

Junior Rebels down Acton for Halton championship

BY HERB GARBUTT
Staff Writer

The Georgetown District High School Rebels are kings of the court. The Rebels' junior boys volleyball team defeated their Halton Hills rivals, the Acton Redmen, 15-10, 15-11 to win the Halton Hills Athletic Association

volleyball title on Friday. The Rebels trailed both games but rallied for the victory.

"It was a harder fight this time," said Rebel coach Andrea Diaczok. "Both teams had a lot of learning to do since we played (Acton) at the beginning of the season."

In some respects, Friday's final was much like the season opener. Acton was able to match

GDHS point for point but was unable to come through with a rally to finish off their opponents.

The Redmen charged out of the gate, taking the first four points of the opening game. The Rebels came back to tie the game at seven and the teams traded points to 10. That's where the Rebels used their height advantage and a stronger attack to pull

away.

"Georgetown is a strong team and we played really well against them," said Acton coach Kelly Holmes. "We tried to get up there on the blocks but they were hitting the ball well."

In the second game, the Redmen continued to mix up their offence, tipping the ball over the Rebel blockers to build an 11-9 lead. GDHS was able to

adjust, though, and with improved coverage were able to regain the lead. Consistency also helped down the stretch as Acton made the Rebels fight for each point.

"The serving was really good," said Rebel coach Meredith Sones. "I think we only missed one serve the whole day."

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Andrew Sandziuk dekes Mississauga goalie Frank Gulino but he couldn't beat the Charger netminder. The Raiders defeated Mississauga 9-3 to improve their record to 11-11-1. Stace Page scored six goals for the Raiders and Peter Veltman added a pair. Friday night the Raiders doubled Streetsville 8-4. The Raiders host Brampton on Saturday.

Photo by Herb Garbutt



Redmen eyeing OFSAA crown

Halton championship may have eluded them, but the Acton Redmen senior boys' volleyball team now have their sights set on another title.

Acton will be in St. Mary's for the Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association (OFSAA) A championships beginning Friday. But the Redmen may go into the tournament without their best player, Jeff Birrell. Birrell injured his ankle three weeks ago and hasn't played since. Though he's been able to put weight on the ankle, his status is uncertain.

Still, Redmen coach Rob Tannahill says a medal should be within the team's reach.

"I know what this team's potential is and I'd like to see them fulfill it," he said.

If Birrell does miss the tournament, it will be up to veterans Adam Ahearn, Fraser Hewitt and Andre Savard to elevate their games.

It has been a year of full of adjustments for the team. First the season was shortened, giving players less time to learn the new defence, serve reception and rotation that Tannahill, in his first year with Acton, put in place. Also, the team is divided into a group of graduating players and a group of first-year seniors.

"Both of them are used to playing different styles so it's been a matter of getting them to jive," Tannahill said. "I think they made an excellent adjustment. I brought in a lot of new things but they feel comfortable with it now."

One pitfall Acton will have to avoid is getting off to a slow start. That proved costly in their Halton semifinal loss to T.A. Blakelock. Though there were extenuating circumstances in that game—the team bus had to detour and was late, causing the Redmen to miss their warmup—Tannahill said they can't afford to be playing catch up against teams at OFSAA.

"We got off to poor starts and found ourselves in big holes. We were able to overcome it and win (against M.M. Robinson, in the opening playoff round) but we'll be playing some good teams and they have to focus on the game at hand."

Page powers Raiders to .500 mark

The Georgetown Raiders have long said the key to turning around their fortunes was getting everyone on the same page. This weekend they were as the team climbed aboard the back of Stace Page on their way to two victories.

Page exploded for a seven-point night in Friday's 8-4 win over the Streetsville Derbys. For an encore, he simply one-upped himself with a six-goal, seven-point effort in a 9-3 win over the Mississauga Chargers on Saturday.

"It's exciting. I've been getting a lot of bounces and they're all going my way," said Page, who has racked up 11 goals and 26 points in the last five games to give him 26 and 54 respectively for the season.

Those are some pretty lofty numbers considering the Raiders' leading scorer last year had 37 points for

the entire season. Page, coming off a 34-point campaign, had hoped for 50 points this year. With three months and 28 games remaining he has already surpassed that.

Since being reunited with wingers Gene Spadaro and Scott MacDonald two weeks ago, the trio has been on fire. It combined for 33 points over the weekend. MacDonald had two goals and four assists Friday and a goal and four assists Saturday. Spadaro scored once and set up three more against Streetsville and then had four assists versus Mississauga.

"We just know exactly where each other are going out there," said Spadaro. "And it helps when Stace keeps scoring on every breakaway."

"A lot of has to do with speed," Page added. "Gene's been flying out there and Scott has been playing really well. We just play at a high

tempo together."

Page said the emergence of the second line has also helped because teams can no longer key on just one line. It contributed Saturday with Peter Veltman scoring twice, both set up by linemates Mike Knoepfli and Andrew Sandziuk, who is substituting for injured captain Curtis Carr.

The two wins helped the Raiders climb back to the .500 mark. The team that won just six times last season has now won six of its last seven and stands at 11-11-1 for the season. They share fifth place with Oakville but both Burlington and Streetsville are only two points back. The Raiders will face a big test as they meet Bramalea and Brampton this week.

Corey Broussard and Mike L'Heureux each had a goal against Streetsville.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

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