

## Jr B Northmen claim Founders Cup

The Orangeville Junior B Northmen brought the national Founders Cup championship home to Orangeville with a stunning 11-6 win over the Green Gaels from Clarington in the final game of the tournament at the Alder Street arena on Sunday, August 21. It was a double whammy for the Gaels who lost the Ontario Junior B Lacrosse championship to the Northmen on August 8. The prestigious tournament featured the top Junior B teams from across the country in an epic six day battle to decide the best in the country.

Going undefeated for the tournament, the Northmen entered the final after delivering a 9-2 win over Calgary in the semi-final. The Gaels were, no doubt, looking for some payback when they found themselves in the final and again playing the Northmen for the top spot.

The first period of the final game ended with a 3-3 tie after the Gaels took an early two goal lead that was then matched by the Northmen when the buzzer sounded to end the frame.

Orangeville ramped it up in the second frame and seemed to knock the drive out of the Clarington team after outscoring them 4-1 for the period and leaving the Gaels trailing 7-4 with one period remaining.

The game ended with the Northmen notching two powerplay goals early in the third period to take a 9-4 lead and leave the Gaels scrambling to get back into the game.

Smart manoeuvring in the final half of the third period saw the Northmen dismantle the Gaels and finishing with an 11-6 win to take the game and the championship.

The excitement of hosting a Founders Cup had been growing steadily over the past year when the Northmen organization announced they would be hosting the Cup and the support was overwhelming with the final game taking place in an arena filled to capacity.

"It's been an amazing ride," said Northmen captain Peter Hunt after Sunday's victory. "We stuck to our system all year. We've had great coaching, management, and a great team. We worked hard all year and we finally got here. I'm so proud of these guys, it's awesome. I'm so proud of the town and putting this all together. I'm thankful for our families and all our friends. It's an amazing opportunity."

The squad, Hunt said was determined to follow through with a championship in their home town.

"We just kept going. We didn't want to let up because we know they're a great team. I have a lot of respect for those guys."

Head coach Bruce Codd said earlier that one of the Club's goals was to win the League so they could enter the Founders Cup as champions - not as a host club which would automatically get an entry.

"I think we had four goals in total (to start the season) and obviously tonight was the big one and the last one," Codd said after Sunday's win. "I'm extremely proud of everyone involved in our team, and in our talent. The fact that the win was here in Orangeville, and run so well - the tournament went off without a hitch and to have the crowd we had here tonight - I don't know when this building will see a crowd like we had here tonight. Once we got one or two goals the place just erupted. To have it here and share it with our family and friends all the people who supported us, it's extra special."

Most fans were expecting the final match-up between the two teams who also battled for the Ontario championship to maybe come down to a one-goal game, but once the Northmen got their momentum they ran over the Gaels in the final half of the game.

"I think it really started at the end of the first," Codd said. "We got some momentum late, a couple of goals and the crowd got loud. The second period we really wanted to play fast. We said that the first period is always their best, even in the series we had against them to win Ontario. We said the second period was always our best. So it was important for us to run up and down, play fast and make them make decisions quickly and I thought we did an excellent job. Near the end of the second period they started to wear down and get frustrated."

Winning the National Championship as host team is an outstanding accomplishment for the Junior B Northmen.

The Club last won the Founders Cup 26 years ago when the Northmen defeated the Port Coquitlam Saints to win the title in 1990.