

MUDHOGS CLOSE AT SUMMERSLAM

The Mudhogs captured two 2nd place finishes recently at the Summerslam Tourney in London , Ontario . With both Mudhog teams full of new faces this was an exceptional result. The Silver team finished 3rd after a tough fought loss in the Semis to the eventual winners, the London Fury Jr. A team. The Gold team finished 2nd after bowing out to the Force Sports team in the final.

After back to back 2nd place finishes for the Gold team, questions are starting to rise as to what this team needs to do to get back to its winning ways. With the Oakville Waterfront Tournament scheduled for June 25-27 followed by the Can/Am Cup July 2-4 and finally the much coveted World Cup July 8-11. It's safe to say that they will have plenty of opportunity to redeem themselves and show all in the roller hockey world why they are considered one of the very best adult roller hockey teams in the area.

The Silver team is in an entirely different situation trying to establish a core of players to ensure that they can compete in each and every tournament. At the back end they are solid with a stay at home defenseman in Jon Zombeck and blue collar defenseman Chad Johnson. Between the pipes they are steady with 10 year veteran goalie Todd Gallant backstopping the team. Now the key will be finding the right mix of forwards up front that can be a part of this team for tournaments to come.

Fortunately for both teams they have built a strong foundation of players that compete every Wednesday night in the CIRHL (Canning Inline Roller Hockey League). This will provide both teams with options in their upcoming tournaments. With that being said I guess the real question is who is going to step up and jump on this tremendous opportunity.

A GOOD START TO 2004

On March 12, 2004, the Mudhogs travelled to the Joe Dumars Fieldhouse in Utica, MI, to play in the Hyper Crusade tournament, in the Silver Division. The competition was quite tough for the 'Hogs, with the first game facing off against the P.A.S.I. Phantoms. Unfortunately, the team showed up quite cold, and after a number of defensive lapses, the game finished with the Mudhogs on the wrong end of the scoreboard in a 10-4 loss.

On Saturday, the Mudhogs faced off against the Motor City Knights in a very chippy, physical affair. The Mudhogs were able to keep their cool, allowing the fans to do the verbal sparring for them, and pulled off a 4-2 victory. Todd Gallant played an excellent game between the pipes, holding off the Knights. The Mudhogs followed this game with an 11:40 pm match against Mission Ryan. The team played well as a unit, and seemed to be gelling quite nicely. Both goalies also played a fine game, and the guys went back to the hotel with an 8-4 victory and a spot in the finals on Sunday. Kudos to Jon Zombeck for a job well done on the defensive side of the puck this game.

In the finals, the Mudhogs were up against the P.A.S.I. Phantoms again, in a rematch of the opening night game. The team played excellent, and at half time were down 1-0 on a power play goal. The team came out and fought well in the second half, but were unfortunately outscored, with a final score of 5-1 including one empty net goal. There was nothing to be ashamed of upon the outcome of the game, as the team played well but simply lost to a better team.

Way to go guys! Just as a sidenote, each player on the team recorded at least 1 point, which says something to the way the boys move the puck and involve the entire team.

The Mudhogs next event will be a tournament in London in May, along with the opening of the 3rd CIRHL season coming in May as well, preseason beginning in mid-April.

2004 - THE YEAR OF THE HOG

The year 2003 saw the Mudhogs capture their first ever NHL Breakout Championship in two divisions!! The focus for 2004 will now be on retaining those two titles that they spent three seasons striving to achieve.

But before they head back to Breakout to defend those titles they have some other tourneys to make an impact in! The first will be next weekend at the Fieldhouse in Detroit where the two teams will be competing in the silver and bronze divisions at the Hyper Crusade Tourney. Not only is this tourney special because it kicks off the 2004 season but it also is the Mudhogs corporate sponsors tournament. Anything less than a good showing in the playoffs will likely not satisfy too many of the Mudhogs brass.

After the Hyper Crusade tournament the two teams will prepare for the World Championships that are being held in London , Ontario this year. This is a great opportunity for many of the guys to play in front of family and friends which will be an exciting change from playing on the road in most of the tournaments they compete in.

As if the tournaments and Sunday practices were not enough the Mudhogs will continue to hone their skills during the 3rd season of the CIRHL (Canning Inline Roller Hockey League). The league will start pre-season the middle of April and opening night will be May 5th. This year the league looks to add an all-star game along with a skills competition. Year three of the CIRHL will be like no other!! Check back often for all the latest developments right here at thehogsden.com.

