

SPORTS & LEISURE

For Halton crown

'Cats claw Pearson

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Those 7 a.m. practices held four days a week over the past two months likely won't rank among the cherished moments of the 2006-07 school year for members of Acton's senior boys'



Acton's Norm Tosh (5) and Bearcat teammate Brandon Nixon (10) brought too much offence for Lester B. Pearson to defend against in the Halton high school senior boys' AA volleyball final at Sheridan College on Monday. Acton's seniors won 25-19, 25-23.
Photo by Eamonn Maher

volleyball squad, but the Bearcats' commitment to winning has brought them to within one victory of returning to the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations' championship tournament at the end of the month.

The 9-1 Bearcats are the Halton AA champs for the second consecutive year after beating Burlington's Lester B. Pearson 25-19 and 25-23 on Monday at Sheridan College. A victory over Hamilton's Bishop Tonnos in Acton this Friday would earn the 'Cats a berth in the OFSAA AA finals Nov. 24-25 in faraway Dryden, Ont., which promises to be an adventure just getting up there for the 16-team tourney.

"Our players have sacrificed every morning except Fridays to achieve their goals and it's paying off," said fifth-year coach Chris Braun. "We have the same team as last year. They've just grown a little more, become better co-ordinated through the summer and have got a lot more heart. We didn't anticipate that we'd even make it to OFSAA last year, but we went, had fun and gained a lot of experience, so hopefully we can do it again this year."

Acton's seniors boast one of the taller line-ups in the Halton region, beating AAAA teams such as Georgetown during the season. Norman Tosh delivered several powerful kills from the middle hitter's territory on Monday to lead a balanced Bearcat attack against Pearson, which brought along a boisterous cheering section.

Braun hopes that home-court advantage in Friday's GHAC final in front of partisan spectators will spur Acton on to the provincials. Match start time is 3:30 p.m. The team has raised a little less than half of the estimated \$8,000 cost of accommodation, flying to Winnipeg, and rental of a vehicle to then make the three-hour trek to Dryden.

Raiders get back on track

Overtime hasn't been a fun time for the Georgetown Raiders recently but the team's coach is hopeful that a breakthrough 4-3 victory last Thursday over the division-leading Brampton Capitals will shake his team out of its slump.

Dating back to the 2005-06 playoffs, the Raiders had not pulled off a win in extra time in 11 consecutive OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League games until beating the 19-4-1-1 Capitals for the second time in three starts this season.

In Thursday's spirited win at Brampton, veteran forward Ford netted the clinching marker one minute into overtime on an excellent individual effort, beating two defenders and then the goalkeeper. Wade Finegan, George Lovatsis and Peter Drikos rounded out the scoring.

Georgetown won again on the road Saturday in Mississauga 3-0 to start up a two-game winning streak, putting an end to a frustrating run of

just two wins earned in 12 outings.

"We've been challenged over the past month with some ups and downs, but the guys have pulled together and we're figuring a way out of this," said coach Blaine McCauley. "It's a long road to where we want to be and we didn't think we'd get there right away. Beating a good team like Brampton really helped our confidence and to top it off it was in OT, so hopefully that trend will continue for the rest of the year."

Rookie Spencer Janes, leading scorer Kyle Schwende and Ford tallied for the 12-5-2-3 Raiders against the Chargers. Keaton Hartigan registered his first shutout of the campaign as Georgetown outshot the hosts 38-21.

This week, the Raiders will visit the last-place Bramalea Blues on Friday, then host Burlington Saturday at Alcott Arena at 7:30 p.m.

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Devin Rattie (12) and Brad Richards (obscured from view) of the Georgetown Rebels repelled Oakville-Trafalgar's Matt Grunwald's bid for a kill during the Halton AAAA senior boys' championship in Oakville Monday. O-T defeated the Rebels in three games.
Photo by Eamonn Maher

More work facing Rebels

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For the second year in a row, the Georgetown Rebels will have to use the side-door route in order to return to the Ontario high school senior boys' volleyball championships after getting nosed out for the Halton Secondary School Athletic Association AAAA title on Monday at Sheridan College in Oakville.

Undefeated Oakville-Trafalgar claimed the Halton crown by scores of 27-25, 19-25, 15-13 in a tense match that featured several lead changes, except in the second set when the Rebels were in dominant form. Georgetown looked poised to add yet another Halton-champion banner to its gymnasium wall, leading 9-6 in the deciding game before O-T rallied.

Despite the loss, the 8-2 Rebels will play in today's Golden Horseshoe Athletic Conference Challenge best-of-5 semi-final against host Thomas More of Hamilton, while Oakville-Trafalgar faces Brebeuf. Then, another win will

be required on Friday in the GHAC final if the Rebels want to qualify for this year's OFSAA tourney, to be held Nov. 24-25 at Barrie Innisdale.

"I think our boys thought they had O-T in that third game, but (Oakville-Trafalgar) have a tall team and it just seemed near the end that they were hitting off the top of our blocks instead of us being right on them," said Rebel coach Sheri Nairn. "But I was proud of the way they played and it was not through a lack of effort for sure. We still get a chance to go to the show and I know the players will be hungry after losing like this."

Nairn said she was impressed with the performance of Millar Galbraith in the middle hitter position in the absence of Aaron Hnatiw, who was sidelined with an ankle injury. Galbraith, usually attacking from the flanks, hasn't played in the middle spot all season yet was an effective point generator for the Rebels.

O-T's juniors eliminated Georgetown at the semi-final stage with a 25-22, 27-25 win Friday.

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