

SPORTS & LEISURE

Raiders end Oakville hex, now hope to show Spirit

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

Now that the Georgetown Raiders have eliminated their chief nemesis from the playoffs, they'll have to try to neutralize the Ontario Junior Hockey League's leading scorer in the next series.

The West Division-champion Raiders take on the North Division winners, the Stouffville Spirit, in the best-of-7 OJHL semifinals.

Game one of the series is set for the Alcott Arena this Wednesday at 7:30 p.m., with game two Thursday at the Stouffville Arena at 7:30 p.m.

The Whitby Fury faces the Toronto Lakeshore Patriots, featuring Georgetown residents Robbie Murden and Alex D'Oliveira, in the other league semifinal.

Georgetown and Stouffville split their regular-season meetings with each other, as the Spirit won at home 5-3 Oct. 30 and the Raiders prevailed 4-3 in a shootout on Dec. 10.

While the Raiders finished atop the OJHL overall standings with a 39-9-1 mark, the 32-8-9 Spirit placed second in its division during the season but pulled off a mild upset by knocking off the front-running Newmarket Hurricanes in game seven of their division final on Sunday night, scoring a 5-2 road victory.

Leading the way for the Spirit offensively is Christian Finch, a 20-year-old who had an OJHL best 37 goals and 67 assists in the regular season, following that up with an average of two points per game in the playoffs. His linemate, Chris Porter, had an 80-point campaign and



Oakville Blades' goaltender James Prigione didn't see this shot from the point that was tipped in by Georgetown Raider forward Caleb Apperson for the opening goal in game six of the OJHL West Division final Friday night in Oakville. The Raiders went on to beat Oakville 2-1 to claim a playoff series victory over their Halton rivals for the first time in five seasons.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

Stouffville's solid defence is backstopped by 21-year-old netminder Jonathan Hall.

"They're a dynamic team with lots of big guys on offence," said Raiders' head coach and general manager Greg Walters, who was able to take in some of the Newmarket-Stouffville series when his own squad wasn't on the ice.

"When you get this far, it's going to be tough no matter who you face and I think it's going to be a tight series. It could go seven games."

Four years of frustration came to an end for the Raiders Friday night as they

finally beat the Oakville Blades in a playoff series.

The two Halton rivals collided in the OJHL post-season for the fifth consecutive year after the Blades won the last four meetings, but this time it was the Raiders who emerged victorious, taking all four games by one goal and two of them in overtime to capture the West Division title.

It appeared that extra time would come into play again Friday before forward Jacob Bauchman's backhand from the slot with just over four minutes

remaining in regulation gave Georgetown a 2-1 victory at Oakville's Sixteen Mile Sports Complex in game six of the West Division final.

"I don't know if I could have handled going through another overtime," joked Bauchman, a 20-year-old from Barrie who is familiar with the Stouffville side after playing last season for Orangeville and Collingwood.

"We were trying to solve (Oakville's) goalie (James Prigione) the whole series. We were getting six or seven goals in many games during the regular season and we just haven't found our offence in the playoffs yet."

Caleb Apperson had opened the scoring for the Raiders on the power play at the 3:30 mark of the first period off a deflected point shot, but the Blades responded only a minute later when Tyler Karius's close-in blast beat Georgetown netminder Steven Racine, who made 29 stops on the evening in front of about 700 spectators.

It's the first division title for the Raiders since the 2005 campaign, the only time the club has made it to the Royal Bank Cup national championship tournament, which will be held this year in Humboldt, Sask.

NOTES: Tyson Fawcett and Stephen Genua are tied for the Raiders' playoff lead in points with nine apiece in 11 games...Georgetown was noticeably more efficient in its own zone Friday with the return to the lineup of their only two righthanded-shooting defencemen, Jake Emilio (suspension) and Conor McLoughlin (injury).

Blue Fins perform well at Quebec swim meet

Despite having only three swimmers at the 2012 Eastern Canadian Championships in Gatineau, Que., the Halton Hills Blue Fins finished 32nd out of 81 teams at the meet.

About 850 swimmers, including several national team members, attended and defended Canadian titles, but the intimidating atmosphere was not enough to stop Kyle Haas, Matt Fox or Elizabeth Skuriat from performing well.

Matt Fox shattered two HBBF records in the 200m backstroke (2:09.32) and 400 individual medley (4:59.21). These were remarkable performances, not only because of the fast times,

but also because Fox was one of the only men under the age of 15 at the meet. Fox finished 10th in the 200m back out of 48 16-&-under competitors, moved him to second ranked in the country and beat a lot of older swimmers as well.

Elizabeth Skuriat also broke two club records in the 400m (4:36.57) and 800m freestyle (18:03.52) events. Skuriat, who studies at Acadia University, is one of the first Blue Fins to return and represent the club from a university program.

"Elizabeth is a big reason for HBBF's suc-

cess in the past few years. We're really happy to have her representing us at this level of meet," commented head coach Mike Thompson.

The 16-year-old Haas, a Youth National Team Member, won the 50m and 100m backstroke races and finished fourth in the 200m back, seventh in 100m free and eighth in the 50m butterfly, breaking several HBBF club records along the way.

Thompson said the performances were a good indication that Haas will be ready to make an impact at Olympic Trials later this month in Montreal.

GEORGETOWN
TOYOTA

GAME OF THE WEEK

Game One

GEORGETOWN JR. A

RAIDERS

vs

STOUFFVILLE SPIRIT

Wednesday March 21, 2012

7:30 pm

Mold-Masters SportsPlex (Alcott Arena)

GO
RAIDERS
GO!

GEORGETOWN JUNIOR "A"



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