ANOTHER YEAR, ANOTHER CLASSIC

On a snowless December 24th, the Mudhogs took off their blades and tied up their shoes for the 5th annual Christmas Eve Classic.

In a shocking display the Paris team arrived early and were looking to win their second Classic in 5 years. However, the Canning teams had other plans in mind. Finally it was time to drop the ball and get the action underway. All afternoon the competition was fierce with close games and exciting shootouts!

At the end of round robin play there was a three way tie for first. In order to determine the seeds goals against was counted only to find another 3 way tie. So it was onto goals for where once again to everyone's amusement yet another 3 way tie. It was determined that the three teams would be put in a hat and drawn to determine seeding. Finally it was time for the playoffs!!

The first playoff action saw Zommer's team face off against Fezzer's team. It was a hard fought game with ankle breaking moves. In the end Fezzer's team would triumph to move onto the finals. In the other semi-final action Foggers team battled Katt Merr's team where the intensity and hard play continued, as both teams battled for an edge. You just knew that nothing would be decided in regulation time with the great goaltending that was taking place. Overtime saw more great scoring chances at both ends but Hilly and T-bone would not allow that deciding goal that easily. With under a minute left in OT Ron Boakes roofed a backhand with Hilly down and out after making a great first save.

The finals were set and both teams knew what was at stake, the Christmas Eve Classic Trophy, and bragging rights for a year! Both teams were playing hard, making great passes, while shooting and blocking shots. It was an action packed game but when it was all over it was a 3-0 victory for the team of Jesse Romano, Brock Murray, Brad Boakes, Ken Butcher and goaltender Todd Gallant. The winning team had a little luck on their side with a penny that was buried at center ice before the start of the tourney. Congratulations to the winning team and everybody who made it out for yet another great day in Mudhog history.

MUDHOGS BACK TO BACK TOUR CUP CHAMPS!

On Friday, November 21, the Mudhogs travelled to Detroit, MI, to take part in the 2003 Tour Cup, being held at the Joe Dumars Fieldhouse. Again the 'Higs took two teams, placed in the Silver and Bronze Divisions. The Bronze team started off the weekend playing against Matrix. Unfortunately, Matrix decided that they had no chance to win the silver division, so they dropped down to an undermatched bronze division where they would have no problem taking the championship. The boys were easily frustrated by Matrix, and ended up playing an embarrassing game which saw two members thrown out, and the team losing 8-0. This game was followed by the silver Mudhogs, who showed how the game is played. The boys played an excellent game, and went away with the win. (Video of one of the goals can be seen on the video page in the multimedia section.) The next morning the Bronze 'Hogs got up with the intention of playing

themselves into a playoff spot. The first game against Gang Green was played well, but the 'Hogs ran up against a hot goale, and were narrowly defeated 3-1, which included an empty net goal. Being mathematically eliminated, the 'Hogs didn't give up, and triumphed in their final round robin game, in a very chippy affair. The boys showed excellent grit in coming back from their first game loss, and laid a foundation to build on for their next tournament together.

The silver Mudhogs fared better in their second game, winning that as well. In the third game, the fellas had the lead, but the opponent got quite chippy, and the guys sat back rather than getting hurt, resulting in a one goal loss. The 2-1 record however put the boys in the finals, where they were matched up again against "Team Chippy" The boys played well, with Justin Read scoring 3 goals and Todd Bowler adding two, resulting in a 5-4 win, and another championship trophy.

Click on the photos to the left and right to see some of the action from the weekend. Next Mudhog action is the 5th Annual Christmas Eve Cup, December 24th at Gallant Gardens.

MOONSHINE PUTS ON DANCE SPECTACULAR!

On Saturday, November 22nd, the Mudhogs held a fundraising dance at the Princeton Centennial Hall, with live entertainment being provided by the band Moonshine. This dance was a chance for the Mudhogs to showcase what an event the dances have become for the community of Princeton and area. The band, Moonshine, which come from Kitchener, ON, put on a great show, keeping the crowd singing and dancing all night long. The band added their own style to many popular country songs of today, including Brad Paisley's Celebrity, Doc Walker's The Show is Free, and Garth Brooks' classic, Friends in Low Places. There was not a person in the room who could honestly say that they had a bad time. And to top the night off, the Mudhogs raised some money from the dance to help offset future tournament costs. For more information on the band check out their website at <http://moonshine.musicpage.de>.

