

SPORTS & LEISURE

Girls' skills on the rise

Twisters getting better

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

The North Halton Twisters hosted their annual showcase of Canadian women's hockey in Georgetown Friday night and also took the time to recognize the efforts of some volunteers prior to the contest.

Formed in 1997, the local-area girls' hockey association has close to 600 players registered and most of those were in attendance as the Brampton Canadette-Thunder defeated the Burlington Barracudas 4-1 in a Canadian Women's Hockey League regular season game.

Like the newly-formed CWHL, established this past September after the former National Women's Hockey League disbanded, the Twisters have also made some changes to improve its player development at the tyke (5-6 yrs.) and novice (7-8 yrs.) age groups.

An initiation program was introduced in the fall for beginners and novices that provided the girls with six weeks of fundamentals instruction. Previously, a four-team house league operated, but organizers were concerned that the disparity between the calibre of the more-experienced and beginner players wasn't helping either group.

"Basically, it was our rep girls against your rep girls and a lot of the younger girls were lucky to even touch the puck during a game," said novice

division convenor Peter Trivino.

"Instead, we formed a rep team that stepped up to the novice B level and that left us with a three-team house league. The level of play has gone down in the house league but that's been good because it's now a level playing field for the girls who are just starting to play."

To add some variety, the novice Twisters play an interlocking schedule with the six-team Oakville league, while the six-week initiation program focuses on skills such as skating, puck control, passing and shooting.

"You can't score goals if you can't do crossovers and what we found at the beginning of this year was that Oakville's house league was a lot more developed than ours," Trivino added.

"We've had good feedback from the parents because they're happy to see the girls progress with their skill development. The IP covers the basics of hockey so that the individual coaches can then teach other parts of the game like offside or positioning at their team practices."

Ice time constraints are a challenge for the Twisters, who run the IP sessions out of the John Tonelli Arena in Milton, and the intention is to expand the program to 10 weeks next season.

Trivino hopes to have enough players to have four novice house league teams starting in the fall and eventually a tyke division as well.



Marcus Pryde of the Georgetown Raiders was able to get behind the defence of the Oakville Blades but couldn't put his shot past goalie Scott Greenham on Friday night at the Joshua's Creek Arenas. The Raiders dropped this game 5-2 and then ended Oakville's 20-game consecutive wins streak in Georgetown on Saturday with a 4-3 win. *Photo by Eamonn Maher*

Raiders in a dogfight for second

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

The final three weeks of the OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League's regular season promise to involve a lot of scoreboard-watching with the Georgetown Raiders back in a three-way tie for second place in the wacky West Division.

A 3-1 loss in Hamilton on Monday night put the 25-13-4 Raiders even with the Red Wings and Brampton Capitals on points as the race for second spot in the division and a first-round bye figures to be unresolved until the final day of the regular season on Feb. 12.

Georgetown also earned a weekend split of a home-and-away series with first-place Oakville, putting an end to the Blades' 20-game win streak here on Saturday night with a 4-3 victory.

Of their seven remaining games, the Raiders play Mississauga, Streetsville and Burlington twice and will travel to Milton on Friday night. None of those teams have clinched a playoff spot at this point and the pursuit of the sixth and final playoff berth in the conference is shaping up to be a thriller as well.

Raider head coach James Richmond noted that the unpredictability and parity within the division makes the final few regular season games much more meaningful than in the past, especially with a possible free pass at stake through the best-of-5 first round of the playoffs.

"It's there for us to take, but again, do you want the bye or do you not want it?" he said.

"If you're not playing well at the end of the regular season, you want the bye. If you're playing well you don't want it. But in our loop,

if you're not playing well at the end of the season you're not going to get the bye anyway. It's a two-headed monster."

West Division rookie of the year Andy Bathgate had the lone Raider marker early in Monday's closely-contested game in Hamilton and goalie Marc Stuart was superb, making 42 saves. Two quick goals midway through the game were the difference for the Wings, who added a last-minute empty-netter. Georgetown's coaching staff was unimpressed by the officiating of Pete Kostyk, which included three goaltender interference penalties.

The Raiders had an opportunity Saturday to knock off the West Division's top club as first-place Oakville paid a visit to the Alcott Arena.

After earning a 5-2 decision over the Raiders the previous evening, the Blades were uncharacteristically on their heels in the opening period of Saturday's rematch and the hosts were in full flight, grabbing a 3-0 lead 43 seconds into the middle stanza. Oakville cut the lead to one before Kyle Essery potted the eventual clincher in the final period. Bathgate, Peter Mrksic and Jeremy Wick rounded out the scoring.

The Blades hadn't lost since Nov. 9.

Friday night in Oakville, John Seymour scored for the Raiders less than two minutes into the contest but the Blades took a 3-1 lead into the third period and eventually won 5-2. Wick tallied on a rebound midway through the final frame. Georgetown was outshot 35-27.

Also coming up this week, the Raiders host the seventh-place Mississauga Chargers Saturday beginning at 7:30 p.m. and then the teams meet again Monday night in Port Credit.



Goalie Mandy Cronin and teammate Tiffany Hagge of the Brampton Canadette-Thunder held the Burlington Barracudas to just one goal and won their CWHL matchup Friday in Georgetown 4-1. *Photo by Eamonn Maher*

PARK MOTOR SALES - "Price Busters"



2007 FORD FUSION SEL
3.0L, V6, AWD, Auto, Power Heated Leather Seats, Power Moonroof, AM/FM Stereo CD, "Factory Warranty" 33,250 kms.
\$18,980.00

Stk.#C378



2003 DODGE DAKOTA SPORT
EXTENDED CAB, 4X4
3.9L V6, Auto, Air, Alloy Wheels, Rear Slider, "Factory Warranty" 63,889 kms.
\$14,680.00

Stk.#T340



2008 US CARGO
14 FT. LOW PROFILE ENCLOSED TRAILER
One Piece Aluminum Roof, Tandem Torsion Axles, LED Tail lights, E-Z Lub Hubs, Chrome Wheels
\$5,650.00

Stk.#653-B

Hwy. 7 between Georgetown & Acton
www.trader.ca/parkmotorsales 905-877-2261