

SPORTS & LEISURE

New game 'sticking it' to hockey 'dinosaurs'

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Traveling across southern Ontario to spread the word about Hockey Canada's mandate to establish a new standard of play and rules emphasis in amateur hockey, Georgetown's Bryan Lewis has a message for those "dinosaurs" who fail to adapt to the changes.

"Buy in, or it's bye-bye," said Lewis, the former director of officiating for the National Hockey League and current Hockey Canada instructor.

With the regular season now under way for most amateur hockey teams, players, coaches and spectators will notice that the game is being officiated in a dramatically different style than in past years. The motto is, "It's a New Game" and the two main points are:

- The stick will not be allowed to, in any way, impede a player's progress, and;
- It is imperative that coaches teach the players that the stick can only be used to play the puck.

Lewis admits to being "old school" in his hockey upbringing, but pointed to the exciting hockey produced during last season's NHL playoffs, where infractions such as obstruction were rarely seen after the league's post-lockout crackdown. As an OHA supervisor, Lewis addressed several junior hockey teams before the season and spoke to the Georgetown Referees' Association about the new guidelines. He said that officials who don't adhere will find themselves getting fewer assignments and that the deterrent of the power play will force coaches and players to adapt or be left behind.

"In fairness to the officials, players and coaches, there's a lot of reprogramming to do, but from what we've seen, it's a pretty simple process when you

look at the material that Hockey Canada has supplied," said Lewis, referring to the 35-minute instructional DVD and written information. "There is also a shared respect element to this where the refs won't be the scapegoat if the coach hasn't taken the time to educate his players. Nine out of 10 times the complaints occur because they don't understand what it is that they've done wrong, or had taken little effort to try to understand."

At this point in the season, Lewis added, awareness is the big stumbling block. Some OPJHL teams failed to show up to a pre-season league meeting to discuss the new initiative and Lewis noted that some of those clubs are now struggling in the standings because of the number of power play goals they're surrendering.



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—Hockey Canada instructor Bryan Lewis

Georgetown Jr. A Raiders' head coach Blaine McCauley took it a step further, inviting his older brother Wes, who was hired on as a full-time NHL official referee prior to last season, to go over the guidelines with the players during a pre-season practice. Through their first 14 regular season games, the Raiders appear to have adapted well, for the most part, averaging about 25 minutes in penalties per game— if a fight-filled contest with Burlington isn't included.

"We watched the Hockey Canada DVD, and I didn't realize there were nine different ways you could hook someone," joked Blaine McCauley. "Wes was able to give us some helpful hints. If you're chasing someone with the puck and you bring your stick up, you immediately have the referee's attention. In practice, we've been stressing to our players to keep their sticks down. With the team we've built, we want to play an aggressive, high-tempo game that's on the edge, so you're going to take some penalties

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Georgetown Raiders' leading scorer Adam DeJong nearly caught Oakville Blades' goalkeeper Matt Hoyle out of position during the second period of their OPJHL contest on Friday at the Dominion Twin Rinks. The 16-year-old Hoyle recorded the victory as his teammates rallied from a two-goal third period deficit to beat the Raiders 6-4. Photo by Eamonn Maher

Crunch time ahead for Raiders

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Division titles aren't won in October, but the OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League schedule for the Georgetown Raiders over the next couple of weeks will likely go a long way in determining the club's fortunes for the remainder of the 2006-07 campaign.

On Thursday, the second-place Raiders begin a stretch of eight games in which they'll face seven teams with better-than-.500 records. They're in Brampton tomorrow (Thursday) and then host the first-place Capitals Saturday at the Mold-Masters SportsPlex starting at 7:30 p.m. Georgetown is seven points back of the 13-2-1-0 Capitals with three games in hand, while four teams, Hamilton, Oakville, Burlington and Streetsville, are right on the heels of the Raiders.

"We're going to find out if we're for real or if Brampton has really overtaken us," said Raiders' director of player personnel Peter Mavroudis. "I think we've played down to our competition at times and we can be better as a team. Five on five against Oakville on Friday, we dominated."

The 9-2-1-1 Raiders looked to be in full control in the third period of their game in Oakville, leading 4-2 before penalty troubles and unlucky bounces allowed the defending West Conference champion Blades to reel off four straight goals and claim a 6-4 triumph. The Blades went 4 for 21 with the man advantage, outshooting Georgetown 53-33, spoiling a brilliant night by goalkeeper Keaton Hartigan.

The Raiders, who were 3 for 11 on the power play, received goals from Adam DeJong, Wade Finegan, Jeremy Whelan and Adam

Pomroy. Fifth-year centre Rob Sgarbossa sat out with a one-game instigator suspension from the previous week against Streetsville and his penalty-killing prowess was noticeably absent Friday. Blades' defenceman Cody Goloubeff notched a hat trick for the home side— all coming on the power play.

Last-place Bramalea paid a visit to the Alcott Arena on Saturday evening, and while they kept the outcome in doubt through the first 40 minutes, the Raiders found their stride in the final period, scoring six times to record a 10-3 win. Kyle Schwende (3), Ryan Torres, DeJong, Sgarbossa, Whelan, Ryan Ford, Finegan and 15-year-old rookie blueliner Spencer Metcalfe supplied the goal scoring.

The Raiders were scheduled to play Monday night in Buffalo, but the game has been rescheduled after last week's snowstorm.

NOTES: Georgetown's Deron Cousens has been selected to play for Team Canada West at the inaugural World Junior A Hockey Challenge Nov. 6-12 in Yorkton and Humboldt, Sask. The 19-year-old defenceman is in his second season with the Penticton Vees of the BCHL and will attend Michigan Tech University next year on a scholarship. Also entered in the tournament are Team Canada East, Russia, Belarus, Germany and Slovakia. Cousens has five goals and eight assists in 14 games so far with the Vees, who are ranked sixth in Canada with a 12-2-0-0 mark...Defenceman Adam Pomroy quit the Raiders after being a healthy scratch on Saturday...Georgetown property Ryan Lee is playing defence for the Austin Ice Bats of the Central Hockey League.

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