

Blades need three straight wins to avoid playoff elimination

A hot goaltender has put the Oakville Blades on the ropes in the opening round of the Ontario Junior Hockey League playoffs.

Orangeville Flyers netminder Wyatt Pickrell made 51 saves — the third time in four games he stopped 40 shots or more — as the Flyers downed Oakville 5-1 Wednesday in Orangeville and took a 3-1 lead in the best-of-seven series.

The Flyers, seeded sixth in the OJHL South-West Conference, can eliminate the third-ranked Blades as early as today (Friday), when the teams meet at Sixteen Mile Sports Complex for Game 5 (a 7:30 p.m. start).

Oakville outshot the Flyers 52-29 Wednesday, but could only manage a second-period goal by Max Lindsay that cut Orangeville's lead to 3-1. The Flyers led 2-0 after the first period despite Oakville registering 21 of the 30 shots in the frame.

Devon Gillham (two), Daniel DeRose, James McLaughlin and Oakville native Connor Stack provided the goals for Orangeville.

If Oakville is victorious tonight, the series would shift back to Orangeville tomorrow (Saturday) for Game 6. A seventh game, if necessary, would be played Monday in Oakville.

The Blades/Flyers series is the only one of eight opening-round affairs in which the higher seed was trailing going into last night's (Thursday's) action.

Oakville gymnast earns five gold at international meet

Oakville Gymnastics Club members combined to win 14 gold medals, six silver, seven bronze and many ribbons at the Nadia Comaneci International Invitational Gymnastics Meet recently in Oklahoma City.

Sixteen-year-old Hanna Gula, who moved to Oakville from Red Lake, Ont., two years ago to train at the OGC,

Hanna Gula

led the way by winning gold in vault, bars, beam, floor and overall competition. Gula also received the Nadia Comaneci Spirit Award, named after the legendary Romanian gymnast who was the first female competitor to score a perfect 10 in an Olympic event, in recognition of Gula's choreography and presentation throughout the competition.

Other highlights for the OGC were its Level 6 team finishing third in its division and its 17-athlete contingent meeting and posing for pictures with Comaneci, who Oakville coaches Alexa Barac and Lorne Bobkin have known for years.

"In terms of results, the girls exceeded our expectations," Barac said. "The main goal of the trip was to build team spirit and bond. We wanted the girls to hit their routines the best they can. They all did a

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tremendous job and were inspired by seeing so many other talented gymnasts."

OAK swimmers shine at Eastern Canadians

Mabel Zavaros won four gold and Tessa Cieplucha added three more to pace the Oakville Aquatic Club (OAK) at the 2015 Speedo Eastern Canadian Open recently in Quebec City.

Zavaros also earned two bronze and Cieplucha collected a silver as OAK finished the meet with 21 individual medals. OAK also won the most gold medals of any participating team in the event.

"I was expecting great performances (from Zavaros and Cieplucha) because they've shown over the last two months that they've been training very well," said OAK head coach Sean Baker. "They're renowned for their work ethic and dedication. It was nice to see people who were doing the hard work being able to realize those results."

Lauren Lalumiere, Rosie Zavaros, Luka Tomic, Matthew Fox and Christina Ji were OAK's other medalists at the meet, the first long-course competition of the year for many swimmers.

"The significance of it was to measure how our training is going directly related to the long-course venue, and also that it's a great level of competition," Baker said.

The OAK coach added that he expects as many as six club swimmers to qualify for the upcoming Pan Am Games in Toronto. That number is in addition to OAK products Zack Chetrat and Terra Van Beilen, national teamers who now represent other clubs.

"We count them as Oakville swimmers because they came up through our program," Baker said. "They were a big part of building the culture within our club."

OT wins OFSAA snowboarding boys' title

Oakville Trafalgar High School won the boys' team championship and finished second in the girls' standings at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations snowboarding festival last week near Collingwood.

OT had 33 points (a score calculated by adding together its top three placings in Level 1 competition) to easily beat out second-place Aurora (71) in the boys' division. Will Izzard won the Level 1 (less-experienced racers) individual title, with Keaton McCallum finishing fifth and Kyle Cestnik placing 27th.

The Red Devils scored a total of 68 in the girls' division, finishing behind only Aurora (42). Jackie Carlson was second in Level 1, Olivia Neary-Hatt placed 12th and Ellen McGee was 54th.

In Level 2 individual competition, OT's Eric Van Hees won the boys' title, followed closely by teammates David Van Hees (third) and Magnus Hamble (seventh). Spencer Clough of St. Thomas Aquinas was 15th and OT's Cam Oliver was 18th.

Kayley Edwards of Iroquois Ridge was Oakville's top finisher in Level 2 girls, placing 12th.

Boxer to put perfect record on the line

Undefeated Oakville middleweight boxer Ryan Young (6-0, six knockouts) will face Argentina's Bruno Leonardo Romay in a scheduled six-round March 28 at Mississauga's Hershey Centre.

Young, a product of Primetime Boxing Club on Speers Road where he learned the trade from head coach Greg Post, is currently ranked third and fifth in Canada by the Canadian Professional Boxing Council and the National Championships of Canada, respectively.

His fight is part of a seven-bout card presented by United Boxing Promotions. Tickets are available via the Hershey Centre Box Office and www.ticketmaster.ca.



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