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Local hockey player competes in Women?s U18 Esso Cup

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Local hockey player Catelyn Clark showed her skill and ability to play the sport at a very competitive level when she travelled to Vernon B.C. with the North York Storm to play in the 2024 Women's U18 Esso Cup in Vernon B.C. in April.

The tournament took place over seven days, from Sunday, April 21 to Saturday, April 27.

Catelyn, who is 14 years old, was asked to play with the U18 North York team based on her skill as a defensive player. She started playing hockey as a Novice with the Orangeville Tigers and moved on to playing at the rep level.

From there, she went to Barrie, then to North York as her minor hockey career progressed.

The Storm team recruited players from different areas to put together a strong team.

?My coach in Novice put me on defence and I've played that position ever since,? Catelyn said of her start playing in the back. ?I like controlling the play in front of the net.?

Catelyn's skill on the ice was noticed by her coach and she was asked to ?play up' and fill in a position on the older age team.

?My coach this year asked me to play up because they needed a few players to fill some roster spots,? Catelyn explained. ?I was very excited.?

The older girls are generally faster and stronger on the ice than younger players, but Catelyn managed to hold her own with the older players.

Going to the Esso Cup was a big deal for the team as they were up against top girls' U18 teams from across the country.

?The games were longer than we normally play,? Catelyn explained. ?The periods were longer. We usually play 15-15-15 (periods), but in the tournament we played 20-20-20 with floods in between periods. We played one game each day.?

The Storm managed to make it to the final.

?It was the fastest game,? said Catelyn's mom, Kareen. ?They were playing against girls that have Division One scholarships. They played against one girl that played on the U18 national team.?

They lost the final game 2-1 to the Regina Rebels.

?I think we did well keeping up with their speed and making the right plays at the right time,? Catelyn said.

Catelyn will continue playing with the U18 Storm.

?I like the challenge and competing at the highest level,? Catelyn said.