

GHB/Diamond Mineral Water Int'l Indoor Hockey Festival

Revamp, Hikers and GCC Tigers share honours on final night

—Canadian Guyanese, Jonathan Roberts, voted MVP

CANADA's Revamp men's hockey team along with Guyana's Hikers veterans and Georgetown Cricket Club's (GCC) ladies shared the honours when the Guyana Hockey Board/Diamond Mineral Water International Indoor Hockey Festival came to an end on Sunday night at the National Gymnasium, Mandela Avenue.



Caption: Hikers' veterans show off their Carib trophy for winning the veterans' title in the just concluded Diamond Mineral Water int's Indoor Hockey Festival.

The Canadian side, led by Roberts' efforts, defeated Trinidad and Tobago's Queen's Park Oval 4-0 in the men's final. Roberts contributed a double. Roberts who represents Canada internationally was subsequently named the Most Valuable Player of the tournament.

In the Carib sponsored men veterans' final, Hikers out-ran GCC men's 7-4 to retain the veterans' trophy and cash prize.

In the Digicel sponsored ladies final, GCC Tigers outlived Trinidad and Tobago's Malvern by a 4-2 margin to clinch their fourth title since the tournament started some nine years ago.

A roaring and vociferous crowd witnessed the close of the Festival as the Canadian men of Revamp Hockey Club completed their domination of the men's division by winning the men's final. The crowd, however, was even more enthusiastic to see local national champs, the GCC Tigers, defeat Malvern in a more competitive and highly entertaining Digicel ladies' final.



Caption: Canada's Revamp men's team show off their first place trophy for the just concluded GHB/Diamond Mineral Water Int'l Indoor Hockey festival. At extreme right is the tournament's MVP, Guyanese Jonathan Roberts

In an all Guyana Carib veterans' final, Guyana enjoyed two of the three grand prizes at stake. In the men's final, Roberts' fellow international, Micah Texeira, opened Revamp's account through a well-executed penalty corner in the first half. However, Queen's Park remained competitive with a tight defense marshalled by Guyanese Jerazeno Bell.

Roberts netted his first goal of the match five minutes into the second half and Canada went ahead by three when Jewan Bath found the back of the net with a deceptive penalty corner strike three minutes later. While Queen's Park was more competitive than the score suggests, men's goalkeeper of the tournament, Pradeep Koonar, thwarted several of their attacks to maintain a clean sheet.

Roberts then sealed the deal for Canada with his second goal in the closing minutes to pull off the 4-0 victory for Revamp.

The GCC Tigers, having qualified first for the Digicel women's final, had to await the outcome of the pool match between Toronto Toros of Canada and Malvern to know their opponents. Based on the outcomes of earlier matches most in attendance expected the Toros to qualify but Malvern managed to show their quality and execute a successful game plan to keep them in the running for the title.

As Malvern and GCC squared off in the final, striker Kerensa Fernandes set the pace with a neat deflection off a penalty corner pass to score the first goal for the Tigers and the match three minutes into play.

Ladies competition leading goal-scorer Krezia Layne, managed to produce a rare penalty corner goal for Malvern against tournament top goalkeeper and ladies MVP, Alysa Xavier in the sixth

minute. GCC's Trisha Woodroffe however answered one minute later with a similar penalty corner strike for GCC to maintain their one goal lead at the half.

Five minutes into the second half, Captain Sonia Jardine produced a moment of brilliance in eliminating the defence down the right flank before drawing the goalkeeper and sliding her pass to Fernandes who scored her second of the match. At 3-1 down and time against them, Malvern opted to withdraw their goalkeeper from the court in preference of an extra field player.

The tactic changed the complexion of the game as the Tigers defence struggled for a bit with the additional pressure. The risk however left Malvern vulnerable in defence and with outstanding goalkeeping from Xavier, it was GCC who would score next as youngest player of the side, Aliyah Gordon, pounced on a loose ball after a goal-mouth scramble to score her first goal of the match four minutes from full time.

Layne managed to pull one goal back for Malvern in the dying minutes but it was too little too late as the Tigers held out for the 4-2 victory and fourth title of the Festival.

The Carib veterans' final saw the younger Hickerys out-run an aging GCC, with the game all but decided at 4-1 by half time. The addition of Jerazeno Bell to the defending champions' (Hickerys) side put the game beyond GCC's reach as Bell himself scored two of his team's first half goals while Amanda Garnett and James Mentore notched the other two.

GCC's Alan Fernandes was on target with the first goal of the game in just the fourth minute but it was all Hickerys for the rest of the half. The second half belonged to former national captain and Hickerys' midfielder, Devin Munroe, whose athletic ability made him a menace for the GCC defence.

Munroe was first to score in the second half of play before GCC finally came alive through a Damon Woodroffe penalty corner and a Philip Fernandes field goal. Munroe then scored two more to complete his hat-trick before GCC's Alan Fernandes scored his second of the match in the very final minute.

Canada's Jonathan Roberts and Pardeep Koonar, both of Revamp HC, were voted MVP and best goalkeeper of the men's competition while Queen's Park's Nicholas Wren was highest goal-scorer. GCC's Alysa Xavier was the recipient of both the MVP and best goalkeeper awards for the women while Malvern's Krezia Layne was highest goal-scorer.

In the veterans' competition, Jerazeno Bell, making his veteran debut was voted MVP with Azad DeAbreu also of the Hickerys being selected as Best goalkeeper.

GCC's Philip Fernandes was the highest goal-scorer.

(By Michael DaSilva)