

2014 produces good results ? Golden Hawks look to next season with some optimism

By Brian Lockhart

After bowing out of the 2014 Junior C playoffs with a loss to the Schomberg Cougars in the quarter-final round, the Caledon Junior C Golden Hawks will do what every other team does in the off season ? plan for next year.

The Hawks had a respectable season, finishing in fourth place in the Georgian Mid Ontario Hockey League with a 21-19 record and 47 points.

They started the season with new coach Sandy McCarthy and quite a few returning players, determined to have a better result in 2013-14.

The team ran into trouble midway in the season when they lost a few key players due to injury and school commitments.

?I think something that we learned from this year is it's important to keep that synergy early in the season,? said Club President Jake MacIntyre. ?Those games you put away gives you a chance to get one round under your belt to get all those playoff jitters out of the way, because you're seeded higher. In Schomberg, it was unfortunate we went in the first round, because we knew it would be a good series between the two teams because we are similar in our playing style.?

Filling the missing spots on the team are key of producing a well rounded squad, MacIntyre said.

?If you look at the kids from last season that returned, they were the main core that we built and branched out from,? he added. ?It becomes, ?here is what we have, and this is what we need'.?

With McCarthy on the bench this season, the team responded well to the former NHLer's methods and had a lot of respect for his experience.

?When he talked, they listened,? MacIntyre observed. ?He's been there, he's done it. He knows what it takes to be there. It's not like he was given anything on a silver spoon. He earned it. When he says something they listen.?

McCarthy led the Alliston Hornets to back-to-back GMOHL championships in 2012 and 2013 before making the move to the Caledon bench at the start of the 2013-14 season.

From a player's perspective, the squad improved this year and worked hard on their discipline on the ice.

?We had some ups and downs along the way, but overall it was better than last year,? said defenceman Cody Forgione. ?It's not where we wanted to finish but we where happy with the outcome ? somewhat. We kind of slowed down in the later half of the season.?

Forgione said the squad appreciated having a new coach on the bench.

?Sandy really took care of us,? he said. ?He treated us like his own family.?

Forgione is returning next season and said he is relying on other returning players to form the nucleus of the team.

?I think we're going to have a good core group of vets ? the same guys that came back from last year. Hopefully, we'll get some good talent at the summer camps and have some good chemistry in the off season and bring it to the new season.?

While the squad worked on their on-ice discipline this season, they again ended the regular season as the team with the most penalty minutes in the GMOHL and that worked against them in several games.

It would also be good to see more Caledon residents come out and fill up the stands during Golden Hawks' home games. While attendance was low this season with a core group of fans coming out to every game, local hockey fans will find the speed, talent and excitement of Junior C hockey to be well worth the price of admission and a great Sunday evening entertainment.

The Hawks officially ended the 2014 season with an informal pick-up game at the Caledon East arena between team members.



The Caledon Golden Hawks wrapped up the 2013-14 season with a final informal game of pick-up hockey on their home ice at Caledon East. The Hawks finished the regular season in fourth spot in the Georgian Mid Ontario Junior C Hockey League before going out in the first round of the playoffs. Photo by Brian Lockhart

