

SPORTS & LEISURE

Raiders on the brink of playoff extinction

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Staff Writer

Getting good starts against the Oakville Blades in the first three games of their OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League playoff series hasn't exactly translated into positive results for the Georgetown Raiders.

The Blades can secure their second West Division championship in three years in Georgetown tonight (Wednesday) with a victory, completing a four-game sweep of a hard working yet frustrated Raider side.

Marcus Pryde got the visiting Raiders off to a dream start Friday night in Oakville, scoring on a penalty shot just nine seconds into the contest. But that's the only time the regular-season champion Blades have trailed in the series as they quickly tied the score and have remained a step ahead since, even though Georgetown has carried the play for lengthy periods of time.

"We're making mental mistakes that we thought going into this year with a young team we'd be able to manage, but now in the finals, we see our guys looking a little more uptight," said Raider coach James Richmond.

"It's not from a lack of effort or scoring chances. We just can't buy a goal right now. (The Blades) have a high-powered team and they take advantage when we give them something.



Georgetown's Jeremy Wick (18) is prevented from getting a good shot on Oakville Blade goaltender Scott Greenham by defender Braden Birch on Monday night at the Joshua's Creek Arenas. The visiting Raiders outshot Oakville 27-24 in the contest but the Blades took a 3-0 lead in the best-of-7 OPJHL West Division championship series with a 5-2 triumph. The Raiders play host to game four tonight at 8 p.m. in hopes of prolonging their season.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

We can't win four games in one night so we'll just go out and play Wednesday night and see how it goes."

The second-place Raiders were also dealt a tough blow when captain Evan Zych suffered a leg injury during the first period of game one, in which the Blades prevailed 4-3.

Saturday's snowstorm threatened to postpone game two of the best-of-7 matchup, but the teams and about 400 spectators were able to get to the Alcott

Arena. The Raiders again came out of the gates well, outshooting their guests 14-7, although it was scoreless heading to the first intermission.

Then the Blades seized control, scoring five second-period markers en route to a 7-1 romp, with Trevor Branning's tally in the final frame the only blemish on Oakville goalie Scott Greenham's evening.

Led by one of the OPJHL's top scorers in Nick McParland, the Blades again had a big mid-

dle stanza on Monday night, breaking up a 1-1 draw after 20 minutes with three straight goals, including a spirit-breaker with only two seconds remaining before the break.

"In the second period we had three breakdowns after we got caught pinching in and you can't get away with that at this calibre of hockey," added Richmond.

Chris Borges gave the Raiders some hope with a goal 32 seconds into the third period, but McParland netted another on

the power play to round out the 5-2 win.

Pryde had two goals in game one and leads Georgetown with nine points in eight playoff starts. Tom Jefferson also scored for the Raiders.

If a fifth game is required, it will be played Friday in Oakville beginning at 7:30 p.m. The winner of the series will move on to face either Aurora or Stouffville in the league semifinals.

NOTES: Georgetown resident Ryan Ellis was named the State University of New York Athletic Conference's player of the year and a member of the first all-star team after leading the Division III Oswego State Lakers in scoring this past season. Ellis, a third-year forward and former Oakville Blade, had 17 goals and 21 assists in 25 games for the Lakers, the defending NCAA Division III champions. Oswego State lost earlier this month to rival Plattsburgh State 4-3 in the SUNYAC championship game and was not selected for the upcoming playoff tournament... Three former Raiders, goalie Matt Harpwood, Tyler Leggo and Ryan Del Monte, were key contributors to the Brock University men's varsity team that lost at home 4-1 to McGill on Saturday in the Ontario University Athletics title game.

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

High school roundup

Eighth-ranked Bearcats nearly pull off OFSAA shocker

Seeded eighth out of 20 teams in the tournament, the Acton Bearcats came within just a few points from capturing their first provincial court title since 1989 at last week's Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association senior girls' A championship in Whitby.

Finishing first in their preliminary-round pool, the Bearcats went on to beat host E.S.C. Saint-Charles-Garnier at Durham College 25-11, 25-13 in the quarterfinals, then upset fifth-ranked West Elgin of Sturgeon Falls 25-20, 25-17 in the semifinal match on the strong serves of Ashley Nixon and Emma Jolly,

along with the quick setting of Gabby Kosziwka and Jaimi Fellows.

In the final, Acton met up with Welland's Jean Vanier, the third seed, and took the first game in the best-of-5 matchup 25-20. But Vanier held off the Bearcat attack and went on the offensive, winning the next three sets by scores of 25-21, 26-24 and 25-21 to claim the provincial A title.

Meanwhile, Georgetown's senior girls, who narrowly defeated the Bearcats in the Halton semifinals, shook off a pair of tough losses in the preliminary round of the OFSAA AAAA tourney in

Scarborough, making it to the consolation final before bowing out to Mayfield of Caledon 25-23, 30-28.

The ninth-seeded Rebels began the 16-team tourney against third-ranked Sinclair of Whitby and Toronto's Birchmount Park—the two teams that later met in the championship match. GDHS lost 25-21, 25-16 to eventual winner Sinclair and was edged 29-27, 25-22.

Wins in their next three matches against Thornhill's Thornlea, Leaside and Michael Power from Toronto sent the Rebels through to the consolation final.

Track and Field

A couple of Rebels earned trips to the medal podium in the team's opening meet of the season recently at Copps Coliseum in Hamilton—the 91st Highlanders Indoor Games.

Georgetown's Andra Wingfield placed second in the midget girls' long jump with a leap of 3.80m, 27cm behind the winning distance.

Teammate Emily Driedger was also on the heels of the race champ in the junior girls' 1,500m run, finishing in 5:11.09.

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**GEORGETOWN
TOYOTA**

PLAYOFF GAME OF THE WEEK

**GEORGETOWN JR. A
RAIDERS
VS
OAKVILLE BLADES**

**Wednesday, March 12, 2008
8:00 pm**

Mold-Masters SportsPlex (Alcott Arena)

GEORGETOWN JUNIOR "A"



www.georgetownraidersjra.com