

SPORTS & LEISURE

Not dead yet

Raiders post double OT win but still trail Blades 3-1

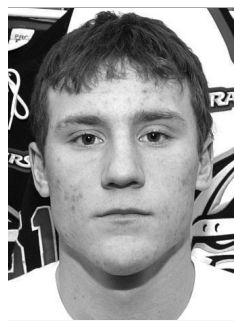
EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Playing a desperate, defensive brand of hockey helped the Georgetown Raiders remain alive in the playoffs for at least two more days, but the Oakville Blades can still advance to the next round of playoffs with a victory on home ice tonight (Friday) starting at 7:30 p.m.

The first-place Blades lead the best-of-7 OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League West Division final 3-1 and felt they could have swept the series if not for a controversial ending to game four on Wednesday in Georgetown.

Raider winger Jeremy Wick scored on a rebound midway through the second overtime period on a power play in the 4-3 decision, fending off a furious late surge by the Blades, who hit the post twice in the first OT frame.

It will, however, require something miraculous for Georgetown to extend the series further, as the Blades have beaten their Ninth Line nemesis in all five meetings at the Joshua's Creek Arenas this season.



JEREMY WICK

Still, Wednesday's win meant the Raiders avoided the embarrassment of having been swept in the West Division final for the second year in a row. The two lone returnees from the 2006-07 squad, goalie Marc Stuart and captain Evan Zych, certainly played like they didn't want to see a replay of the Hamilton Red Wings parading around the ice with the championship trophy at the Alcott Arena last March.

Zych made a surprise return from an injured knee suffered in game one, while the 21-year-old Stuart kept his composure as the Blades found their momentum in the third period, outshooting Georgetown 14-4.

The hard-charging Raiders finally benefited from some favourable bounces to build a 3-0 advantage in the second period, outshooting the regular-season division champs 23-10 through 40 minutes. But the Blades rallied in the third, forcing extra time on a Nick McParland goal, his second on the night, with less than four minutes left in regulation.

Oakville dominated much of the first overtime stanza, then took a too-many-men infraction early in the second OT that seemed to give the Raiders some hope.

Shortly after killing that penalty, Blades' defender Scott Judson was assessed a slashing major at the 11:39 mark of the second overtime period after Georgetown centre Andrew Ella crashed head-first into the boards behind the Oakville goal.

Ella, who scored one of the Raider goals and played a key defensive role as well, was cut on top of his head, lying on the ice for several minutes before he was helped off. The 20-year-old from Schomberg was walking



Georgetown goalie Marc Stuart had some close calls in overtime, like this scoring bid by Oakville's Luke Moodie, but the host Raiders were able to stave off elimination from the OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League playoffs with a 4-3 double-overtime triumph on

around in the dressing room afterward but his status for game five is uncertain.

"I couldn't see it, but (referee Brent Holdsworth) told us he couldn't just call a two-minute penalty," said Blades coach Carlo Coccimiglio.

"I don't think our guy slashed him. I think (Ella) stepped on a stick and lost control. I actually thought the penalty was going the other way, because of the way (Ella) hit (Jeff) Grenier. It was just disappointing the way it ended."

The Raiders scored 30 seconds into the subsequent man advantage as Wick rifled a loose puck into the net from close range.

Wednesday. The Blades still lead the series 3-1 and can wrap up the OPJHL's West Division title at home tonight (Friday) with a victory. Also in the photo are Raiders Scott Levitt (44) and Chris Borges (4).

Photo by Eamonn Maher

"It just worked out perfectly," said Wick, who netted his fifth goal in seven playoff starts. "Bathgate got it down low to McGowan, and he tried jamming it in the side, then it popped out right to me. It's one win, and that's how we've got to do it. Just one game at a time."

Anthony Luciani and Marcus Pryde also scored for Georgetown, which outshot Oakville 41-35 overall in front of just over 600 spectators.

Game six, if necessary, will be at the Alcott Arena Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

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

Four Georgetown rep squads begin OMHA championship series on road

Four Georgetown Raider rep teams begin their Ontario Minor Hockey Association best-of-5 championship series this weekend and all will play the opening games away from home.

The Buywise Windows & Doors minor bantam AA Raiders will be in Richmond Hill Saturday for the opener and then host game two Sunday at the Alcott B Arena at 6:45 p.m.

Georgetown's Ultimate Hockey Training minor bantam AE Raiders travel to Newmarket Sunday night

for game one and game two is set for Tuesday at the Alcott A Arena at 7:30 p.m.

In the minor midget AA division, Georgetown's Wild Wing Raiders are in Barrie Saturday for the series debut and then host the Icemen

Sunday at 4:45 p.m. on the Alcott B pad.

The Hungry Man minor midget AEs will play in Barrie on Saturday just before the minor midget AA Raiders at 5 p.m., with game two on Sunday at Alcott B at 8:45 p.m.

Players needed for Under-16 girls' soccer

Players are needed for a Georgetown Soccer Club girls' under-16 select team that will play this summer.

The coaching staff is looking for

enough players to form a squad and will hold tryouts if interest warrants.

For more info call coach Rick McCabe at 905-877-5833 or e-mail javmcc@cogeco.ca.

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