

# Mount Clemens capture MAHA Squirt AA state championship

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## Wolves defeat Trenton Thunder, 5-1, in final

In front of a packed house at Suburban Ice-Macomb, the Mount Clemens Wolves won the MAHA Squirt AA title over the Trenton Thunder on March 18<sup>th</sup>.

The Wolves didn't waste any time in the final getting down to business, peppering the Trenton net with multiple shots in the game's first five minutes. Hunter Jenuwine opened the scoring on a rebound from Corey Kerner's shot to give Mt. Clemens a 1-0 lead. Michael Houle was also given the assist on the goal.

“Usually, we come out pretty slow and it takes us two to three periods to get going, but this game we came out and scored in the first period,” said Wolves’ head coach Steve Bayagich.

Then tournament MVP Evan Gizinski made a slick move past a Trenton defender and put a wrist shot into the top corner of the net to make it 2-0. Steven McPhee was given the assist on the goal.

“Today was Evan’s birthday so I thought he played fantastic. He did everything perfect from backchecking to scoring and that’s why he won MVP,” Bayagich said.

Trenton killed off a 5-on-3 powerplay to start the middle period, but couldn’t get anything going offensively.

After Patrick Ricchi scored the Wolves’ third goal with 7:07 left in the second, Trenton’s head coach Bob Duna called a timeout and switched goaltenders to try and swing the momentum into the Thunder’s direction.

But the Thunder went back on the penalty kill again and was unable to prevent Gizinski from scoring his second goal of the game. A little over four minutes later, the Wolves scored another goal and this time the source of offense came from McPhee. Gizinski notched the assist, as did Camden Bayagich, who had his second assist of the game.

During the second intermission with Mt. Clemens up by five goals, the Wolves’ coaches reminded their players about their 5-4 loss to the Grand Rapids Jr. Griffins earlier in this tournament even though the Wolves had been up 3-0.

Trenton’s only goal of the game came less than a minute and a half into the final period on a wrist shot by Andrew Sawyer on the power play.

The Wolves then made sure to buckle down and play some sound defense.

The rest of the game was spent with both squads on special teams as four penalties were called in the last eight minutes of the game. Mt. Clemens’ starting goaltender Stephen Erwin made numerous saves in the remaining minute and a half with Trenton on the power play.

After the buzzer ended the game, the Wolves tossed off their gloves and jumped into a large pile at their end of the ice with cheers of celebration and joy.

“It was pretty cool because I had never won states before and it was just very exciting,” Gazinski said.

Last year, the Wolves lost in the state finals so it was very rewarding for the players, coaches, and fans to be able to clinch the state championship this season.

“I thought they worked so hard. They deserved to be number one. To come here twice in the finals is very rare,” Bayagich said.

Duna was extremely proud of the Thunder’s performance especially when no one predicted his team to make it to the championship.

“It’s unbelievable how much these kids have accomplished this year,” he said.

## **Squirt AA Notebook**

Trenton had victories over Macomb, Marquette, Lakeland, and Midland, 4-2, in the semifinal on goals from Sawyer, Devin Dickow, and two from Justin Dunn. Midland got goals from Lucas Goeders and Travis McNally in the loss... The Wolves had to go into overtime to beat the Lakeland Hawks, 2-1, on a goal from Michael Houle in the extra period. Gizinski also scored for Mt. Clemens and Joey Ogden scored for Lakeland... Ryan Mantha scored twice in Lakeland's 5-0 win over Marquette... Grand Rapids got goals from Brendan VanSweden, Brian Cain, and Cam Fisher in a 3-2 win over the Soo. Noah Talentino and Will Gauthier scored for the Lakers in the loss... Chase Sereno had a hat trick in Lakeland's 11-1 win over Macomb. Frank Scheff scored for the Mavericks... Grand Rapids scored five straight goals – two from Cam Fisher and two from Mitchell Hawes and one from Sherman Mowery – to beat Mt. Clemens, 5-4... McNally had four goals and Drake Cergnul had a hat trick in Midland's 11-5 win over the Soo. Chase Gemelin had two goals for the Lakers... Andrew Krambeck had two goals and Matt Moroso earned the shutout in Macomb's 5-0 win over Marquette.