

# Under 11 Thunder displays brilliant defensive skills

Eight goals in three soccer matches would, in most circumstances, be more than enough.

But as the Ancaster Thunder under-11 girls team found in early August, you need to spread those goals out a little bit for success to come your way.

As it turned out, the Thunder used up seven of those eight goals in one game, producing a solid 1-1-1 record on the first day of the giant Mississauga all-star tournament over the August 6-7 weekend but not quite enough to earn their way into the second day of competition.

The coaching staff, lead by head coach Paul Buchanan, still found it rather difficult to find too many faults with the Thunder, however, as the team surrendered just a total of two goals during another weekend of brilliant defensive play and excellent goaltending.

“As has been the case much of the season, we just couldn’t convert enough of our scoring chances when we needed to,” said coach Buchanan.

Facing arguably its most difficult competition of the season in the elite tourney, Ancaster took on teams from Milton, Erin Mills and Mississauga in the event, the province’s largest summer tournament with 173 teams in 18 divisions.

The Thunder wasn’t as shorthanded as had been the case for a tournament in New York state the month before, but was still missing a vacationing Kara Zuccato while Devon Morrison was out with an injury.

In the first game against the Milton Magic, the Thunder produced possibly their best game of the season against a very strong club that, in the end, went on to win the under-11 championship. A 0-0 tie reflected the quality of the Ancaster effort, with the defensive shield led by Jenna Pryde, Alex McCord, Lauren Bott, Heather Bradley, Kayla Carroll and Victoria Mazzorolo proving to be impregnable against the Milton attack.

The spirits of the team rose even higher in the next game against an under-10 club from Mississauga when the offence came to life in a 7-0 victory. Rachael Holmes and Lauren Zaitz each scored twice in the win, with Delaney Cox, Lindsay Nedelko and Julia Shen each contributing a single. Shen and Monica Lutz combined for the shutout, giving the pair a extraordinary stretch of more than 200 minutes of tournament play without surrendering a goal.

That set the stage for the crucial third match of the day, this time against Erin Mills, with both clubs needing a victory to move on to the semi-finals on Sunday.

The Thunder, however, came out flat, and fell behind early after giving up a long breakaway goal. In the second half, however, Ancaster came to life with offensive pressure generated up front by Hayley Buchanan, Delaney Cox, Maggie MacDonald, Lindsay Nedelko and Victoria Pappas, and tied the game on a long shot by Julia Shen. With excellent support work by Rachael Holmes, Harley Morrison, Alex McCord, Ally Scione and Lauren Zaitz in the midfield, the Thunder poured on the pressure but couldn’t find the net and were stunned in the final seconds when Erin Mills produced a goal to advance to the next round.

The Thunder’s final competition of the season is scheduled for the Sept. 10-11 weekend at the Lincoln County Fair all-star tournament.

