

SPORTS & LEISURE

Raiders kick off season with back-to-back wins

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Two wins in their first two OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League contests would be an ideal start for most teams, but the Georgetown Raiders expect to not just beat inexperienced teams like Milton and Mississauga in 2006-07, they should defeat them convincingly.

Despite dominating the opposition in both outings for long stretches of play, the Raiders found themselves up just by a goal in each of the games' late stages. They started slowly in their home opener Saturday against Milton in front of about 350 fans, falling behind 2-1 after 20 minutes before scraping out a 4-3 victory.

Then, after grabbing an early three-goal cushion Monday at Port Credit versus Mississauga, the Raiders allowed the Chargers to hang around long enough to be a nuisance, needing a couple of late insurance markers to secure a 7-4 triumph.

Newly-named Georgetown captain Wade Finegan played on the Raider squad that went to the Royal Bank Cup national championship tournament two years ago, so he's aware of the local fans' standards for winning. And with a team that's shaping up to be a powerhouse again in Ontario this year, the 20-year-old Finegan welcomed the challenge of wearing the captain's C.

"There are always big expectations here. Every year we're in position to do something big, but (the Royal Bank Cup) is a long way away," said the right-winger, who netted the eventual winner over Milton. "Our motto is that we've got 2,639 miles to go to (Prince



Goalie Taylor Dunn of the Milton IceHawks gloved this breakaway wrist shot by Georgetown Raiders' captain Wade Finegan during the second period of their OPJHL contest Saturday night at Mold-Masters SportsPlex. Finegan did score in the final period to cement the Raiders' 4-3 season-opening victory.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

George) B.C. for the RBC, and it all starts here. It's going to be a long trip."

Chatter around the Raiders' camp during the pre-season wondered whether it would be Finegan or fifth-year centre Rob Sgarbossa from Campbellville who'd sport the C this year. The long-time linemates are effective at both ends of the ice, and as far as the spunky, 5-foot-9 Finegan is concerned,

there can never be too much leadership and experience around, no matter who is wearing which letter on their jersey.

"I'd have no problem with Rob as our leader and I don't think anyone else would. It was just the decision that was made," said the York University student. "I thought a lot about being a leader over the summer and what I might do differently to prior years.

You just try to learn from captains who I've played for here like Frank (DeAngelis) and John Wheaton."

Finegan's off-season commitment to strength and conditioning could have played a part in the decision. Last year, he trained out of former Maple Leaf Gary Roberts' state-of-the-art Toronto gym, and when that shut down, Finegan worked out with fellow Mimico resident and childhood buddy David Bolland, a 57-goal scorer with the OHL's London Knights and second-round pick of the Chicago Blackhawks. The "new-age" training regimen the pair undertook involved Olympic weightlifting and using a new skating treadmill that has an adjustable incline.

"There are only three of these machines in Canada and it's made a big difference in my skating," added Finegan, who was also selected to play for Hockey Canada's Tier II Jr. A all-star team that played in a tournament in Russia in the spring.

In the victory over the IceHawks, Sgarbossa, newcomer Kyle Schwende and Jeremy Whelan rounded out the Raider scoring with a goal and an assist each.

Forward Adam DeJong, acquired from Milton in the off-season, had a hat trick and two assists against the Chargers and Whelan enjoyed a four-point night. Jon Southgate and Schwende also found the net, with Keaton Hartigan earning the win in goal in both games.

Coming up this week, the Raiders host Bramalea on Saturday at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex at 7:30 p.m. and then travel to Buffalo on Monday.

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Stress-free Isles' legend Trottier holds court at Acton hockey camp

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Seven-time Stanley Cup champion Bryan Trottier has it figured that after a decade as a coach, he'd much rather take on a new job that has a little more long-term security.

The 50-year-old Trottier agreed to rejoin the NHL team with which he enjoyed his greatest successes, the New York Islanders, as the director of player development back in June.

"It's a wonderful place to be because there's no stress," said the native of Val Marie, Sask. at the inaugural Bryan Trottier Inside Edge Pro Sports Hockey Camp in Acton recently. "No scouting, no traveling. All the players have

their own coaches and I'm not a coach any more, so I'll leave that to them. I'll concentrate on being a mentor to our prospects from junior, college or Europe."

Trottier is the Isles' all-time leading scorer with 500 goals and 1,353 points, winning four consecutive Cups in the early 1980s on Long Island. He went on to win two more championships as a player with Pittsburgh and Mario Lemieux, then earned his seventh Cup as an assistant coach with the Colorado Avalanche in 2001.

A Hockey Hall of Fame inductee in 1997, Trottier's return to work with the often-dysfunctional Islanders signaled the end of hard

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Christian Begin, 12, of Acton was thrilled to get his photo taken with a couple of former Stanley Cup champions and a miniature version of the famed trophy itself during the Bryan Trottier Inside Edge Pro Sports Hockey Camp in Acton. Trottier (left) and Jay Wells signed autographs for all of the young participants on the final day of the camp recently.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

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