

SPORTS & LEISURE

Raiders, Wings to meet after Georgetown KO's Brampton

How will the West be won?

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

With nine days off between series, Georgetown Raiders' coach James Richmond is somewhat concerned about the lengthy break heading into the OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League's West Division final against the Hamilton Red Wings, but nonetheless is confident given his team's impressive playoff run so far.

The fourth-place Raiders completed a surprisingly easy takeout of the regular-season-champion Brampton Capitals last Thursday in the second round and begin their conference final series in Hamilton against the Red Wings this Saturday at the Dave Andreychuk Mountain Arena beginning at 7:30 p.m.

"Yes, I'm concerned about the layoff, because when you're at a high, high tempo like we were against Brampton, you want to just keep rolling with it," said Richmond, who took over as bench boss of the Raiders in November. "Having said that, if you had given me the choice of finishing with Brampton in five games as opposed to a six- or seven-game series, we'll enjoy the time off and do what we have to do in practice to get ready for a good, solid deep team in Hamilton. Beggars can't be choosers, I guess."

Third-place Hamilton prevailed in six tough games over the runner-up Oakville Blades on Monday night, with Steeltown native Frankie Grandits finishing off his hat trick with the clincher at the 19:58 mark of the third period for a 3-2 victory. The Red Wings have conference MVP Cameron Talbot in goal and boast a lineup that is probably even stronger than the one that eliminated Georgetown 4-2 in last season's division semifinals, having allowed just 21 goals against in 10 playoff starts in 2007.

Along with Grandits up front, the Wings have proven snipers in Mike Galbraith, Steve Mullin, Wes Consorti and Spencer Abbott, while 20-year-olds Josh Van Dyk and Chris Duncan anchor a tough, mobile defence.

"There really was no preference if we played Oakville or Hamilton. You're going to have to beat excellent teams anyway to get through our division," added Richmond. "Hamilton's got great goaltending with Talbot, but I think our goalies have been pretty solid too and I like the way we match up with them. They finished well ahead of us in the standings



Georgetown Raider goalie Keaton Hartigan steers away trouble with some support from defenceman Matt Thomson during the game-five elimination of the host Brampton Capitals last Thursday at Memorial Arena. The Raiders won 8-2 and will now face Hamilton in the division finals. Thomson has enjoyed a superb playoff for Georgetown as he's ninth on the OPJHL scoring list with five goals and 11 assists in 10 games.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

and were in first place for a while so we know we're going to have to be at our best to keep playing."

Georgetown hadn't won in Hamilton for three years until they shocked the Red Wings 8-1 on Feb. 5 in the regular-season finale, which secured home ice advantage for the Raiders in their first-round matchup with Burlington. The Red Wings took the season series 3-2-0-0 over the Raiders, including two wins at the Alcott Arena. Whoever prevails in the West Division final will move on to face Aurora or Stouffville from the North in the OPJHL semifinals.

The Raiders eliminated Brampton on Thursday night for their third lopsided win at Memorial Arena in the series, building up a 6-0 lead six minutes into the second period and cruising to an 8-2 triumph. Kyle Schwende and Adam DeJong each had four-point nights for the visitors, with other single markers supplied by Matt Thomson, George Lovatsis, Wade Finegan, Matt Carter, Jeremy Whelan and Spencer Janes. Goalie Keaton Hartigan, making his first appearance of the series, made 31 saves in the Georgetown goal,

but Richmond wouldn't tip his hand about who might start the opener against Hamilton, considering that Marc Stuart has a 6-1 post-season record with the Raiders over the past month.

Richmond reports a healthy lineup heading into the conference final, although flu has stricken some players over the last few days. Big defender Peter Mrksic, a Hamilton native, has one more game to serve on a suspension before returning to the Georgetown lineup.

NOTES: Local resident Jay Sprague has earned a regular spot in the Michigan State Spartans' lineup as a freshman and the NCAA hockey playoffs are set to start this weekend. The 6-foot-3, 217-pound 20-year-old forward had a goal and eight assists this season with the Spartans, who'll face Nebraska-Omaha in a best-of-3 series...Hamilton forward Zac Rinaldo faces a lengthy suspension after a charging major on Oakville's Brent Clarke on Monday night that put the talented Blades' centre in hospital with a head injury.

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



VS.



West Conference final
best-of-seven series

Game 1

Saturday, March 10 @ Hamilton Mountain Arena 7:30 p.m.

Game 2

Tuesday, March 13 @ Alcott Arena, 8 p.m.

Game 3

Thursday, March 15 @ Hamilton Mountain Arena 7:30 p.m.

Game 4

Saturday, March 17 @ Alcott Arena 7:30 p.m.

Game 5

Monday, March 19 @ Hamilton Mountain Arena 7:30 p.m. (if necessary)

Game 6

Tuesday, March 20 @ Alcott Arena 8 p.m. (if necessary)

Game 7

Wednesday, March 19 @ Hamilton Mountain Arena 7:30 p.m. (if necessary)

Rebels busy in OFSAA action

A slight upset in their opening preliminary-round match got the Georgetown Rebels running at the 16-team Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association AAAA senior girls' volleyball championships in Waterdown on Tuesday afternoon.

Tenth-seeded Georgetown maintained its undefeated record in regular season and playoff action for 2006-07 by taking out seventh-ranked London Saunders 24-26, 26-24, 15-10 to start things off. The Rebels also faced the fourth seed and host Waterdown and Woburn Collegiate of Scarborough to finish off pool play yesterday. The playoff rounds will unfold today (Wednesday), with the championship set for 7 p.m.

SWIMMING: The Rebels are organizing the OFSAA 2007 meet at the Etobicoke Olympium this week and several Georgetown-based high school swimmers are considered medal contenders in individual and relay events.

Action ran through the day yesterday (Tuesday) and will finish up by mid-afternoon today (Wednesday). Check Friday's *Independent & Free Press* for results from the Christ the King and GDHS athletes.

<p>2006 300 TOURING</p>  <p>Midnight Blue, 3.5L V6, automatic, 41,000 kms Stk.#P11187</p> <p>\$24,999</p>	<p>2006 LIBERY RENEGADE</p>  <p>Silver, 3.8L, automatic, 13,010 kms. Stk.#7J11-1</p> <p>\$26,300 / \$250 BI-WEEKLY/72 MTHS</p>	<p>2005 300C</p>  <p>Silver, 5.7 HEMI, automatic, 75,747 kms. Stk.#7T45-1</p> <p>\$25,300 / \$240 BI-WEEKLY/72 MTHS</p>	<p>2004 PACIFICA</p>  <p>Jade, 3.5L 6 cyl., automatic, 48,463 kms. Stk.#P11138</p> <p>\$29,999 / \$255 BI-WEEKLY/84 MTHS</p>	<p>2004 SX 2.0</p>  <p>Black, 2.0L 16V, 4 cyl., 27,600 kms. Stk.# 7E44-2/P12</p> <p>\$12,500 / \$140 BI-WEEKLY/60 MTHS</p>
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GEORGETOWN CHRYSLER JEEP
336 GUELPH ST., GEORGETOWN, ON. 905-877-0149