

Caledon Jr. C Bandits fall twice in opening weekend

By Jake Courtepatte

The Caledon Bandits met a heavy-handed Cornwall Celtics team to open the Ontario Junior C Lacrosse League season over the weekend, both offensively and physically.

In a constant parade to the penalty box for both clubs, the Celtics managed to pot a total of 32 goals over two games which featured very little five-on-five action.

The Benson Centre in Cornwall was the venue for the weekend back-to-back series, with Caledon drawing first blood in game one Saturday. Josh MacIssac, in his second year with the club, found the back of the net just more than five minutes into the first period. The teams traded a few more to bring a 2-2 tie into the intermission, with newcomer Robert Cristello scoring his first as a Bandit. Cornwall opened up a healthy lead in the second, outscoring Caledon 7-3, a lead they would not relinquish through the third. The Celtics took the season opener 14-9, while the teams split 127 minutes in penalties.

The bad blood spilled over into game two the following afternoon, with fighting majors and unsportsmanlike conduct penalties handed out like candy. Cornwall outscored the Bandits 8-0 in the first 20 minutes, with the teams playing much more evenly over the final 40, despite a final score of 18-6.

Jordan Oshowy led the Bandits with a goal and two assists in the contest.

The Bandits are looking to rebound from a 2016 season that saw them bounced from the first round of the playoffs by the Fergus Thistles for the second straight year, after managing just three regular season wins.

They bring a much more veteran squad to the floor in 2017, after losing only one player to age eligibility and seeing some familiar names make a return. Oshowy and Austin Heughan, both three-year veterans with the Bandits, should provide a healthy spark of offence, complimented by some talented rookie pickups.

A new season also brings a new home to the Bandits, who have moved out of Mayfield Arena and into the one in Caledon East. Home games will be split between Tuesday and Friday nights, with the return of the hardest shot competitions at intermissions. With the first five games of the season on the road, the home opener is scheduled for May 23 against the Wilmot Wild, with the opening draw set for 8 p.m.

In the meantime, a pair of tough games lie ahead this weekend for the Bandits when they visit the Oakville Buzz Saturday, followed by the Six Nations Warriors Sunday.

The season schedule consists of 16 games and will run until the end of June.

For schedules, visit www.banditslacrosse.com/jrc