

SPORTS & LEISURE

'Dogs headed to provincial final

Rally past Mimico in thrilling fashion but now face powerhouse Six Nations

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Staff Writer

They broke The Hex, and the reward for the Halton Hills Bulldogs is a meeting with the top-ranked team in Canada as their remarkable playoff run of 2008 continues.

The Bulldogs earned a berth in the provincial championship series for the first time in franchise history after coming back to knock off the Mimico Mountaineers in their Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B East Conference final series over the weekend.

A 7-5 win over the Mountaineers Sunday night in front of about 1,000 spectators at the Alcott Arena in the fifth-and-deciding game of the series propelled the Bulldogs into a matchup with the mighty Six Nations Rebels, who rallied from a 2-0 series deficit to beat the Elora Mohawks in game five, 7-6, on Monday night in the OLA West Conference final.

Game one of the best-of-5 title series will be held at the Gaylord Powless Arena in Oshweken Friday starting at 8 p.m., with game two Sunday in Georgetown at 7 p.m.

The Bulldogs faced elimination for the second straight series against Mimico

Friday night, but dominated the home side, chalking up a 13-3 win, marking the ninth consecutive playoff game between the two division foes that ended with the road team victorious.

In the deciding game on Sunday, the home side took a 3-1 lead to the first intermission before the Mounties struck back with three quick goals to go out in front. Pat Saunders scored his third goal of the night to even the score to set up a tense third period, with Kyle Davis cementing the result on an empty net goal with 17 seconds remaining. Mike Burke connected twice for the 'Dogs and rookie Chad Cummings added a key third-period marker.

"We finally broke the curse and got the first goal at home, which was so big," said Davis, a Caledon resident. "Up until Friday night, we hadn't played our best lacrosse and that win really opened it up for us. When we give up four or five goals, our offence should be able to score



PAT SAUNDERS

enough for us to win that game."

Saunders, who led the OLA Jr. B circuit with a team record 57 goals and 102 points, was hoping to play the team that cut him in his second year of junior—Elora—but for the moment was just glad to see the last of Mimico.

"They had been shutting me down all series, so it was nice to score three and come out on top," said the 19-year-old from Arthur, a possible National Lacrosse League selection. "They were high sticking me, trying to get in my head and didn't give me much room. You just have to play through it."

"We just have a good team here that works hard and that's all. It's not all about the skill. It's who wants it the most."

In Friday's rout at Mimico, the host Mounties actually scored within the first minute of the contest, which only seemed to fire up the Bulldogs. The visitors led 7-2 after the first period, chasing starting goalie Stephen Fryer, and never let up, shrugging off the Mounties' intimidation tactics.

Burke had three goals and three assists to pace the offence and Davis helped set up five scores. Cummings (3), Saunders (2), Evan Whillans (2), Michael Licata, Mike Brown and Brendan MacDonald found the twine for the conference champs.

In Six Nations, the 'Dogs face the defending Founders Cup winners who went undefeated (20-0) during the regular season for the second year in a row and at one point owned a 48-game win streak. But the Rebels lost to Windsor in the second round of the 2008 OLA playoffs and dropped the first two games against Elora before storming back to eliminate the Mohawks.

Halton Hills head coach Blaine McCauley says the Rebels will be a daunting opponent for his squad, which never did have an official captain, opting instead to have four assistants.

"We are a young team but our older guys who went through the wars last year really learned to play in these difficult situations and passed that on," McCauley said.

"You don't necessarily need a guy with a 'C' on his jersey when you have group leadership and sometimes that works better than just a single leader. We did it by committee and it seems to have worked because we've had a lot of leaders step up at some point. You can go up and down the roster."



Veteran Halton Hills' forward Nic Grasby (13) was the first player to reach Bulldogs' goalie Michael Cregan after the final buzzer sounded Sunday night and the celebrations began after the local Jr. B lacrosse club eliminated Mimico to earn their first OLA East Conference championship.

Photo by Eamonn Maher



Mimico's Scott Bird was foiled on this point-blank scoring attempt by Halton Hills Bulldog goalkeeper Michael Cregan during their OLA playoff game on Sunday evening. Cregan had a superb game and backstopped his team to a 7-5 victory, and now the Bulldogs will play Six Nations for the Ontario Jr. B title.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

Sinclair, Lapointe place 8th, 10th at tournaments

Gloria Sinclair of the North Halton Golf & Country Club finished eighth at last week's Golf Association of Ontario Senior Women's Amateur Championship held at the Loyalist Country Club near Kingston.

Sinclair, 61, turned in rounds of 86-77-78 to finish a dozen strokes behind winner Ivy Steinberg of Cedar Valley, Ont.

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Georgetown's Mary Ann Lapointe shot a two-over-par 74 on Friday to end up in a tie for 10th at the Royal Canadian Golf Association Women's Amateur Championship, an event she's won four times.

The 48-year-old Lapointe recorded rounds of 73-74-73-74, finishing up nine strokes back of champion Stacey Keating of Australia.

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