7-2 win over the Gray Sabres.

The first period saw lots of end-to-end action. The Flyers lit up the scoreboard first when Gregory Sibick scooped up a rebound and put one in between the pipes with a quick backhanded maneuver.

Flyers defenseman Austin Gallagher, playing with an injured hand, scored his first goal of the season when he rushed up the middle and made a powerful shot that flew into the Gray Sabres' net.

The second period had aggressive play from both teams. The Flyers' Nick Schiappa scored his team's third goal in the second period when he skated around the Gray Sabres' net and slipped one in from the side.

The third period saw the most action from the Flyers when they simply were on fire. Amir Gulati scored a well-deserved fourth goal

for his team when he outskated the defense to slice one in between the netminder's legs.

Eric Bailey scored another goal for the Flyers when he took advantage of a Gray Sabres' error for a perfectly timed shot.

Peter Masters lit up the scoreboard for the Flyers' sixth goal when he flew down the ice and made an awesome wrist shot that sailed past the goalie's shoulder and landed in the net. The final Flyers' goal was made by Gregory Sibick when he got another burst of energy and showed some fancy stick handling in the last 30 seconds of the game to put another one in between the net.

Outstanding plays for the Flyers were also made by Mark Christy, James Mueller, Anthony Macchia and Dean Battaglia.

Angelo Derossi and Antonio Zandano scored Gray Sabre goals.

**Squirt Flyers 5, Sharks 0**  
The Squirt Flyers skated hard for a 5-0

win against the Sharks early Saturday morning at the Amherst Pepsi Center.

The Flyers' Gregory Sibick scored the first goal when he outmaneuvered the Sharks' defense and made an awesome wrist shot between the pipes.

Trevor Shaw of the Flyers had his usual outstanding impact on the game when he scored two

back-to-back goals with determined offensive pressure.

The third period had tight defense with a lot of pressure in front of the Sharks' net. Mark Christy of the Flyers finally took advantage of a rebound opportunity and scored.

Conor Mulvey fought his way up the ice and sliced the puck through

the Sharks' defense and into their net for the Flyers' fifth goal.

Additional outstanding plays for the Flyers were made by Austin Gallagher, Austin Ballard, James Williams, Eric Bailey, and Flyers' goalie Bryan Cowing.

The Sharks' defense had a number of notable saves and solid plays.

## Stars rebound with playoff win

The Squirt Stars responded to last week's tough Canadian road trip by scoring a resounding 4-1 victory over the Red Sabres in the first playoff game for each team.

Jimmy Kirkpatrick was the star of the game, contributing a hat trick in an outstanding display of skating ability. He scored the first goal with 5:36 left in the first period on a breakaway after accepting an outstanding pass from Steven Zaprowski.

Ben Battaglia added to the lead 1:06 later putting the puck past outstanding Red Sabre goalie Andrew Welchoff.

Less than two minutes later, Adam Tucker answered for the Red Sabres on an unassisted breakaway.

Kirkpatrick knocked in an AJ Aquilino rebound in the second period, to extend the Stars' lead back to 3-1.

One minute later, Kirkpatrick finished the scoring, converting on a two-on-one break, notching the only power-play goal of the game.

The scoreless third period was punctuated by outstanding goaltending by Welchoff and the Stars' Christian Aichinger.

The Stars were aided by outstanding defensive plays by Patrick Irving, Heather Casselman, Justin Bystrak, Christian Cretella and Jonah Held.

Welchoff was constantly tested by Ben Warda, Dan Bounds, Samantha Degen, Neal Greiner and Craig McCabe.

The Red Sabre effort was led by Nicholas Tracy, Alex Gervase and rookie of the year candidate, Andrew White.

## Mite Rangers finish regular season undefeated

Jason Koginos and Brennan Hurley each scored twice and Hurley added an assist as the Mite Rangers defeated the Sharks, 6-1, on Sunday to finish the regular season undefeated. Once again, 16 young men played as one for the Rangers as every player on the roster made a meaningful contribution to the outcome.

Goaltender Jake Kantor started it off for the Rangers only a minute into the contest, making a spectacular glove save to rob Shark forward Bennett Levy. Levy picked up a loose puck at the Ranger blue line, skated in all alone and fired a laser earmarked for the top corner of the net before Kantor picked it off.

Shark netminder Dylan Utz was equally spectacular at the other end, stoning Michael Kreuz and then shutting the door on William Mann on the rebound to keep the game even.

Alex Streng's persistence finally staked the Rangers to a 1-0 lead late in the first period. Streng picked up a pass from Patrick Greeley just outside the Shark blue line and skated in on Utz, who denied him twice before

Streng finally slid the disk over the goal line.

Early in the second period, Streng spotted Cameron Kiefer blazing up ice but Utz denied Kiefer to keep it a one-goal game. Ranger center Austin Stanley then had two glorious scoring chances but Utz somehow kept the puck out of the net.

