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SPORTS & LEISURE

Bulldogs looking to take next step in 2006

EAMONN MAHER
 Staff Writer

Heading into his fifth campaign with the Halton Hills Bulldogs, new team captain Travis Bland has made it to the second round of the Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B playoffs three times and the high-scoring forward feels his club is capable of taking the next step in 2006.

With most of last season's roster returning, an outsider might speculate that the Bulldogs would be sticking with the status quo that helped them post a 11-7-2 regular-season mark in 2005—their fifth consecutive year with a .500 or better record.

An unexpected coaching change, however, and the graduation of star forward and captain Mike Dube to the OLA Major Kitchener-Waterloo Kodiaks likely make for a significant

changing of the guard for Halton Hills, which begins its regular season this weekend with games at Akwesasne Saturday night and in Cornwall Sunday afternoon.

Blaine McCauley has taken over as head coach of the 'Dogs after Mike Falkiner decided to assume the bench duties for his hometown Orangeville Northmen. Trying to replace Dube's 49 goals from last season will also likely mean a shift in offensive strategy for the club.

"From our players' perspective, it's changed a lot because of the new coach and because we'll be missing Dube, but there are a lot of left-handers like Graham Knoepfli and Chad Artem who can step in and fill Mike's place," said the 20-year-old Bland, who was second in team offence with 33 goals and 38 assists in 20 regular-season games. "We definitely have the team to be successful, it's just a matter of staying disci-



plined and keeping on top of the things that our coaches have been stressing to us."

Mixed in with the core of veterans are some excellent Jr. A prospects such as Cameron Flint, Braden Artem and Nic Grasby. In goal, the Bulldogs have one of the best in the province at the Jr. B level in Kyle Kennery, a Georgetown resident who is in his fifth and final year of eligibility.

"We've had discussions about what our style of play might be and it can't be as an outside-shooting team," said Kennery, who is enrolled in the Child &

Youth Worker program at London's Fanshawe College. "We could rely on those three or four goals a game from Mike before, so our defence has to step it up now. Something we've needed to improve on over the past couple of years is our work ethic and drive and I really feel that Blaine can get that out of us."

Bland added that during his four years here, the team has shown flashes of being championship-calibre, but needs to be more consistent to contend with the top clubs. In their final exhibition game last weekend, the Bulldogs were tied 4-4 with Orangeville after the first period, then scored just once over the next 40 minutes in a 12-5 defeat.

"We've always seemed to have those little 10-minute lapses where we were playing well and then all of a sudden we're out of the game already," said the captain. "Those things just kill you and it's something we have to work on."

Halton Hills will play in a division with Oakville, Mimico

and Milton this season.

After playing their first four games on the road, the Bulldogs' home opener will be on Sunday, May 7 against Scarborough at 6 p.m.

NOTES: Tim Walinga and Graham Knoepfli were late arrivals to training camp due to other commitments but are expected to be key contributors for the Bulldogs. The club also picked up defender Casey McDonald from Orangeville... Dube's #18 jersey will be retired during the Sunday, May 28 contest vs. the Barrie Tornado... Halton Hills finished the pre-season with a 2-2 record... Two former Bulldogs are still alive in the NLL playoffs. Acton's Sandy Chapman and the Rochester Nighthawks take on Buffalo in one league semifinal on Saturday, with Peter Veltman of the Arizona Sting facing Colorado in the other final-four matchup.

(Eamonn Maher can be reached at emaher@independentfreepress.com)



Indoor season ends

Georgetown's under-11 girls' Mustangs just finished their Ontario Indoor Soccer League season with a couple of ties and are ready to take their game outdoors for the spring and summer. The Mustangs are pictured above in white in a recent match against North Mississauga, with Mallory Gratton at forefront and Sydney Ranson in the background. Vanessa McCracken and Pascal Colangelo gave the Mustangs a 2-0 first-half lead over North Mississauga, but they had to settle for a 2-2 draw. McCracken potted a second-half marker for Georgetown in a 1-1 tie with Glen Shields. The under-11 Mustangs are in training for the start of their season, which begins with a tournament in Virginia on the Memorial Day weekend at the end of May.

Submitted photo



Motorsport Hall of Fame moves here

The Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame is now installed in its new Halton Hills home, establishing Halton Hills' newest museum within the second storey of Legendary Motor Cars at 8242 Fifth Line, just north of Steeles Avenue. On hand for the official opening were (from left) Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame executive director George Daszkowski, Legendary Motors Cars owner Peter Klutt and Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame administrator Tim Miller. The museum, which was formerly located in Toronto's Exhibition Place, has a three-year lease at Legendary Motor Cars and will be looking for a permanent home, possibly within Halton Hills.

Photo by Ted Brown

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