

SPORTS & LEISURE

Bulldogs show they're best in Ontario

By **EAMONN MAHER**

Staff Writer

It won't be the first appearance for the Halton Hills Bulldogs in the Founders Cup championship tournament, but this time, they're going through the front door.

The Bulldogs won their first-ever Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B title at home Saturday night, running past the Elora Mohawks 8-3 in the deciding game of the best-of-5 final series.

With the win, the OLA Eastern Conference-champion 'Dogs earned the 12th and final berth in this week's Founders Cup event, hosted by their division rivals, the Mimico Mountaineers. Halton Hills begins the round-robin portion of the tourney today (Tuesday) at 3 p.m. at the MasterCard Centre in Etobicoke versus the Onondaga Redhawks, the Iroquois Lacrosse Association representative from the Syracuse, N.Y. area.

As hosts of the 2002 Founders Cup, in which they lost in the bronze medal game, the Bulldogs were granted an automatic berth into that tournament. This time, however, as winners of the 27-team Ontario loop, coach Blaine McCauley's squad heads into the fray as one of the favourites along with Mimico, the 2009 Founders Cup champion Calgary Mountaineers and Kamloops, B.C.

"It's probably good that we'll only have a couple of days off between our last series and the Founders because we can keep it in business mode," said McCauley, in his fifth year as head coach.

"It's much more gratifying to do it the right way by winning the Ontario championship. From talking to people who've done it, there's such a big difference between earning your spot the hard way and getting in through the back door by hosting it. We're looking to get rid of the Founders Cup jitters Tuesday and see where we can take it from there."

The Bulldogs will play five round-robin games in a four-day stretch that also includes a matchup with Calgary on Wednesday at 5 p.m., followed by two games Thursday, at 10 a.m. against

the Saskatchewan Swat and at 4 p.m. versus the Moncton, N.B. Mavericks.

They'll complete the round-robin Friday against the Winnipeg Gryphons at 5 p.m., with the semifinals set for Saturday and the championship game slated for 4 p.m. Sunday at the MasterCard Centre, which serves as the practice facility for the NHL's Toronto Maple Leafs. Games will also be played at the Long Branch Arena.

After taking a 2-0 series lead over Western Conference champ Elora, the Bulldogs dropped the next two to force Saturday's rubber match for the provincial title.

On Friday night in Elora, the Bulldogs led 2-0 1:02 into the game but were down 5-2 after the first period and despite three good scoring chances in the final few seconds, lost 8-7.

Mike MacDonald (2), Ethan O'Connor (2), Pete Laidlaw, Clark De Geer and Shane Scott were the goal scorers.



RYAN KELLY

In front of about 1,200 spectators at the Alcott Arena Saturday, the home side quieted the

large Mohawk cheering section with a goal by O'Connor at the 1:49 mark and didn't break goalie Ryan Kelly's shutout until the third period was 17 seconds old, with the Bulldogs up 7-0.

"Once we got up a couple of goals I started to breathe a little easier," said Kelly, game five's first star, who made 32 saves.

"Before the game we were just joking around, throwing the ball at each other in the room. We didn't take (Friday's loss) too hard and we just seem to play better with our backs against the wall."

Jayson Crawford (2), Michael Licata (2), Mike MacDonald, Bradley Kri and De Geer also found net for the hosts.

Halton Hills's leading playoff goal scorer, Brendan MacDonald, has served his two-game suspension but was on crutches on the weekend and his status for the Founders Cup is uncertain.



After an 8-3 triumph over the visiting Elora Mohawks Saturday, the Halton Hills Bulldogs celebrated the franchise's first Ontario Jr. B lacrosse championship in front of a capacity crowd at the Alcott Arena. There's little time for rest, however, as the 'Dogs play their first game of the Founders Cup national championship tournament today (Tuesday) against Iroquois representative Onondaga of New York. *Photo by Eamonn Maher*

European tour for Cousens

Hockey season starts a little bit earlier for Georgetown's Deron Cousens as his Michigan Tech University Huskies are in Europe this week for a series of exhibition games against Austrian and German professional teams.

Heading into his senior year with the Western Collegiate Hockey Association's Huskies, the 23-year-old defenceman was named co-captain of the team along with last year's MVP, junior centre Brett Olson.

Cousens, who participated in a prospects' development camp with the National Hockey League's Washington Capitals last summer, had a goal and seven



DERON COUSENS

assists in 35 games last season with Michigan Tech and was one of the squad's leaders in ice time.

The European tour is rare for U.S. college varsity teams as they're only permitted one foreign trip every four years. They will play five exhibition games during their stay.

Cousens plans to pursue a professional hockey career in Europe or North America after finishing his business management studies at Tech.

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