

SPORTS

'Quote
unquote''My mental game wasn't totally there and my physical
ability wasn't where it should've been.'

—Golfer Robbie Johnson...see story page 43

Bulldogs face 'tough decisions' as new season dawns

By EAMONN MAHER

Staff Writer

Since winning the Founders Cup title in 2010, anything short of making the Jr. B national championship tournament is regarded as a disappointment by Halton Hills Bulldogs' head coach Blaine McCauley.

The Bulldogs are set to begin their Ontario Jr. B Lacrosse League regular season at home this Saturday for the first time in several years, with their division foes, the Oakville Buzz, slated to square off at the Alcott Arena beginning at 7:30 p.m.

After finishing the regular season last summer with a 17-2-1 record, Halton Hills appeared to be in position for another run at supremacy in Ontario. But following a hard-fought first-round playoff series with Kahnawake, the Bulldogs were swept away convincingly by the perennial rival Green Gaels in the next series, with Clarington coach & GM Jason Crosbie saying afterward that he'd "specifically" built his squad to match up with Halton Hills.

"(The Gaels) beat us last year at our own game and we weren't happy about that," McCauley said.

"We've got some tough decisions to make before the opener about some of the young kids because they've shown that they can play tough, hard-working lacrosse. There are certain expectations within this organization and yes, we had a nice regular season last year, but everybody knows it's the playoffs where it counts most and we fell far short of our goals. We're going to make some changes to address that and thankfully we've got



Halton Hills Bulldogs' goalkeeper Gavin Lecky was unable to stop this shot by a Six Nation Rebel but nonetheless had a strong outing in a 5-4 loss to the defending Canadian champs during a Jr. B lacrosse exhibition tournament last weekend in Oakville. The Bulldogs start the regular season at home Saturday against the Oakville Buzz. Photo by Eamonn Maher a lot of different options to look at."

With the departure of mainstays such as Brendan MacDonald, Peter Laidlaw, Kody Lyons, Michael Licata, Chris Haynes, Matt Sargent and Justin Reid, the 'Dogs have looked to their Halton Hills Minor Lacrosse affiliates for some reinforcements.

Among the returnees are Luke Laidlaw, who was third in OJBLL scoring in 2012 with 43 goals and 114 points, his cousin Seth Laidlaw, an 85-point scorer last year, and Princeton University star Mike MacDonald,

who was second in Ivy League field lacrosse scoring with 35 goals in 13 games this spring.

Last year's starting netminder, Dustin Hanzelka, is on an internship in Sudbury this summer and likely won't be available often, leaving 20-year-old Gavin Lecky and youngster Drew Coleman with the goaltending duties. Seventeen-year-old Connor Brown, who had 37 goals in his rookie season, is back in the fold along with the versatile Jamie Batten.

"We're happy with the mix of veterans and young guys from our minor system and we feel we've got more depth than we had last year," added McCauley, who's back for a seventh season as Bulldogs' bench boss.

"We're fortunate in that we're able to draw from our midget team, which finished in the top six in the province last year, and our Jr. Cs, who were one win short of the Ontario championship. Put them together with a good core of older guys and there's going to be a lot of competition within the team for playing time."

Last Saturday, the Bulldogs tuned up for the campaign by playing in the Buzz's pre-season tournament in Oakville, defeating Spartan of St. Catharines 7-3 before fielding a mostly rookie lineup in a 9-4 loss to Windsor.

The finale featured a matchup against the reigning national-champion Six Nations Rebels in which the 'Dogs led 3-1 at one point before eventually losing 5-4.

OJBLL rule changes this year include a mandatory switch to a bubble-style facemask for all players and fighting majors will now result in an automatic game ejection.

Dickinson revels in Canadian win

Although an injury kept Georgetown's Jason Dickinson on the sidelines during Team Canada's run to a gold medal during the World Under-18 Men's Hockey Championships in Russia, it didn't keep the 17-year-old centre from joining in the celebration.

Canada edged the four-time defending-champion U.S. 3-2 on Sunday in the final played at Sochi, Russia.

The 6-foot-2, 176-pound Dickinson was selected to represent Canada for the first time in his budding career

but suffered a high ankle sprain during an exhibition contest against the U.S. just prior to the tournament and was unable to play.

A member of the Ontario Hockey League's Guelph Storm for the past two seasons, Dickinson had hoped to improve his stock for the National Hockey League Draft in June with a strong performance in Russia. He dropped from 16th in the Central Scouting Bureau's mid-season rankings to 30th amongst North American skaters in the end-of-season ratings released last week.



Georgetown's Jason Dickinson (right) and his Guelph Storm teammate Hunter Garlent from Welland embrace the championship trophy won by Canada at the World Men's Under-18 Hockey Championship in Sochi, Russia last weekend, clinched with a 3-2 victory over the U.S. in the final. Dickinson was unable to play in the tournament due to a high ankle sprain. Now the waiting game begins for the 17-year-old centre leading up to the National Hockey League Entry Draft on June 30 in New Jersey.

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