

**(From the Langley Times)**

## **West Coast teams strike gold in Florida**

*Aug 10 2007*

Dallas Gaytmenn displayed some excellent hand-eye co-ordination, batting a mid-air pass from teammate J.J. Virtanen 42 seconds into the second period to snap a scoreless tie.

And from that point on, the West Coast 96 Warriors would tack on three more goals before surrendering a late tally to defeat the California Wolves 4-1.

The victory gave the Warriors the gold medal in the mite-platinum division of the North American roller hockey championships (NARCh) last month in Florida.

The Wolves got a goal past Warriors goaltender Ayden MacDonald, to break his shutout bid with three minutes remaining. The tournament was marked by outstanding performances by the players, some of whom were not playing their normal positions.

Jake Virtanen, normally a power forward, moved to the back-end, where he beautifully quarter-backed his teammates, setting up the Warriors attack.

Dennis Cholowski served double duty, also helping the 98 Warriors win gold in their division at NARCh. Despite giving up two years to his competition, Cholowski excelled in a defensive role.

Matt Hall and Nick Guiney did a great job of back-checking and pressuring the Wolves to ensure very few scoring opportunities.

And the play of defenceman Kevan Lavallee — known for his near-miss as North America's fastest skater in 2005 by four one-hundredths of a second — played a great all-around tournament, right from the first round robin game to the championship final.

The Warriors coaches called Lavallee the team's most consistent player. In the final, his offensive style of defence made it difficult for the Wolves to play against as they did not know whether Lavallee was going to pass the puck or use his speed to burst past would-be defenders.

In addition to their tournament success, four Warriors were chosen to represent Team West in the all-star game. MacDonald, Ryan Furby, Ryan Donaldson and Kurt Klimek played in the game, which was won 9-3 by Team East.

Several Warriors also suited up in the skills competition. MacDonald nearly successfully defended his title as top goalie that he won in 2005, while Donaldson participated in the fastest skater event. And another pair of Warriors, Gaytmenn and Quinncy Leroux competed for the title of top shooter in the event.