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NINE SOUTHLAND KIDS REPRESENT ANAHEIM DUCKS AT “ACE'S GOT SKILLS” NATIONAL CHAMPIONSHIPS IN NEW YORK CITY

T.J. Sneath Honored with Inaugural Peter Aquilone Memorial Award

ANAHEIM, Calif. – The Anaheim Ducks announced today that nine southland kids represented the National Hockey League (NHL) club at the first annual “Ace’s Got Skills” National Championships at The Sky Rink at Chelsea Piers in New York City, June 24-25. Four of the nine players representing the Ducks brought home a total of six titles including two *Sports Illustrated for Kids* Top Skills Awards. **Max Becker** of Orange (hardest shot, shootout, top skills), **Jeremiah Goddard** of Long Beach (hardest shot), **Patrick Leahy** of Coto de Caza (accuracy) and **TJ Sneath** of Chino (accuracy, shootout and top skills) all brought home championships.

“The Anaheim Ducks are honored to be associated with this great cause,” said Anaheim Ducks Director of Fan Development Matt Savant. “We are proud of our local participants and excited to see TJ Sneath take home multiple honors including the Peter Aquilone Award. The local participants of the Ace’s Got Skills events are an example of the great future for Southern California hockey.”

Boys and girls ages 9-12 participated in the competition that tested skill level in five different categories: fastest skater, hardest shot, most accurate shooter, shoot out and best goalie. Launched in September 2004, *Ace’s Got Skills* is modeled after the NHL’s All-Star Super Skills Competition. The nine Southland participants were all winners from each of the three local competitions. A total of 61 kids representing nine U.S. states competed at the National Championships.

The eleven participants:

Player	Level	Skills Competed In	D.O.B	Hometown
Max Becker	Squirt	Accuracy, Hardest Shot, Shootout, Top Skills	7/7/95	Orange
Michael Boutoussov	Pee Wee	Fastest Skater	5/23/94	Dana Point
Paul Boutoussov	Pee Wee	Fastest Skater, Hardest Shot	6/28/96	Dana Point
Andrew Freeman	Pee Wee	Goalie	10/18/94	Irvine
Jeremiah Goddard	Squirt	Hardest Shot , *Shootout	7/4/95	Long Beach
Kevin Leahy	Squirt	Fastest Skater, Accuracy	9/17/97	Coto de Caza
Patrick Leahy	Pee Wee	Accuracy , *Shootout	10/11/95	Coto de Caza
Zach Peterson	Pee Wee	*Hardest Shot	4/22/93	Cypress
TJ Sneath	Pee Wee	Accuracy, Shootout, Top Skills	8/13/94	Chino
<i>Dylan Shives</i>	<i>Squirt</i>	<i>Fastest Skater</i>	3/4/95	<i>Santa Ana</i>
<i>Austin Shives</i>	<i>Squirt</i>	<i>Goalie</i>	3/4/95	<i>Santa Ana</i>

Bold=Won event

*Asterisk=Runner-up

Italics=qualified but did not compete due to illness

In addition, 12-year-old Sneath was awarded the inaugural Peter Aquilone Memorial Award for “perseverance in life through hockey” as a result of his performance in the competition despite having heart surgery in October of 2005. Sneath began playing hockey at age two and aside from a severe allergy to peanuts was considered to be very healthy. In June of last year, he was traveling to a hockey tournament in Las Vegas with his father when he grabbed his chest and winced in pain. Sneath had been having the pains since March of that year but never mentioned it to his parents. Cardiologists discovered that he had a birth defect known as Patent Ductus Arteriosus (PDA) that requires surgery to be corrected. Amazingly, most newborns with PDA do not leave the hospital without being diagnosed. After his surgery in October, Sneath returned to the ice one month later and competed in tournaments in Chicago, Toronto and Ottawa.

Registration fees benefit the Ace Bailey Children's Foundation, an organization dedicated to the well being of children undergoing major medical treatment in hospitals. The foundation seeks to improve hospital programs, environments and professional services that reduce the stress of hospitalization for newborns, children and their families.

The competition and foundation's namesake, Ace Bailey, played eleven seasons in the NHL on five different teams and won two Stanley Cup trophies with the Boston Bruins in 1970 and 1972. After his playing career, he joined the Edmonton Oilers scouting staff before serving as the Director of Pro Scouting for the Los Angeles Kings for seven years. He was killed on September 11, 2001 in the terrorist attacks as he was on board a flight to Los Angeles for the Kings' training camp.



For more information on the Anaheim Ducks or *Ace's Got Skills*, please visit either www.anaheimducks.com or <http://acesgotskills.com>.

