

SPORTS & LEISURE

Raider goalies happy to share netminding

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Having been around the junior hockey block more times in two seasons than most professionals would in a lengthy career, Georgetown Raiders' goalie Marc Stuart doesn't mind when he has to watch a game from the players' bench in favour of teammate Keaton Hartigan getting the start.

Stuart's path to the OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League has been long enough to get too worked up, having begun in his native Dallas, Texas, then moving to



MARC STUART

Toronto to play minor midget before landing with junior teams in Couchiching, Oakville, Pickering, Newmarket and finally just before Christmas in Georgetown, where he plans on staying awhile.

Posting an 11-1-0 record down the stretch drive, Stuart earned his teammates' respect in a shocking 8-1 Georgetown win in Hamilton in the regular-season finale despite being outshot that gave the Raiders precious home-ice advantage in their best-of-seven playoff series with the Burlington Cougars, which the Raiders led 3-2 heading into last night's (Tuesday's) game six in Burlington.

So he seems genuinely happy to be here and hasn't complained when Raider head coach James Richmond switches goalers partway through a game in order to perhaps shift momentum what's been a hard-fought, emotionally draining series.

"Right now, we're just playing whoever wins, so we've been going back and forth with Keats and I," said Stuart, who starred for Oakville in the Blades' surprise West Division championship club last season that lost in the league semi-finals to Stouffville. "I like the (platoon) system, I don't mind it. It worked well for us last year with Oakville and when you get to the playoffs, it's a whole other season, you never know what to expect. When I came here they welcomed me right in and it's a great feeling to be a part of this team. We all have the same goal."

Stuart was the second star of Saturday's 5-2 Georgetown triumph at the Alcott Arena, making 34 stops, while forward Ryan Ford notched his fourth hat trick of this season to power the Raiders past the Cougars. Matt Thomson and George Lovatsis also chipped in goals.

Both teams seemed a bit weary in game five after experiencing the awkward situation of having to play a game and a half the previous evening, which resulted in two Burlington home-ice victories to even the series 2-2.

The Cougars first held on for a 3-2 win in a game that had to replayed from about the midway point four days after it originally started, thanks to a blown officials' call that was successfully protested by Burlington.

After a brief break, the teams lined up for the regularly scheduled game four on Friday night and the Raiders seemed to be revitalized with Hartigan standing tall, facing 24 shots alone in the opening period. Georgetown led 3-2 until the late stages of the middle frame when penalty troubles caught up and the Cougars scored twice in 25 seconds to take the lead for good en route to a 7-3 win.

Wade Finegan had two shorthanded



Georgetown Raider captain Wade Finegan (14) tracks down Burlington's Jordan Gray on the forecheck Saturday night in game five of their OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League West Division quarter-final series. The Raiders won 5-2 and hoped to close out the series in game six in the Cougar den Tuesday evening. If a seventh game is required it would be played tonight (Wednesday) at the Alcott Arena beginning at 8 p.m.
Photo by Eamonn Maher

first-period markers in the loss and Kyle Schwende added another.

In total, the Cougars went 5 for 23 on the power play and the Raiders were 0 for 4, leading to a predictable fight-filled third-period fiasco that resulted in suspensions to important players on each side.

"It was time to get it out of our system," added the 20-year-old Stuart, whose January birthdate gives him another year of junior eligibility. "We needed this win (Saturday) because having to play that game over again kind of got us down, so this win was a big step in the right direction."

Raiders' centre Adam DeJong earned an instigator fighting ban for two games while defender Peter Mrksic's intent-to-injure suspension was pegged at eight games. DeJong can return if there's a game seven in Georgetown tonight (Wednesday) at the Alcott, facing off at 8 p.m.

The winner of this series will play the first-place Brampton Capitals, who eliminated the feisty Milton IceHawks in five games Saturday night. Second-place Oakville takes on Hamilton starting Friday in the other conference semi-final matchup.

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

High school roundup

Rebel volleyball squads to host semifinal games today

Georgetown District High School's girls' volleyball teams both remain undefeated so far in Halton Secondary School Athletic Association action this season but will be tested today (Wednesday) when the Rebels play host to regional semifinal matches.

The senior Rebels swept

Christ the King 2-0 on Monday in the quarter-finals and will take on M.M. Robinson of Burlington today at 3:30 p.m., while the juniors took both sets from Abbey Park Monday and play at home Wednesday against White Oaks starting at 4:45 p.m.

The Halton championship matches are set for Friday at

Sheridan College and Acton's senior girls plan to be there, provided they can beat Lester B. Pearson in Burlington in today's semi-final.

Although out of the post-season tournament, Acton's junior Bearcats had an excellent showing at a tournament at Mentor College in Mississauga on the

weekend, bowing out to Holy Name of Mary in three sets (25-18, 15-25, 15-12) for the A Division championship.

Sarah Glassford was named the Bearcat MVP for her outstanding play throughout the tourney, which included a 25-18, 20-25, 15-4 victory over St. Famille of Mississauga in the

semi-finals.

Basketball

Matt George led the attack with 22 points for Christ the King in their 64-46 trouncing of Burlington Central on Friday as the 9-0 junior Jags hosted their first-ever playoff game.

See UNBEATEN, pg. 19

<p>2004 GRAND CARAVAN</p>  <p>Midnight Blue, 3.3L V6, auto, 31,798 kms. Stk.#P11184</p> <p>\$18,999 / \$209 BI-WEEKLY/60 MTHS</p>	<p>2004 GRAND CARAVAN SXT</p>  <p>Black, 3.8L V6, loaded, auto, 48,000 kms. Stk.#P11192</p> <p>\$20,999 / \$200 BI-WEEKLY/72 MTHS</p>	<p>2004 RAM 1500 4X4</p>  <p>Almond, 5.7 V8, auto, 30,793 kms. Stk.#P11188</p> <p>\$28,999 / \$276 BI-WEEKLY/72 MTHS</p>	<p>2004 RAM 1500 4X4</p>  <p>Flame Red, 5.7 HEMI, auto, 32,546 kms. Stk.#P11189</p> <p>\$28,999 / \$276 BI-WEEKLY/72 MTHS</p>	<p>2004 RAM 1500 LARAMIE</p>  <p>White, 5.7 V8, auto, 59,756 kms. Stk.#P11190</p> <p>\$28,999 / \$276 BI-WEEKLY/72 MTHS</p>
---	--	--	--	--

GEORGETOWN CHRYSLER JEEP
336 GUELPH ST., GEORGETOWN, ON. 905-877-0149