

Junior C Schmaltz Cup conference champions start playoffs this week

Written By **Brian Lockhart**

Junior C Hockey in Ontario is moving one step closer to the Provincial Schmaltz Cup Championship as Conference champions start the next round of playoffs this week.

The Provincial Junior Hockey League semi-finals are underway with four teams remaining alive in Ontario.

The Hanover Barons representing the North Conference will face off against the Clarington Eagles from the East Conference.

Hanover eliminated the Alliston Hornets in the North Conference championship series that went five games and ended on Friday, April 19, on Alliston home ice.

Clarington knocked out the Napanee Raiders for the East Conference title in a series that went six games.

The other semi-final series will feature the New Hamburg Firebirds up against the Lakeshore Canadiens.

New Hamburg eliminated the Grimsby Peach Kings in a series that went five games to win the South Conference title.

Lakeshore defeated the Thamesford Trojans in a series that went four games.

The Conference champions will go on to the final Schmaltz Cup championship final series.

The Schmaltz Cup final is returning to a best-of-seven format this year after playing a tournament-style final over the past two years.

The Cup went to the tournament style because of the pandemic, but that was viewed as a temporary format.

Locally, all Junior C teams are done for the season.

The Alliston Hornets were the North Carruthers Division champions this season. They met the Hanover Barons in the Conference title series.

Hanover proved to be a well-disciplined and skilled team who wrapped up the series with a 4-1 win in game five to win the series 4-1.

?For everybody it's a good learning experience how good the other teams are, how committed you have to be to the small details of all the games, and you can't take a couple of games off an expect to win a series of this level,? said Hornets GM, after the series ended.

?I have to give them (Hanover) a lot of credit. They are really well coached and committed to what they are doing, and they're going to give everybody else a real problem as they move forward.?

The Conference championship series has to wrap up within two weeks, as per league rules.