

Hornets blank final four opponents at OWHAs

continued from p.18

the series with a 3-3 tie, Oakville scored back-to-back victories, 4-1 and 3-2, to advance to the league championship weekend where it claimed a bronze medal.

At last weekend's Ontario Women's Hockey Association championship, Oakville again met London, this time in Sunday's semifinals with a trip to the gold-medal game on the line.

Oakville blanked the Devilettes 2-0 and four hours later shut out Belleville 4-0 to claim the provincial championship.

"All their work paid off," Hardy said. "All that time in the summer running stairs, all the Scottish miles, all the shots they took, it made a difference."

The provincials may not have started the way Oakville hoped. Despite outshooting Brampton 29-13, the Hornets twice fell behind but managed a 2-2 tie with Brampton thanks to a shorthanded goal by Erin Gibbons. After building a 3-0 lead against Scarborough, Oakville held off a comeback to pull out a 3-2 victory.

That left Oakville needing a victory against the Ottawa District champion Nepean Wildcats to advance to the playoff round. Two quick goals by Mackenzie Calvert gave Oakville the lead and Laura Cote's second-period goal provided the insurance in a 3-1 Hornets win.

"(Nepean was) a big, strong, fast team," Hardy said. "The girls played as a team, and after that game, you could tell they wanted it."

The team's motto for the season was 'Make it Count', and the players certainly did. Over the next 24 hours,

Oakville won four games by a combined score of 13-0. The Hornets scored three first-period goals on their way to a 4-0 win over Kanata. Avery Vickers gave Oakville the lead five minutes into the quarter-final and Andrea Fausto was outstanding in net in a 3-0 victory over Saugeen-Maitland.

Facing London in the semifinals, Vickers again got the Hornets on the board, scoring in the opening minute of the second period. It remained that way until captain Megan Carter scored with two minutes to play to seal a 2-0 triumph over the Hornets' rivals, who had won medals at each of the previous three provincials.

There would be no letdown in the final. Laura Cote scored twice — giving her 60 for the season — in the opening period and Hannah Rettinger extended the Oakville lead with an end-to-end marker in the third. Isabelle Hardy and Carter combined for a highlight-reel goal in the final minute to seal the victory while Ashley Taciuk recorded her 17th shutout of the season.

"The girls really played as a team," Hardy said. "They passed the puck, controlled the neutral zone and they believed in themselves."

Other members of the Hornets' OWSA championship team are Megan Harley, Olivia Wallin, Chelsea Coderre, Emily Lou O'Neill, Chloe Saxton, Ainsley Svetek, Mikayla Hanson, Meghan Groulx, coaches Tracy Hanson, Christina Mancuso and Dwayne Rettinger, and trainers Chantal Wallin and Antonetta Cote.

— Herb Garbutt can be followed on Twitter @Herbgarbutt

White Oaks grad to play volleyball for Niagara

White Oaks high school grad Devon Lowes will play women's volleyball for the Niagara College Knights next year.

The middle blocker, who is over six feet tall, is an accomplished rep player with the Burlington Blaze. She will study police foundations at Niagara with an eye towards pursuing an un-

dergraduate degree in criminology.

"I am really excited to be heading to Niagara in the fall. I always feel welcomed while on campus," Lowes said. "I really like the school atmosphere, they have a great women's volleyball program, and I really like the coaching staff."



Chemistry, discipline keys to Union's success, Bennett says

continued from p.18

Bennett said team chemistry is a big reason Union — which reportedly has fewer living alumni than the University of Minnesota has active students — has been able to compete with much bigger men's hockey programs. So is attention to detail, something Bennett said was also key for the Blades in their trip to the Royal Bank Cup national championships in 2010.

"Discipline is not just showing up to practice every day, it's also being focused and not just going through the motions. It's away from the rink as well," Bennett said. "We take care of ourselves, make sure we get enough

sleep. That was the same with the Blades. We make sure we do everything right and we don't let the small stuff go. If (the small stuff) is an issue, it can become something big."

Bennett has one remaining year of eligibility at Union and said he's determined to get back into the regular starting lineup next season. After college, the Appleby College grad is considering pursuing a pro hockey career in Germany, a path his father Brian — also a former Blade — took in the 1970s.

— Jon Kuiperij can be followed on Twitter @Beaversports

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