

Heelis is hoping to shine in Memorial Cup spotlight

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

The five-year junior hockey career of Georgetown's Liam Heelis is about to finish where it all got started.

Heelis, 20, began in Tier II Jr. A with the Mississauga Chargers in the 2006-07 campaign, and now the Owen Sound Attack overage forward will play out his eligibility on the Canadian Hockey League's biggest stage, the four-team Memorial Cup, to be held at Mississauga's Hershey Centre May 20-29.

The Attack shocked most Ontario Hockey League observers by winning the West Conference title for the first time in the franchise's 22 years in Owen Sound last week, beating the two-time Memorial Cup champion Windsor Spitfires four games to one.

With the victory, Owen Sound moves on to face the East Conference winner Mississauga St. Michael's Majors in the best-of-7 OHL championship series starting tonight (Tuesday), and because the Majors are hosting the Memorial Cup, the Attack earned an automatic berth into the weeklong tournament as the OHL representative.

The champions from the Quebec and Western leagues will round out the tourney.

"My mom (Adele) and I were talking about how much of a coincidence it is, that I started out in Jr. A with Mississauga and now it's all going to come to an end in the same place— hopefully with us winning it all," said the 6-foot-1, 195-pound Heelis, who joined the Attack last summer after three seasons with the OHL's Peterborough Petes.

"Even in minor hockey, I played a lot of games at the Hershey Centre and it's going to be a lot of fun playing in front of all my family and friends. I've been getting tons of (ticket requests) already."

Heelis has five goals and five assists, along with 24 penalty minutes and a +7 plus/minus rating, in 15 playoff matches with the Attack this spring, following a career-best 20 goals and 33 assists during the regular season.

He dispelled any notion that the OHL final will be meaningless since both teams have already qualified for the Memorial Cup, pointing out that hockey-mad supporters in the Scenic City are anxious to raise their first-ever league championship banner.

The Majors are 12-1 so far in the post-season and finished the regu-

lar campaign as the CHL's second-ranked club behind the St. John Sea Dogs.

"Mississauga's a really strong defensive team that plays a boring game systematically and we have a similar-style team in that we're tight checking and can roll all four of our lines," Heelis added.

"People say we don't have the experience to compete with a team like that, but the criticism has been with us all year. I think the *Toronto Star* had us ranked 16th or 17th out of the 20 teams at the beginning of the year, not even making the playoffs. We're out to prove those people wrong."

Another Georgetown resident, Justin Rasmussen, is in his rookie season with the Majors but hasn't seen any playoff action so far.

The 18-year-old centre had a goal and an assist in 14 regular-season appearances.



LIAM HEELIS



Holding back the Waters

Justine Rodrigues (left) and Georgetown Rebel teammate Holly Bigg try to slow down Christ the King's Nicole Waters during their Halton Secondary School Athletic Association senior girls' soccer matchup last Thursday at GDHS. The Rebels led 2-0 at halftime on goals by Bigg and Lindsay Poulton on a windswept afternoon before Waters connected for four second-half strikes in the Jaguars' 4-2 triumph. The two teams are scheduled to meet again Thursday at GDHS starting at 3:15 p.m.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

Bulldogs handed second loss

Last year, during their run to a Founders Cup Canadian Jr. B championship, the Halton Hills Bulldogs didn't lose their first regular season contest until June 3, compiling a 12-0 mark up to that point.

In 2011, the 'Dogs already have two losses in the standings after taking a 12-5 trouncing Thursday night in Bowmanville against the Clarington Green Gaels in a rematch of the 2010 Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B Eastern Conference finals, won by Halton Hills in a fifth-and-deciding game.

The 2-2 Bulldogs rebounded with a 15-4 triumph Saturday in Orillia over the Kings as coach Blaine McCauley's side begins to get some school-committed and injured players back into

the lineup.

They'll need all the ammunition they can muster as the Bulldogs will take on the 3-1 Oakville Buzz this Thursday in their home opener beginning at 8 p.m. at the Alcott Arena.

Against the Gaels, who led 7-5 after 40 minutes and then outscored the visitors 5-0 in the third period, Halton Hills goal scorers were Brandon Cleland, Connor Sellars, Dylan Gilbert, Tyler Ferreira and Chris Haynes.

Ferreira (3), Sellars (2), Pete Laidlaw (2), Connor Brown (2), Jayson Crawford (2), Michael Licata (2), Bradley Kri and Blake Kenny tallied in the win over 0-5 Orillia.

The 'Dogs will also host the 2-0 Gloucester Griffins Saturday at 7:30 p.m.



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