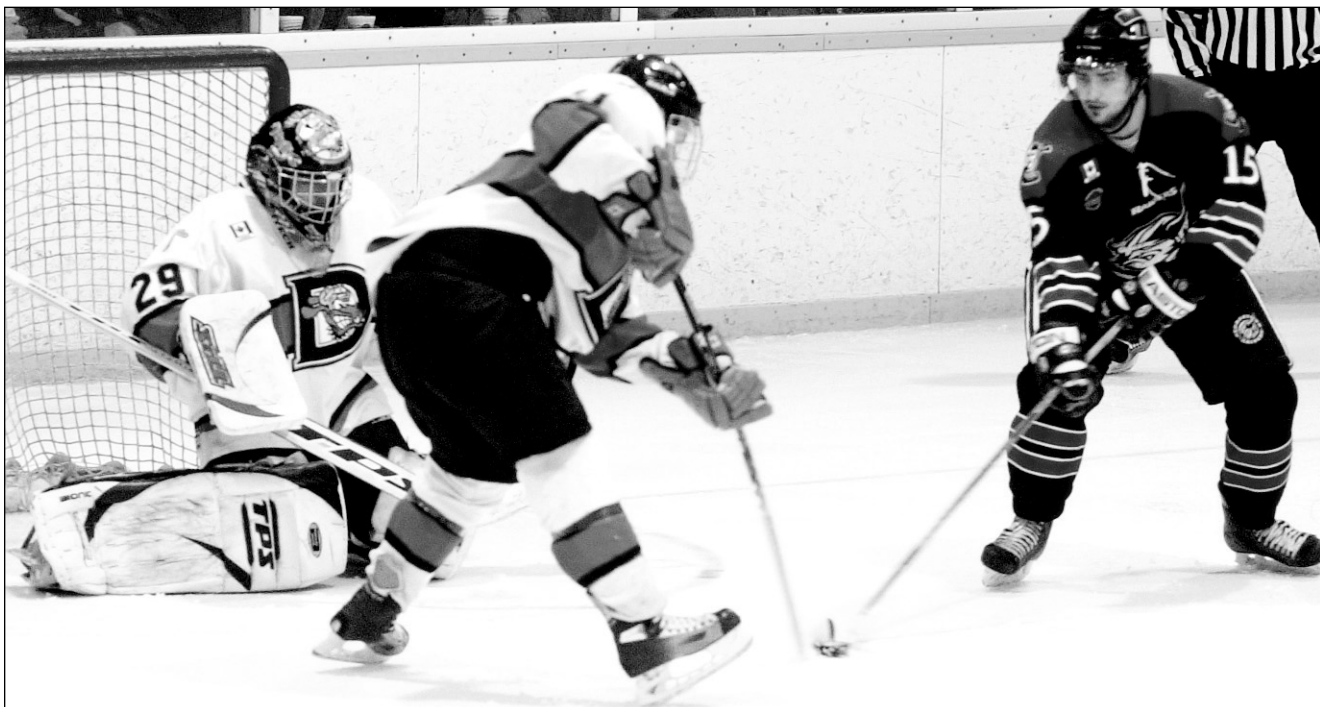


Sports & Leisure

Friday, February 24, 2006

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Georgetown Raider forward Jeremy Whelan (right) battles Michael Paolo for a loose puck in front of Streetsville Derby goalie Tyler Gordon during a Jr. A playoff game Tuesday night. The Raiders knocked off the Derbys 6-2 to take their opening-round series four games to two. Photo by Eamonn Maher

Raiders to face speedy Wings

Facing another playoff opponent who had a decided advantage against them during the regular season, the Georgetown Raiders believe they're now a much different team that dropped five out of six games to the Hamilton Red Wings during this past OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League campaign.

Number-two-seeded Hamilton has the home-ice edge over third-place Georgetown in a series that promises to bring together two contrasting styles of play.

"Hamilton's small but fast and it definitely won't be as physical as it was against Streetsville, and we know they're going to try to put pressure on our defence with their speed," said Kitchener native Matt Sitko, another of the 20-year-old Raider blueline brigade. "That's fine. We are a much different team than when we played them the last time."

