

Quinte welcomes Hockeyville

By Samantha Pyear

Stirling-Rawdon residents packed the seats at the Yardmen Arena on Saturday night as the Hockeyville NHL victory game kicked off between the Washington Capitals and the Winnipeg Jets.

The season opener, which was cancelled last year because of the 113-day lockout, came as a relief to fans who had waited so long to see the game they had worked so hard to win.

It was previously speculated that the pre-season game would be between

the Toronto Maple Leafs and the Columbus Blue Jackets, but fans were not disappointed. As people packed into the arena, it became clear the same excitement from last year's celebration was in the air.

Cindy Brandt, Hockeyville chair, recalled the moment on March 3 last year when, after receiving almost four million votes, Stirling-Rawdon won the title of Hockeyville 2012.

"When they announced it at the arena, it was packed, and people went crazy," said Brandt.

During the game, Brandt was presented with the coveted Hockeyville trophy.

When the game started, people in the stands went wild. Stirling residents had finally achieved their dream of hosting an NHL game at a local arena.

Fans cheered the Winnipeg Jets led the game with two goals scored by left wing Evander Kane. The Capitals soon struck back despite a goal scored by Winnipeg right wing Scott Kosmachuck, tying up the game 3-3.

Just over five minutes into the game, the Washington Capitals experienced

a nail-biter when Alex Ovechkin went down after being hit in the face with a hockey stick from the Jets defenceman Ben Chiarot.

Ovechkin made a quick recovery and headed to the dressing room, but returned quickly. Capitals coach Adam Oates said Ovechkin received a few stitches to the lip.

During intermission, the game featured an appearance by well-known faces Don Cherry and Ron MacLean. Cherry addressed the crowd congratulating them on their victory, and applauded their lo-

cal arena.

The Yardmen Arena had not seen a game of this calibre since 1993, when the Ottawa Senators played the Florida Panthers during an exhibition contest.

This year's game went into overtime after three intense periods. Following that, there was a sudden death shoot-out.

The game came to an end when the Washington Capitals' Mike Green scored on Edward Pasquale to end the game 4-3.

Fans jumped out of their seats as Green scored a wrist-shot for the perfect game-winning goal.

Stirling...

Continued from Page 1

To receive a chance to host Kraft Hockeyville, towns must first be nominated in order to campaign for the chance to win.

"There's a nomination phase, communities across the country get to enter their nomination. It's built around your passion and pride for the game of hockey," Hewitt said. "The passion in Stirling was unreal. Right out of the gates, they demonstrated that they wanted it, through community events."

The spirit and motivation in the town is part of a legacy of the late arena manager, Barry Wilson. Wilson, who died in the spring of 2011, was known for his commitment to hockey and the improvement of the arena. His death in spring 2011 stopped his own involvement, the village continued his work.

"Barry Wilson spent a lot of time in the rink. He put his heart and soul into it. So [the town] wanted to recognize the work he did and unfortunately he passed away... the new lobby has been built and the dressing rooms have been expanded and as a result of \$100,000 we've given and that's a tribute to Barry, a legacy that he left in the community," Hewitt said.

For Hewitt, the best part about Kraft Hockeyville is not about who wins, the festivities, or the NHL-level hockey. Hewitt said the greatest reward is the communities coming together during the campaigning stages.

"In a number of cases we've had communities that have amalgamated, seven or eight towns that have come together," Hewitt said. "Whether they win or lose... It united the community."



Photo by Samantha Pyear

Bringing famous faces to Belleville, Don Cherry and Ron MacLean broadcast from the Yardmen Arena. Cherry and MacLean addressed the crowd, congratulating them on their victory, and applauded their local arena.



Photo by James Wood

Washington Capitals star player Alex Ovechkin makes his way down the crowd in front of the Yardmen Arena prior to the pre-season NHL action.



Photo by Zachary Shuock

Washington Capitals right winger Tom Wilson signs some merchandise for a few young fans. The Washington Capitals and Winnipeg Jets visited the area as a part of the Kraft Hockeyville competition.



Photo by James Wood

Eight-year-olds Lance Zufelt and Brady Allen cheer on the Washington Capitals during the pre-season NHL match between the Winnipeg Jets and the Capitals, held as the conclusion to Hockeyville 2013.



Photo by James Wood

Washington Capital Casey Wellman and Winnipeg Jet Austen Brassard battle it out in front of the net during the pre-season NHL match held at the Yardmen Arena.



Photo by Christopher King

Sydney Johnston, seven, shown with her father Cory Johnston, visited the Stanley Cup at the Stirling and District Recreation Centre. The Stanley Cup was on display during Kraft Hockeyville, which hosted an exhibition game between the Winnipeg Jets and Washington Capitals in Belleville.