

SPORTS & LEISURE

Raiders' road show continues to produce wins

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Staff Writer

Although they've won six games in a row, the Georgetown Raiders aren't exactly steamrolling through what could be considered one of the softer segments of their Ontario Junior Hockey League schedule.

The 7-2-0 Raiders nipped the host Buffalo Jr. Sabres 2-1 on Monday evening to remain unbeaten on the road so far and also outgunned the Brampton Capitals 9-6 Saturday night at the Alcott Arena.

Georgetown now has a 5-0-0 road record in 2008-09, not including the Governors' Showcase win over the host Bowmanville Eagles. And while the Raiders appear to have recovered from two poor home efforts to start the campaign, Saturday's goalfest against the 3-4-4 Capitals provided plenty of cringing yet entertaining moments for the 250 spectators in attendance.

After building a 4-1 first-period lead, the Raiders gave up three goals on the first three shots of the middle frame, chasing starter Kevin Campbell.

The Capitals, with Georgetown Minor Hockey Association products Chase Nieuwendyk and defender Jake Merchant in their lineup, actually led 6-5 early in the final period before first star Kyle Essery scored twice in the last three minutes to break up the tie as he and linemates Trevor Branning and Jordan So connected for two pinpoint tip-in goals.

"In the second period we were kind of laid back, but then in the third we just wanted to win it more than they did," said the 17-year-old Essery, a Mississauga resident who has five goals and six assists in nine starts.

"I played together with Branning a lot last year and So has fit in great. I think we're finally finding our rhythm as a team after the rough start we had."

The 5-foot-8, 175-pound Essery began the season in the training camp of the Ontario Hockey League's Belleville Bulls but retained his U.S. college scholarship eligibility and has been in discussions with St. Lawrence University.

He's one of four Raiders who were invited to attend Team Canada East tryouts during the pre-season— captain Evan Zych, winger Mark McGowan and goalie Tony Capobianco being the others— in hopes of making the



Georgetown Raider forward Steve Perfetto (14) clears a loose puck away from Brampton forwards Chase Nieuwendyk and Adam Scuglia in front of goalie Tony Capobianco on Saturday at the Alcott Arena. The

Raiders prevailed in a see-saw contest in which they led 4-1 and trailed 6-5 before rallying for the victory in Ontario Junior Hockey League action.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

team that will play in the World Jr. A Hockey Challenge Nov. 1-9 in Camrose, Alta.

They're expected to find out in a couple of weeks whether they've made the Team Canada East team, as Zych did last year.

"The best experience of my life," he said recently.

Capobianco was the game's top performer on Monday in Buffalo, as the Raiders were outshot 35-17 and had to kill off eight power plays, compared to just three for the 3-3-2 Jr. Sabres.

Goals by Branning and Fred Gervasi gave Georgetown a 2-0 lead heading into the third period before the shutout was broken.

Jeremy Wick notched a hat trick on Saturday for the Raiders, completed with a last-minute empty-netter. Branning, David Mathers, Gervasi and Evan Zych also tallied.

Nieuwendyk didn't earn a point on his hometown rink Saturday but the rookie winger has two goals and eight

assists in 10 games with the Caps this year.

Georgetown head coach and general manager James Richmond said that he's looking forward to a tough test on Friday in Burlington against the MacKinnon Division-leading Cougars, who are one point ahead of the Raiders with a 7-1-1 mark.

"Burlington has a good young team that always plays us tough and if we expect to be near the top of the standings again, these are the type of road games you have to win," said Richmond.

"We're doing okay right now, but certainly we could be playing much better, no doubt."

Richmond was upset that two of his players were cut in the face by errant Jr. Sabre sticks Monday without any penalties called and planned to call the OJHL about it.

Also coming up this week, the Raiders host the 3-5-0 Streetsville Derbys and travel to Vaughan to take on the Vipers on Monday night.

Joseph Gibbons runners claim two team titles at meet

Just over 500 students from 10 local-area elementary schools turned Cedarvale Park into a field of frenzy last Thursday for the Optimist Club of Georgetown's annual cross-country running races.

Joseph Gibbons of Georgetown took home two titles in the team points category in a closely contested meet overall.

The Halton Board of Education will

hold its annual cross-country meet for North Halton schools at Sherwood Forest Park on Fairview St. in Burlington tomorrow (Thursday).

The younger students (age 3-6) will compete from 10-11:30 a.m., followed by the older grades from 12:30-2 p.m.

The Amos Halton Meet, in which schools bring their five best runners, will

take place Wednesday, Oct. 15 at Sherwood Forest.

For the Halton Catholic District School Board, a regional meet will take place Friday and Saturday at Bronte Creek Provincial Park for students in Grades 4-8.

Following are the individual and team results from Thursday's Optimist meet:

8-year-old Girls

1. Rachael de Melo, George Kennedy;
2. Rachael Carson, Park; 3. Lauren Osborne, Harrison

Team title— Park

8-year-old Boys

1. Daniel Saulzner, Joseph Gibbons;
2. Jacob Albert, Silver Creek; 3. Josh Dors,

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