

SPORTS & LEISURE

Bulldogs blast Saints in Jr. B playoff opener



Goalie Mike Cregan of the Halton Hills Bulldogs plays keepaway with a charging Newmarket Saints' forward during their Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B playoff series opener on Saturday night at the Alcott Arena. Cregan had three assists in helping the Bulldogs score an 11-4 victory and take a 1-0 lead in the first-round matchup. *Photo by Eamonn Maher*

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Irish eyes were smiling down on the Halton Hills Bulldogs but they didn't need any luck in their opening game of the 2008 Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B playoffs.

The fourth-seeded Bulldogs dominated the first two periods of their encounter with the fifth-place Newmarket Saints at the Alcott Arena Saturday night, winning game one of the best-of-5 series 11-4.

Mike Burke of the home side scored less than a minute into the game and the 'Dogs led 8-0 early in the third period before the Saints scored the first of three power-play goals as the contest took a mean-spirited turn by that point.

Bulldog goalie Michael Cregan, who had cousins in the stands from Ireland witnessing their first-ever box lacrosse game, didn't allow a goal until the second minute of the final period, while also earning three assists, including two on shorthanded Halton Hills markers.

The 19-year-old Cregan spent last season with the Peterborough Jr. A Lakers and thanks to his Irish roots, played for the Emerald Isle's newly established box lacrosse team at the world championships in Halifax, N.S.

Released by the Lakers at the start of the 2008 campaign, Cregan

returned home to the Bulldogs and feels the team has a good chance of progressing far into the playoffs.

"I wanted to come back here to help the boys win a championship and let (the Lakers) know they made the wrong choice," he said.



MICHAEL CREGAN

"The team chemistry is great here and we've shown we can beat anyone if we play our game."

Burke, Pat Saunders and Ryan Haynes scored twice each for the hosts, with Evan Whillans, Mike Brown, Kyle Andrews, Kyle Davis and Peter Laidlaw completing the scoring.

A stingy Bulldog defence limited Newmarket's 99-point regular season scorer Patty Lee to just one assist on the night. The Saints fired their final goal into an empty Halton Hills net with just a second remaining as coach Blaine McCauley pulled Cregan, apparently concerned that a Newmarket player would take a run at his goalkeeper.

Game two of the series will be played tonight (Wednesday) at the Ray Twinney Complex in Newmarket. Halton Hills will host game three Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

Silas set to skate with Bulls

Georgetown resident Stephen Silas has made it official.

The 16-year-old defenceman signed on with the Ontario Hockey League's Belleville Bulls after being

drafted in the first round (19th overall) by the club in last month's Priority Selection.

"We are very pleased that Stephen and family have made the commitment to join our organization to continue his hockey and educational progression," said Bulls' general manager and head coach George Burnett.

"Stephen will be a valuable addition to our team and has a bright future ahead of him in Belleville."

In 73 games last season with the Halton minor midget AAA Hurricanes, Silas had 25 goals and 52 assists along with 69 penalty minutes.

As well, Silas was among 84 players selected to attend the Ontario Under-17 Provincial Identification Camp last week in Thunder Bay. The camp will identify players for the 2009 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge to be held Dec. 29 to Jan. 4 in B.C.



Georgetown's Stephen Silas was introduced to the Belleville media by Bulls' coach and general manager George Burnett.

Lapointe edged in Star final

Playing the role of underdog to a 't,' Hamilton's Ashley Sholer knocked off Canadian Golf Hall of Famer Mary Ann Lapointe of Georgetown for the championship of the Toronto Star Women's Amateur Friday.

The 22-year-old Sholer fell behind by two early on in her match with the top-seeded Lapointe at the Thornhill Golf & Country Club but won four straight holes to take control, eventually winning 2 up.

"(Lapointe) is such an amazing player. I felt if I lost to her, there's no shame in that," said Sholer, a third-year student at Oklahoma City University.

Played under hot, humid conditions, Lapointe nearly rallied to even the match— her sixth round in four days— after sinking a

birdie putt from off the green on the 15th hole that cut Sholer's lead to 1 up.

But the 48-year-old Lapointe, who won the Quebec Mid-Amateur title a couple of weeks ago, put her tee shot into the water on the 18th hole and Sholer prevailed 2 up.

"Afternoon matches get a little bit ugly sometimes," Lapointe said.

The North Halton Golf & Country Club member was victorious in the Toronto Star Women's Amateur twice previously and has now made the match play championship final on three occasions.

She won the 36-hole stroke play segment of last week's event and then defeated her first three opponents in match play before falling to the second-ranked Sholer.

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