



Photo: Kathy Rice

## KEARSARGE MITES ARE TOURNAMENT CHAMPS

by Doug Windsor

### Kearsarge Thrashers Coach

The Kearsarge Mites hockey team showed up with an Unbeatable Determination for the Bobby Dunlap Tournament and went undefeated beating Concord, Hudson, and Keene to bring home the gold in a New Year's weekend of stunning play.

Opening the Mite level of the tournament on Friday night, December 29, the Thrashers had little trouble in beating Concord. Lucas Windsor announced he was in the house, scoring the first two goals for the Thrashers, the second on an assist from linemate Logan Marcus of Andover, who made a nifty pass from the corner onto Windsor's stick.

Concord answered with a goal before the third line controlled the offensive end, and Jakob Arnold scored his first goal of the series. Concord answered late but the Thrashers ended this one in control and on top 3-2.

### Thrashers Versus Keene

The Saturday dance card listed Keene as the next challenger. A challenge it was. Keene proved quite strong and very disciplined, showing off their three/two line changes rivaling anything the National Hockey League has to offer.

Regardless, Thrasher goalie Nicolas Stiles of Andover had his own "Determination" and thwarted shot after shot. Finally on a break-away in the second period Keene found a corner to beat Nicholas. But before Keene could get back to the game at hand Jakob Arnold wristed a laser from the right blue line that found its mark just inside the far left post of Keene's surprised netminder.

Locked at one to one, Keene and Kearsarge battled this one to a welcome tie, splitting points even for the game. It is worth noting that Keene outshot the Thrashers 24-5 for the game.

### Thrashers Versus Hudson

Later Saturday, Kearsarge entertained the Hudson Cyclones. The Cyclones wanted this, having beaten Concord earlier, but Lucas Windsor had his dancing shoes on again and notched a pair of goals along with a nifty full rink rush and impossible angle score by Matty Jarvis, who danced into the game after heroic efforts by a field of parents to overcome a nasty snow storm. The final score was 3-2, Thrashers.

### The Championship Game

Sunday morning brought a Kearsarge team to the rink ready to rock and roll with a determined Keene team for the tournament championship game.

The initial face-offs saw two coaches changing lines hastily, trying to create the game matchups they longed for. The Thrashers had a few secret tricks to unsettle the Keene defense with calls of "Red Johnny" and "Red Kevin," signals to hang back for a break out to center ice.

Keene struck first on a shot from the right face-off circle. Then, with an opportunity in front of the net, Andover's Logan Marcus wristed a twelve-footer in the five hole to even the score.

Not long after that Jakob Arnold threw a long shot from the red line that somehow confused the Keene netminder, and the Thrashers took the lead. Both teams settled into a see-saw battle at this point.

Taylor Methven of Andover, who had a tremendous weekend, caught, stopped, and frustrated the Keene speedsters time after time. Matty Jarvis, Jason Altman, and David Benjamin of Andover put up a wall foiling the Keene offense as well. Logan had a break-away that everyone crossed their fingers on, but at the last instant he was caught from behind.

Finally, with four minutes to play, Keene caught a break and buried a high shot over Nicholas Stiles' right shoulder. A flurry of defensive postures preserved a 2-2 tie leading to a four-on-four five-minute overtime.

Coach Windsor rolled the dice and loaded a strong line including Taylor Methven and Logan Marcus. The Thrasher Mites controlled the puck and kept in Keene's end for the first three minutes, but just couldn't get the biscuit buried.

Exhausted, Keene drove the puck into the Kearsarge end, where Nicholas took over, thwarting shot after shot. Taylor Methven skated off completely drained. The overtime ended in a draw.

Now each team faced a three-player shoot out. Keene chose to shoot first and Nicholas calmly stuffed the first skater. Logan skated boldly at the Keene goal and let go with a long shot that found its mark – the stands erupted.

Nicholas flipped the next Keene

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skater's shot harmlessly into his glove, almost too easily. Jakob Arnold drove down almost before receiving the referee's "Go." He shot, and for an instant it looked like the Thrashers had won, but somehow the Keene netminder found the rubber under his split legs.

Nicholas was fooled on the final Keene shooter, who found the upper net on a fine shot. Kearsarge's third man, Matty Jarvis, sped in and rifled a shot that just missed the left corner. Deadlocked – again!

Now a sudden-death shoot out. The stands were erupting. Cheers of "Nicholas, Nicholas" and "Keene, Keene" rang out as the rink was swarmed with Bantam players and parents as well as Mite fans.

Coach Windsor asked his boys to quiet down for Nicholas. The next Keene skater slowly approached Nicholas. He shot close in and Nicholas again stuffed the shooter to great cheers.

The coaches chose Luke Windsor to take the Thrashers' shot. Luke skated strongly to the net and fired – GOAL! The Thrashers stormed the rink and the whole team congratulated each other, rightfully so. Handshakes, trophies, and smiles, and a great Keene opponent.

It was quite a weekend, one to remember for these Kearsarge Thrasher Mites known now as "The Determinators."

### Kearsarge Squirts

The Squirts team was runner-up in its division of the tournament, losing the championship game to Littleton 6-2.

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