Back at the other end of the ice, Ranger goaltender Kantor robbed Michael Woods on a clear cut breakaway, and stuffed Woods again moments later to keep the Rangers in front. Kreuz then head-manned the puck up to a steaming Koginos and the Ranger center scored past a sprawling Utz to give the Rangers a 2-0 lead, which stood through two periods of play.

Nick Daigler scored for the Sharks to make it 2-1 early in the third period, but the Rangers answered with four successive goals to win going away. Just 20 seconds after Daigler's goal brought the Sharks to within one, Hurley scored a sensational goal off of a pass from Mark Venditti, and only moments after that,

Koginos converted a Hurley rebound to make the score 4-1.

The Sharks continued to play inspired hockey, but the Rangers only got stronger as the game wore on. Defensemen Drew Elliott and Ryan Arastia kept the Sharks out of the Ranger zone time after time, and Streng made a phenomenal diving play to knock the puck away from a speeding Woods as he blazed in on net.

Hurley would score his second of the game and 11th of year off of a pass from Kreuz to give the Rangers some more breathing room, and Matt Cohen capped the scoring with his 27th goal of the season, with linemates Chris Dirienzo (team-leading 19th of the year) and Jonathan Phillips, picking up assists.

Although he did not figure into the scoring, Ranger sparkplug Patrick Rosen contributed his typical feisty, high energy game in the victory.

The Rangers now try to carry the momentum of their successful regular season into the playoffs, which begin next week with a very difficult game against the Stars.

## Black Sabres nip Red Sabres

The last time the Mite Black Sabres met the Red Sabres, the two teams played to a draw, so both were anxious for a win in the last game before the playoffs. The Black Sabres won, 3-0, on Sunday.

The Mite Black Sabres came out charging against the Red Sabres. The first two goals were scored in the first 90 seconds. Zachary Gannon took a pass from Nick Carbone from Dan Mosher and shot hard at goal to score 35 seconds in. Fifty seconds later, Carbone sent the puck down from a face off near their blue line, Mosher tore after it and scored the second goal of the game.

Lots of hustling for the puck continued through the first period. At one point, the Red Sabres had a breakaway but Noah Bachwitz made a brilliant save by throwing himself on the ice and getting the puck out to the boards with his stick. Elliot Whittaker nearly scored a goal with an assist

from Matthew Shiring but it rebounded off the goalie's pads. Then, from a face off in the Black Sabre end, Bachwitz hit a shot out to the boards that was taken up by Mosher. Mosher faked out a Red Sabre and scored with 3:36 remaining in the period.

The second and third periods saw some great play by both teams but no more goals. Ben Reichart for the Red Sabres made a couple of breakaways only to be thwarted each time by the Black Sabre defense and some terrific goalkeeping by Jacob Ostrowski. Tyler Roberto had a breakaway with a shot on goal that was saved by the Red Sabre goalkeeper.

Christian Rottner, Paul Arias, and Elliot Whittaker played their best offensive games together and had many shots at the net. Bachwitz played smart defense for the entire game. Whittaker was awarded the game puck.

## HIGH SCHOOL SPORTS CALENDAR

**Wednesday, Feb. 14**

**Boys Basketball:** Lancaster at Sweet Home, 7:30 p.m.

**Thursday, Feb. 15**

**Boys Basketball:** East at Amherst, 7:30 p.m., Lancaster at North, 7:30 p.m.

**Girls Bowling:** Sweet Home at Section VI Championships, 9 a.m. (Thruway Lanes)

**Girls Basketball:** Lake Shore at Amherst, 6 p.m., Iroquois at South, 7:30 p.m.

**Friday, Feb. 16**

**Boys Bowling:** Sweet Home, South at Section VI Championships, 9 a.m. (Thruway Lanes)

**Girls Basketball:** East vs. Nardin at Lockport Tourn., 6 p.m.

**Hockey:** WNY Hockey Federation quarterfinals — Sweet Home vs. TBA (Feature Rink)

**Boys Swimming:** ECICs, diving - East, Sweet Home, North, South at Clarence, 3 p.m. (warmups)

**Saturday, Feb. 17**

**Girls Basketball:** East vs. Olean or Lockport at Lockport Tourn., 6 or 7:30 p.m.

**Indoor Track:** Amherst, Sweet Home, East, North, South at Lancaster, 8 a.m.

**Boys Swimming:** ECICs - Amherst, East, Sweet Home, North, South at Clarence, 9 a.m. small schools, 1 p.m. large schools (warmups)

**Wrestling:** Amherst, Sweet Home, East, North, South at Section VI New York State qualifier, 10 a.m. (Fredonia State College)

**Tuesday, Feb. 20**

**Boys Basketball:** Bishop-Timon St. Jude at East, 7:30 p.m.

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