

SPORTS & LEISURE

Another OT loss sends Raiders to the sidelines

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Staff Writer

Coming up with yet another cruel and dramatic way to beat the Georgetown Raiders in the post-season, the Hamilton Red Wings clinched their first conference title in 14 years on Saturday night with a 4-3 overtime triumph to sweep the best-of-seven OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League West Division final.

It's the second year in a row the visiting Red Wings eliminated the Raiders at Alcott Arena and this time they were able to parade the championship trophy around the ice, having been swept themselves in last season's conference finals by Oakville.

Hamilton, which now faces Aurora in the OPJHL semifinals beginning Friday, required three-one goal victories to knock off a stubborn Georgetown club in six games of the second round of the 2005-06 playoffs and virtually pulled off the same close-shave job this year.

The latest and final blow was dealt to the Raiders on St. Patrick's Day in front of about 800 spectators. Leading the series 3-0 and game four 2-1 until the half-way point of the third period, the Wings were apparently sent reeling on Georgetown goals by Jeremy Whelan and Adam DeJong just 32

seconds apart. But Steve Mullin forced extra time by slapping in a loose puck at the top of the crease with 2.9 seconds left in regulation, then Red Wing leading playoff scorer Mike Galbraith secured the title with a similar goal at the 3:13 mark of the first overtime frame.

"That's five overtime games we've had with them the last two years and we lost every one of them," said Raiders' graduating captain Wade Finegan afterward.

"When you're in overtime, anything can happen, but they seemed to capitalize on that one mistake we made. It's going to take a while for this to sink in. Coming back on Thursday to get our gear is probably going to be the toughest part. Right now it's going to be hard just to take off my jersey, because I've had three great years here."

Any hopes of a Georgetown comeback in the series were likely dashed on Thursday in Hamilton after a gritty road performance was rewarded with a painful ending again.

Down 3-0 with just over five minutes remaining in the third, the Raiders improbably rallied with goals from Whelan, Matt Carter and Kyle Schwende to force overtime and started it off with a four-minute power play. Unable to score, the Red Wings soon got their own man advantage situation and captain Corey Stringer rifled in the winner seven minutes into the



Georgetown Raider goalie Marc Stuart skates dejectedly off the ice as Hamilton Red Wings players celebrate their 4-3 overtime win Saturday at Alcott Arena. The loss gave the Wings a 4-0 series sweep of the Raiders in the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League West Conference final.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

first OT stanza.

"We figured that if we could at least win one game we could work forward from there," added Finegan, who has received scholarship offers from a number of NCAA Division One schools. "I really thought we had them beaten (Saturday) and on Thursday night but they were able to find a way to win."

Along with Finegan, several Raider vets played their last junior games on the weekend, including fifth-year centre Rob Sgarbossa, local native Jon Southgate, goalie

Keaton Hartigan, Schwende, DeJong, Peter Mrksic, Ryan Ford and Ryan Lee.

A good portion of the team is eligible to return next year as Carter, defender Matt Thomson, Whelan and goalie Marc Stuart can come back, but the Raiders will be without the recruiting skills of Peter Mavroudis, who has announced his resignation as director of player personnel after leading the club to the conference finals in four of the past five years.

NOTES: Local resident Bob Hooper, commissioner of the

OPJHL, made the West Division championship trophy presentation to the Red Wings...For the second year in a row, the host of the Royal Bank Cup national Jr. A championship has to wait nearly two months before playing in the tournament. The Prince George, B.C. Spruce Kings lost in seven games to the Salmon Arm Silverbacks in their first-round series. The Silverbacks now trail the Penticton Vees, who have Georgetown resident Deron Cousens starring on their blue line, in the second round of the BCHL playoffs.

Rep hockey roundup

Novice AE Raiders open OMHA final with 4-3 triumph

The Georgetown McMaster's Meats and Deli Raiders used two-goal efforts from Mackenzie Chalmers and Jonathan Price to dump Markham 4-3 in the opening game of the team's Ontario Minor Hockey League Novice AE Group 1 playoff series Sunday.

Austin St.Croix, Mathew Patterson, Adam Smith, Paul Keating each had one assist for the Raiders who were to host the second game of the six-point series last night (Tuesday) at Memorial Arena.

Game three is set for Markham Saturday.

Down 2-0 with less than four minutes to play, Georgetown came back to beat Orangeville 4-2 in the fifth-and-deciding game of their OMHA semi-final series, as Josh Cartwright netted the winner with 1:27 left in the third period.

Georgetown 4, Orangeville 2: Chalmers (2G); Josh Cartwright, Daniel Larade (G); Smith, Keating, Braydon McKnight (A).

Minor Pee wee AE Raiders

Whitby led the Halton Hills Rad & Tire Raiders 5-1 in their six-point OMHA Minor Pee wee AE Group 1 semifinals before Georgetown rallied with three straight wins to earn a spot in the finals against Barrie.

Whitby 5, Georgetown 2: Connor Speers, Spencer Sykes (G); Tyler Chabot, Jake Cameron (A).

Whitby 2, Georgetown 2: Cameron (G,

A); Johnathan Haines (G); Sykes (2A).

Whitby 3, Georgetown 1: Chabot (G); Sean Neumann (A).

Georgetown 4, Whitby 2: Sykes, Cameron (2G, A); Speers (2A).

Georgetown 3, Whitby 2: Chabot, Cameron, Nick Campbell (G); Sykes, Olin Flydorf (A).

Georgetown 3, Whitby 2: Speers (3G); Haines, Cameron Sykes (A).

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