

# SPORTS AND LEISURE

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## Top Chargers 1-0 Raiders win last-minute nailbiter

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Staff Writer

On a night when Ontario's provincial elections resulted in a Liberal landslide, the outcome of the OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League contest between host Georgetown and Mississauga went right down to the wire.

Veteran winger Justin Lacey chipped in another timely goal for his sixth of the season with only 1:35 left in the third period to give the 7-3-1 Raiders a 1-0 victory over the stubborn Chargers, who have now dropped a pair of one-goal decisions to Georgetown in the past month.

Raider goaltender Johnathan McQueen posted his first shutout in making 21 saves, not counting the two empty nets missed by the 4-5-1 Chargers, while Mississauga's Derek Brennan faced 28 shots and felt that Lacey's winner didn't entirely cross the goal line on the late scramble.

If there was a similarity between the election and Wednesday evening's game, it seemed that the voter apathy at the polls was matched by the disinterest shown by many of the on-ice participants at the Alcott Arena.

Both teams went 0 for 5 on the power play and picked up just five minor penalties apiece, appearing as though they were in a hurry to get home and find out if Premier Dalton McGuinty would be re-elected as the game took just 1:55 to play.

"The goalies played well but there were a lot of guys with slow legs tonight," said Raider coach James Richmond. "There was a lot of standing around when we needed to just keep going at Mississauga and fortunately we were able to get the two points. We need to have players who are going full out all the time and not waiting around for good things to happen."

The 17-year-old McQueen is now 4-2-1 after taking over for projected starting netminder Paul Claxton,



Forward Andy Bathgate of the Georgetown Raiders tries to outrace a couple of Mississauga Charger defenders during the second period of Wednesday evening's Jr. A matchup at the Alcott Arena. Bathgate's linemate Justin Lacey scored the lone goal of the game with just over 90 seconds left in regulation as the Raiders escaped with two more points to remain in second place in their division.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

who has been out for the past couple of weeks recovering from an emergency appendectomy. Richmond expects that Claxton will return to the nets in two weeks time but has been pleased with how McQueen has settled in.

"He played a couple of OHL games with Sarnia and I think when he came over here he thought it would be easy at first, but this can be a tough league on goalies," added Richmond.

With the victory, the second-place Raiders trail front-running Hamilton by two points with a game in hand in the OPJHL's West Conference heading into the weekend. The Red Wings were shocked by the previously winless Buffalo Jr. Sabres 5-4 in overtime on Tuesday at the HSBC Arena, allowing Georgetown to creep closer in the standings.

The Raiders will host the third-place Oakville Blades Saturday at the Alcott Arena beginning at 7:30 p.m., followed by a road trip to Etobicoke to face the newly relocated Streetsville Derbys on Sunday night.

Pegged to make his debut for Georgetown Saturday

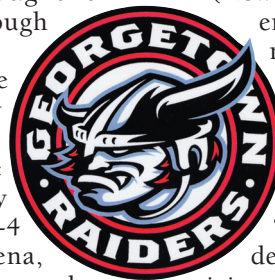
is 19-year-old forward Marcus Pryde of Oakville, who was acquired in a cash deal from the Newmarket Hurricanes this week.

Pryde had five goals and 10 assists in nine games for the Hurricanes, who will host the Dudley Hewitt Cup in April and are loading up on veteran talent.

"(Newmarket's) been bringing in a lot of new players and weren't going to billet me or look after my traveling so it worked out well that I can play in Georgetown and be closer to home," said Pryde, who actually gave up on ice hockey a couple of years ago and was content to play elite-level roller hockey instead.

"I honestly think (roller hockey) helped develop my skills better because it's 4-on-4, no icing or offsides so you have to have patience and vision on the floor. Before, I didn't understand where I could go with hockey and then I realized what schooling opportunities were available and how important education is, so that's why I signed with Newmarket."

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



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