

# RAIDERS PLAYOFF PREVIEW

## No easy route for Raiders

Any ideas of a leisurely stroll through the first couple of rounds of the Ontario Junior Hockey League playoffs for the Georgetown Raiders disappeared after losing the very first game at home to the Buffalo Jr. Sabres, a 3-2 overtime defeat.

Then things got really interesting when the eighth-seeded Jr. Sabres skated past the South-West Conference-champion Raiders 4-1 last Friday in Buffalo in game two.

And while Georgetown came back to tie the best-of-7 first-round matchup at 2-2, head coach & GM Greg Walters said he was concerned before the series even began that his team would be tentative to start after having clinched top spot in the conference way back in January.

"Everybody's nervous, and they're kids. The coaching staff was nervous too," chuckled Walters, in his fifth year with the club.

"You dump the puck in, you get a hit, you get hit and go from there. They're nervous, which means they care. We knew it would turn around because I didn't think we played that badly. We had no adversity through the season and this is the first time

we've faced it."

The biggest reason for Buffalo's 2-0 series lead was between the pipes, with 19-year-old Alex Connal making 66 saves and putting up a .957 save percentage in the Jr. Sabres' two wins.

But Georgetown's rookie all-star Jack LaFontaine has been pretty decent himself with a 2-1 record in his first Jr. A post-season and a .949 save percentage.

**PATRIOT GAMES:** One of the hottest teams in the league in the second half of the campaign was the Toronto Patriots, who won their final eight regular-season games and the first three of their opening-round playoff series with the St. Michael's Buzzers.

The Patriots knocked out the Raiders in last year's conference final and have several returning players from that squad.

In the other South/West Conference quarterfinals, sixth-place Orangeville leads the third-seeded Oakville Blades 2-1 in their series while fourth-place Toronto Jr. Canadiens were also up 2-1 on North York heading into Wednesday night's action.

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