

Golden Hawks to face Siskins in PJHL first round

By Jake Couteplatte

It's been a challenging year for the Caledon Golden Hawks, but the junior C club's biggest challenge yet lies ahead.

With the Provincial Junior Hockey regular season over, the eighth-place Hawks have drawn the first-place Stayner Siskins in the first round of the playoffs.

They finished the season with a 1-1 record in the final week of play, besting the Huntsville Otters 5-4 on the road Saturday before falling 6-4 to the Alliston Hornets at Caledon East Sunday.

Andrew Ireland had an incredible game between the pipes for the Hawks against Huntsville, facing more than 40 shots in a full game played. With Jason Cumbo sent to the Penetang Kings earlier this month, Ireland should be given the brunt of the duty heading into the post-season.

A slow start to the season was the reason for Caledon landing in the last-place spot, though they have been one of the top teams in the Carruthers division since the start of the year.

In the final month, they earned points in six of their eight games, finishing with a record of 11-29-2. Meanwhile, the Siskins have been red hot all year, usurping the throne of the Alliston Hornets in early January and heading into playoffs with a record of 39-3-0.

It is the first time in four seasons that the Hornets were not crowned regular season champions, with Stayner last doing so in 2011-12.

After some lopsided losses earlier in the season, the Hawks took the Siskins to overtime in early January after a late-game comeback, which can only provide fuel to fire the red-hot Hawks.

The teams kick off their first round series tonight (Thursday) when the Hawks visit Stayner Memorial Arena, where the Siskins lost just one game all season.

Action then shifts to Caledon East Friday night, with a 9 p.m. start time.

In its six year history, Caledon has made it out of the first round of the playoffs once, in 2015-16. It was a different-look Siskins they took down in the quarter-finals in six games, before falling in seven games to the Penetang Kings.

Elsewhere around the league, the second-place Hornets face the seventh-place Schomberg Cougars, the third-place Penetang Kings face the sixth-place Orillia Terriers, and the fourth-place Midland Flyers take on the fifth-place Huntsville Otters.

All pairings are in a best-of-seven format.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.jrcgoldenhawks.pointstreaksites.com



Matt Magliozzi plants himself in front of the Stayner net in a Caledon Golden Hawks game against the Siskins in November. Photo by Jake Courteplatte