

St. Joseph girls end volleyball drought

Jaguars win first Halton title in 20 years

St. Joseph girls' volleyball coach Giancarlo Derosa attributes the success of his squad to commitment.

Having seven rep players didn't hurt, either.

The Jaguars won their first Halton Catholic elementary system championship in 20 years last week, defeating the Oakville rival St. Matthew Wildcats in the final.

"We knew we had a lot of talent on the team," said Derosa, noting that seven of 12 players on the Jaguars roster also play rep. "(St. Matthew) had rep players as well. It was a friendly competition between both of our schools, and it was a bit of a surprise to beat them because they always had our number when it came to tournaments."

The Wildcats handed St. Joseph one of its two losses this year, defeating the Jaguars 25-14, 23-25, 15-12 in the Oakville finals the previous week. Both teams advanced to the Halton finals, however, along

St. Matthew lost one league game, claimed Oakville championship

The St. Matthew girls' volleyball team didn't lose many games this year either, finishing the Halton regular season with an undefeated mark.

Prior to defeating St. Joseph in the Oakville final and falling to the Jaguars in the Halton title game, the Wildcats were runners-up to St. Joseph at the 28-team Catholic Cup tournament.

"The dedication, loyalty and passion each of the girls demonstrated throughout the entire season makes them all champions," Wildcats coach Nicole Biturajac said in an email.

Contributing to the Wildcats'

with St. Luke, St. Andrew and the top four teams from Burlington and north Halton.

Derosa felt that dedication from players, coaches, parents and staff made the difference for St. Joseph this year.

"We had 100 per cent commitment from the coaching staff to the actual players to the teachers on staff to the principal."

*St. Joseph Jaguars coach
Giancarlo Derosa*

"Every practice, even the girls who didn't see a lot of playing time showed up and supported our A line," he said. "We had 100 per cent commitment from the coaching staff to the actual players to the teachers on staff to the principal."

Parents Michele Hatzioannou and Herb Arnds also played a key role in the Jaguars' success, serving as volunteer coaches for the past several years.

Members of St. Joseph's team are Brooke Robertson, Emma Costin, Ania Ermarkaryan, Alisa Ermarkaryan, Sofia Sartor, Isabel Heykoop, Claire Hatzioannou, Madeleine Watson, Natalie Lakostik, Jessica Arnds, Nicole Hann and Nicole Pickford.

success this season were Emma Guerin, Jessica Rosales, Marta Tkachuk, Juhl Henriksen, Melanie Richard, Mariah Johnson, Victoria Corett, Holly Guerin, Lexia Noden, Andrea Wallin, Kristen O'Neill and Andrea Wallin.

Karen Moskal, Lindsay Smith and Shelly Donaher also coached the Wildcats.

— See page 26 for a photo of the Oakville champion St. Matthew Wildcats. A team photo of the Halton champ St. Joseph Jaguars appeared in a previous edition of the Beaver.

Back in season



HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY UNDERWAY:

Abbey Park Eagles player Carson Barnes (left) and White Oaks Wildcats opponent Ben Everett chase down the puck Friday at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex. Abbey Park downed the Wildcats 4-1 in the league season opener for both clubs. The Halton high school boys' and girls' hockey campaigns began last week, while girls' volleyball and boys' basketball got underway this week.

MICHAEL IVANIN /
OAKVILLE BEAVER

Fanelli dedicates first OHL goal to mom

Ben Fanelli has a gift for his biggest fan. "I'm definitely going to give the puck to my mom," the Kitchener Rangers defenceman said after scoring his first Ontario Hockey League goal in Kitchener's 4-1 win over the Sarnia Sting last weekend in Kitchener.

"Kind of as a gift, but also a told-you-I-could-do-it type thing."

Fanelli's parents Sue and Frank were in the stands to see their 18-year-old son creep in from the point and blast a shot past Sarnia goalie Brandon Hope midway through the second period.

The Oakville native fired his arms straight up to the rafters in celebration before his teammates mobbed him on the ice.

"I can't keep the smile off my face," said Fanelli, who was scoreless in 30 career games before Sunday's contest. "I never really pictured what it would be like. I thought hopefully I'd get a goal sometime, but I never knew how it was going to happen."

"Hearing the arena and the boys on the bench after I scored was surreal."

The goal was more than two years in the making.

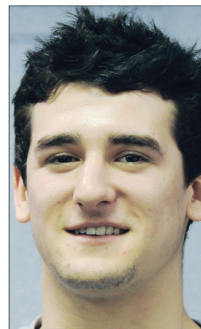
Fanelli was knocked out of action seven games into his rookie season when Erie Otters forward Michael Liambas sent him crashing into the boards in 2009.

The hit sent Fanelli's helmet flying and he cracked his head on a glass support before falling to the ice unconscious in a pool of blood. The blueliner was rushed to a hospital in Hamilton with severe head injuries.

Doctors doubted he'd ever return to the game. But Fanelli never gave up and spent the next two years working toward his comeback. He was cleared to play this season amid mixed feelings from his mom, who supported his decision but doesn't enjoy the violence in hockey.

"She got to see (the goal), and that's great for her," said Fanelli.

— Josh Brown, Metroland West Media Group



Ben Fanelli