But just as the Streetsville Derbys—winners of four of five games from Georgetown during the regular season—found out, the slate is clean when the playoffs begin. The Raiders eliminated Streetsville in their West Conference first-round series in six games with a 6-2 tri-

VS.

Game 1: Last night (Thursday) @ Hamilton
 Game 2: Sat., Feb. 25 @ Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
 Game 3: Mon., Feb. 27 @ Hamilton, 7:30 p.m.
 Game 4: Wed., March 1 @ Georgetown, 8 p.m.
 x-Game 5: Thurs., Mar. 2 @ Hamilton, 7:30 p.m.
 x-Game 6: Sat., Mar. 4 @ Georgetown, 7:30 p.m.
 x-Game 7: Mon., Mar. 6 @ Hamilton, 7:30 p.m.
 x-if necessary

umph in Streetsville Tuesday and they had little turnaround time before taking on the Red Wings.

The opening game of that series was played last night (Thursday) in Hamilton, with game two set for Georgetown's Mold-Masters Sports-Plex on Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

For last night's game details go to www.independentfreepress.com

The second-place Red Wings took five out of the six regular-season meetings between the two clubs, three by one goal. Both teams made significant moves at the roster cut-down date, but Raiders' director of player personnel Peter Mavroudis feels his squad has yet to play its best hockey this season.

"You look at a pure goal scorer

like Travis Kauffeldt. He missed two months and still really hasn't got his touch completely back," said Mavroudis, who is doing well after injuring his back in a fall last week. "I really think we match up well against Hamilton, but the biggest edge we have on any Jr. A team is our goalie, Ryan Gibb. He makes everyone on our team play more comfortably and it allows them to take chances."

Hamilton's backstop, 18-year-old Cameron Talbot, posted a 21-13-1-1 regular-season record with a 2.55 GAA. The Red Wings' leading scorer with 61 points was diminutive former Raider Kyle Zettler.

On the injury front, the Raiders aren't sure whether veteran blueliner Andrew Dennis will be able to return to the lineup any time soon after suffering a leg injury in the Streetsville series.

David Jarman scored the first two goals for the Raiders in Streetsville in game six, with singles added by Marc Marchese, Jeremy Whelan, Alex Paiement and George Lovatsis. Georgetown trailed 2-1 early in the second period before breaking out with four goals in 14 minutes.

—By Eamonn Maher, staff writer

Hockey groups launch all-out effort to make Georgetown 'Hockeyville'

A group of local residents and hockey enthusiasts are going to try to earn Georgetown the title of Canada's most passionate hockey community on an upcoming CBC reality program.

And if the group can convince a judging panel of the Kraft Hockeyville television show, set to debut March 29, that Georgetown can "exhibit the greatest hockey spirit combined with hometown pride," the surreal thought of a National Hockey League exhibition game staged in the historic and compact Memorial Arena would become reality.

It would also likely be the most-sought-after ticket in NHL pre-season history.

"I have no doubt in my mind that we're going to win it," said Geraldine Hardcastle, one of the Georgetown organizers. "There were a lot of people in town who had the idea that we could do this, but the problem was we weren't communicating together. Now everyone's jumped on the same bandwagon and we've got plenty of momentum behind this."

Georgetown Minor Hockey Association, along with the Georgetown Hockey Heritage Council and the local Jr. A Raiders' club, are among the groups spearheading the effort. Hardcastle said the application process is elaborate and many different criteria must be met in order to be even considered to be profiled for the show.

"I was on the phone with the CBC for an hour (Wednesday) and they really liked the uniqueness about what we've been able to put together so far," she said. "The one thing that people have to keep in mind is that there are time constraints involved and we have a very short time period to get this accomplished."

The entry form asks each bidder to demonstrate a unique way in which they can show their community support of the game and Georgetown organizers have come up with a couple. They are urging as many local residents as possible to sign a banner that is over 500 feet long and eight inches high that will eventually line the boards of the Memorial Arena. The banner will be made available to sign by GHHC over the coming days at both local arenas and the Georgetown Market Place.

See LOCAL, pg. 22

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