Thanks to all the guys who sold tickets, collected door prizes, and helped set up and clean up the hall. Next dance will be sometime in the spring of 2004.

See you December 24th for the 5th Annual Christmas Eve Cup at Gallant Gardens.

ONE FOR THE AGES

It's been a long time coming for the Canning Mudhogs inline roller hockey team, but they have finally captured the NHL Breakout Championship title.

Both the elite and competitive Mudhogs won their divisions at the 2003 NHL Breakout Invitational Championships in Columbus, Ohio earlier this month.

The competitive team cruised through the tourney going 6-0. Their only real scare came in the final game when they got down early to a tough team from Pittsburgh. But just as this team had done the whole tournament they came together and fought back for a 4-2 win.

The elite team also came away with a record of 6-0 during the tourney. Unlike the competitive team it took the elite guys a game or two to start clicking with each other like they are used to. Once they did it was onto the final where they faced the defending champions ,Top Shelf from Long Island, NY. Top Shelf, which has several semi-professional players, gave the Mudhogs a great challenge in the final. But after a scoreless 1st period they scored early in the second and managed to control the rest of the game and come away with the championship and a 4-1 victory.

MUDHOGS TRAVEL TO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

After two consecutive trips to the finals in their last two tournaments the Mudhogs will travel to Columbus, OH seeking the ultimate championship!

The NHL Breakout Championships is the highest event to compete in when it comes to outdoor Roller Hockey. The Mudhogs are no stranger to this event where they have finished 10th, 5th and 4th at this competition in the last 3 years. As always the Canning Mudhog Organization will be taking two teams to this three day event being held August 8-10 at the Easton Town Center in Columbus, Ohio. There will be approximately 50 teams from all over North America in the adult division in which the Mudhogs compete in.

The Mudhog Organization, in its eighth year has grown tremendously and shows no signs of slowing down! The team is now proudly sponsored by Hyper Hockey out of California which provides the team with product at discounted prices. As well as being partnered with the Paris Sports Center a great local retailer in which the team can turn to for all its other inline hockey needs. You can follow the Mudhogs and its success at all these tournaments from its website at www.thehogsden.com

MUDHOGS SECOND IN SENIOR SLAM

The London Senior Slam Tourney had a lot on the line with \$1500 dollars in cash prizes to be won in both the Gold and Silver divisions. The Gold team turned in a second place performance after a tough fought battle with an old nemesis Force Sports in the Championship Game. While the Silver team just missed the finals and had to settle for third place! It was a tournament that seemed to favour the local London teams, but that didn't stop the Mudhogs from competing. The Gold team cruised through the round robin and the semis with scores of 12-2, 10-0 and 8-4. From there it was onto the final where a familiar rival awaited. The Hyper Canning Mudhogs and Force Sports faced off in the championship game that was filled with plenty of rough play and stick work. When the horn sounded Force Sports came out the winner in this battle with a score of 6-4. The Mudhogs may have lost the battle but they didn't lose the war that would ensue after the game with a few good tussles. Let's just say that next years Senior Slam has the makings of a real classic when these teams face off again! The Silver team, on the other hand, may have come out on the losing end in all three of their games but it looks like this team may have finally found their stride. With the right nucleus now in tact this team looks to step up and compete when they play in Oakville at the Waterfront tourney later this month. Both teams will be back in action on June 20-22 in Oakville. The Gold team is the defending champions at this tournament and will be looking to repeat while the Silver team is looking to follow in their footsteps. Stay tuned.....

CIRHL SEASON TWO IS UNDERWAY

After some intense scouting during pre season play all 4 teams came to draft day with a plan in mind. Just as unpredictable as all drafts are, the CIRHL draft was no different and had its share of surprises. Mellow Yellow used its first pick to take rookie goaltender James Carrigan and that set the tone for the rest of the draft. The 2nd pick overall was likely the biggest surprise which saw stay at home rookie defenseman Jon Zombeck being selected by Green Machine. 3rd pick went to the All Blacks and they chose rookie Paul Sullivan in hopes to add some much needed offence to their defensive team. The 4th and final first round pick went to White Lightning, last years Canning Cup Champions and they chose Brian Warosz who finished in the top 10 in scoring last season.