

Not all were Whalers fans

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There were plenty of happy people in the Compuware Arena stands Tuesday when the Barrie Colts held off the Plymouth Whalers to win the J. Ross Robertson Cup and the Ontario Hockey League championship that goes with it.

All of them were from Barrie — or at least most of them were.

There were a bunch of Plymouth natives cheering for those enemies from abroad, and with good reason: a native son was playing for the Colts.

And that made this homecoming a particularly sweet one for Erik Reitz, a 17-year-old defenseman in his first year with Barrie.

"This," the former Plymouth Salem student (graduating class of 2001) said happily, "is the biggest game of my life, by far."

It should have been. The best-of-seven series figured to be a struggle all the way, and it was, but when Plymouth took a 3-2 advantage in game 7, Barrie's back was up against the proverbial wall.

Enter the defense.

After giving up six goals in the first five games, the Colts allowed just two in the last two.

"This is all about character, emotion, intensity," said Reitz. He tried to downplay his coming home for the 2000 series, but he was really really into it.

"But it does make you play a little harder."

"Yeah," he added, after a bit more reflection. "To win it at home was great. I would have liked to win it in Detroit because of all the fans, but this was special."

With one of the largest crowds in Whaler history in attendance — a standing-room only assemblage of 4,423 — it was nice to know a few of them were family.

And it was also nice to know the defense was the difference down the stretch.

"They did a good job clearing us out in front of the net," said Whaler coach Pete DeBoer. "They took away all the rebounds, and they have a word-class goalie."

DeBoer said he knew Finley, who appreciated all the work his teammates did in front of him.

Including Reitz. His 6-foot-1, 195-pound bulk helped keep the goal area void of Whalers. Coming into the game, he totaled five assists in 22 playoff games and was tied for the team lead in plus/minus with a plus-10 rating.

Barrie's first-round pick (10th overall) in the 1999 OHL priority selection draft, Reitz was never really an offensive force as a defenseman, tallying two goals and 10 assists in 63 games. He also had a plus-20 rating.

Good numbers for a first-year player in the OHL. But Reitz now has something even more special: a league championship and a chance to play for the Memorial Cup, a quest that begins Saturday.

Loss from C1

gasp as just over a minute later Verbeek stole a clearing pass at the blue-line and rocketed a shot past defenseless Plymouth goalie Rob Zepp to make it 4-2.

"Brian Finley was outstanding tonight," Whaler coach Pete DeBoer said. "He showed tonight why he was the fifth overall selection in the NHL draft (by Nashville) last year. There's a kid you're going to see playing in the NHL for 15 years. He's that good."

DeBoer's praise shifted quickly from Finley to his own players.

"Everything we had you saw tonight," DeBoer said. "The kids left everything out on the ice, but it just wasn't quite enough."

"I think the biggest difference between us and Barrie was depth. They have 19- and 20-year-old kids on their fourth line while we have 17-year-old rookies. That's what it came down to."

"They have so many young guys," said Finley, echoing DeBoer's sentiments. "We have a lot of experience and I think that was the difference."

Plymouth played all but the first shift of the game without dependable defenseman Libor Ustrnul, who suffered a game-ending injury just seconds after the opening face-off.

Barrie took advantage of their second power-play opportunity of



OHL champions: Barrie's Ed Hill raises the trophy.

the game at the 6:36 mark of the first period when winger Sheldon Keefe — the OHL's leading scorer during the regular season — broke free and back-handed a shot past a sprawling Zepp to put the Colts up 1-0. Keefe's goal was assisted by Michael Christian and Nick Robinson.

Plymouth tied the game at 1-1 four minutes later when — just six seconds into its first power-play of the night — Damian Surma fired a slapshot from just inside the blue-line that eluded Finley. The Colts' net-minder was screened from the shot by a pair of Whalers in front of the net. Surma's goal was assisted by Justin Williams and Stephen Weiss.

Barrie regained the lead four minutes into the second period when Mike Henderson slid the puck under Zepp's pads from short range to make it 2-1.

Six minutes later, Zepp redeemed himself by stoning a shot from Verbeek, who had skated behind the Whalers' defense.

Verbeek tallied the first of his two goals seven minutes into the third period when he took a pass from Henderson on a two-on-one break and beat Zepp with a high screamer to make it 3-1.

The Whalers were re-energized at the 10:32 mark of the third period when winger George Nistas stuffed a shot through Finley's five hole. Nistas' unassisted goal came on the Whalers' first shot of the third period.

It was the last mistake Finley would make.

"We had an outstanding year," DeBoer reflected. "This is a great group of hard-working, over-achieving kids who surprised a lot of people this year."

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Defense kept Colts in contention

There were some elements the Plymouth Whalers could not neutralize when they visited Barrie Sunday for Game Six in their best-of-seven series for the Ontario Hockey League championship.

Sheldon Keefe and Denis Shvidki, the Colts' top two scorers during the regular season, were kept scoreless, giving them a total of just three goals (one an empty-netter) in six games.

However, the Whalers couldn't combat the raucous sellout crowd of 4,260. Nor could they do anything to disrupt the play of Barrie goalie Brian Finley, who stopped all 26 Whaler shots in posting a 3-0 shutout win that forced a Game Seven Tuesday at Plymouth's Compuware Arena.

The game was fairly even through the first two periods,

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NOTICE OF PUBLIC SALE OF PERSONAL PROPERTY

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**CITY OF FARMINGTON HILLS
PUBLIC NOTICE
CITY COUNCIL MEETING SCHEDULE**

THIS IS PUBLIC NOTICE of the 2000 Summer Meeting Schedule of the Farmington Hills City Council. Council will meet in regular session on the following dates:

June 5, 2000	June 19, 2000
July 10, 2000	July 17, 2000
August 14, 2000	August 28, 2000
September 18, 2000	September 25, 2000

The Council will meet in regular session in October on the following dates:
October 16, 2000 October 23, 2000

(The regular Council meeting of October 9, 2000 has been cancelled in honor of the Yom Kippur Holiday.)

All meetings begin at 7:30 p.m. unless otherwise noted.

KATHRYN A. DORNAN, City Clerk
City of Farmington Hills

Publish: May 18, 2000

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