

West Milford Bears Mite Division Take 2nd in Skylands Spring League

The West Milford Bears Mite Division, 9 and under, took second place in the Skylands spring ice hockey league after losing to Sparta in a 7 – 4 decision. The championship game was held this past Fathers day at Skylands Ice World in Stockholm NJ.

The Bears battled it out with two difficult opponents in the quarter and semi final playoff games before earning their place in the championship game. First up was the Kinnelon Colts, a tough team with a great mix of talent. “We played Kinnelon well all year long, I knew we could win if we played at our best, and the kids did just that” said head coach Jim De Sotle. “We have a great mix of young kids and older kids on the team. Eight of the fifteen kids are first year Mites and five are under seven years old. We are going to be competitive for a while at this level.” The Bears won the game and moved on to the semi final round against 1st place Vernon.

Vernon had gone undefeated in the Spring League with a perfect record of 10-0-0. The Bears were beginning to feel like the New York Giants of hockey. “I told the kids in the locker room to play at 110% and win or loose we can be proud of what we have done.” The team did exactly that; they played a simple game plan and stuck to it. At the end of regulation the score was tied 1-1. Less than two minutes into overtime the Bears scored the winning goal to defeat Vernon 2-1.

The championship brought West Milford and Sparta together for a highly anticipated action packed game. The atmosphere was electric as the Bears took to the ice while AC/DC’s Thunderstuck rocked the arena. With the lights dimmed and the music rocking, the team warmed up before a capacity crowd. “It was great to see the kids expression when they took the ice and started skating around, for them it was like being on TV.” After the warm ups, proper introductions for each player and the national anthem it was game on! West Milford played a tough game against a great opponent and gave it their all. They kept the game within 2 goals until the 3rd period when Sparta opened up the scoring. “The kids played with all their heart and had a great time doing it, each one had come a long way since the beginning of the season.” In the end it was Sparta on top, and they deserve a big congratulations for a well-played game.

The Bears organization is home to kids from many surrounding towns including Warwick. “We are passionate about hockey and giving the kids a solid foundation in good sportsmanship. As our president, Mark Crevina, would say,

it's all about the kids" For more information on the Bears Organization please visit: <http://www.westmilfordhockey.com/>



Pictured from left to right

Bottom – Evan Brown, Brady Waitze, Nicholas Johansson, Aaron Lemay, Nicholas Wallace, Jordan De Sotle, Sean Walter, Coach Mike Pych

Middle -Paul Fowler, Nick Welch, Ryan Pych, Jimmy Petuch, Lauren Fenwick, Ryan Browne, Joe Latronica, Frankie Annunziata

Top – Coach Jeff Waitze, Coach Erik Johansson, Coach Jim De Sotle