

Blades' veterans come through

Mark Jooris played a hunch, and it worked.

Early in overtime of Tuesday's Ontario Junior Hockey League playoff contest in Kingston, the Oakville Blades head coach moved Kyle Blaney onto a line with Kyle Lysaght and Stefan Thompson. A few seconds later, Blaney set up Lysaght for a goal that gave the Blades a 3-2 triumph and extended Oakville's season for at least one more game, tying the best-of-seven semifinal series with the Voyageurs at three games apiece.

The seventh and deciding game will be played tomorrow (Friday, not tonight as had been previously reported in the *Beaver*) at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex, beginning at 7:30 p.m.

"Blaney's been playing real well, so I played a hunch," Jooris said of the line adjustment that led to Lysaght's winner 2:01 into overtime. "He made a great play... made a nice pass to Lysaght, and Lysaght did what he does. He finished."

Lysaght, a 20-year-old Georgia native in his second year with the Blades, was the second Oakville veteran to come up with a season-saving goal. Fellow 20-year-old Mark McGowan forced overtime by scoring the game-tying marker with 3:29 to go in regulation time.

Thompson, another veteran had Oakville's other goal, opening the scoring in the first period.

"Situations like this, you need your best to be your best. They need to step up in character situations," said Jooris, who was pleased with the poise his club showed in the third period and overtime.

Now the Blades hope to ride that momentum into Game 7 tomorrow as they try to earn their fourth straight trip to the league finals.

Jooris is hoping the Blades can benefit from the same type of crowd support the Voyageurs have received throughout the series. More than 1,000 people jammed the Invista Centre in Kingston Tuesday night.

"We need a ton of Oakville fans," Jooris said. "That's what we need, a full house. It really comes into play when the kids can build off that hometown crowd."

— Jon Kuiperij



COMEBACK KIDS:

The Oakville minor peewee AE Rangers were a happy bunch after winning the Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship Saturday at Oakville Arena, completing a dramatic series comeback with a 5-3 win over the New Tecumseth Tornados.

Minor peewees complete the comeback

By Jon Kuiperij
BEAVER SPORTS EDITOR

Losing the first two games of their Ontario Minor Hockey Association final didn't discourage the Oakville minor peewee AE Rangers.

If anything, it made them better.

The Rangers completed an impressive series rally Saturday at Oakville Arena, defeating the New Tecumseth Tornados 5-3 to win the OMHA first-to-six-points series in six games. Oakville finished the series with three wins and a tie in its last four contests, including a 9-1 drubbing of the Tornados in Game 5 in New Tecumseth.

"No one felt after the first two losses that it was a dramatic situation and that we'd been outplayed," said Rangers head coach Phil Guay. "We lost the first game in overtime and the second game only by a goal, so we felt we were in the games. The boys didn't give up and we changed a little bit how we were playing those guys."

Still, the Rangers were just a goal away from being swept. The third game of the series went into overtime, where defence-man Ryan Rutherham pinched in from the point to give Oakville its first win of the series.

The following game, the Rangers built leads of 3-1 and 4-2 before the Tornados came back, tying the contest with 18 seconds remaining in regulation time. The teams settled for a 4-4 tie, leaving New Tecumseth just one point away from the OMHA championship.

"I was nervous about that one, how they'd react," Guay admitted.

Those nerves were quickly calmed in Game 5 as Oakville blew the Tornados away.

"I still don't understand what happened," Guay said of the 9-1 win. "Things were just clicking, our passes were clicking, we were getting the bounces early. Clearly at the end, (the Tornados) were completely overwhelmed. It set the tone for the last game."

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