

Admirals take three of four points with OT win in Georgetown and OT tie versus Buffalo

By Jim Stewart

The Caledon Admirals put in four periods of extra work on Thursday and Saturday to take three of four points from two playoff-bound clubs.

The plucky Admirals battled the fifth-place Buffalo Junior Sabres to a 2-2 double overtime tie on Thursday night at the Mayfield Recreation Complex.

On Saturday, the Admirals edged the eighth-place Georgetown Raiders 4-3 in another double overtime tilt when leading scorer Cam Lang fired the game winner with 16 seconds left.

With the tie against the Sabres and the win versus the Raiders, Caledon improved its record to 4-4-2-0 (.500) over their last ten games. This is a remarkable improvement in performance, given that the rookie-laden Admirals accrued a 4-26-0-0 record (.133) over their first thirty games.

Admirals Head Coach Chris Taylor was pleased by his team's improvement.

?There's been a huge progression. At the beginning of the season, the young players struggled, but now they think we have a chance to win every night. They know they can be competitive in this league and they're motivated every night.?

In Georgetown on Saturday night, the Raiders opened the scoring with Braydon Hobson's power play goal at 10:59 of the first period.

Fifty-four seconds into the middle frame, Justin Huynh gave Georgetown (17-15-2-4) a short-lived two-goal lead when he beat Caledon goaltender Calem Yorke.

Admirals forward Kaleb Young banged one past Georgetown netminder Noah Mavin just 13 seconds after Huynh's marker to pull Caledon to within one.

Freeman's unassisted goal at 17:46 tied the game heading into the second intermission.

Ben Austin restored the Raiders' lead five minutes into the final frame, but Ryan Haeney forced overtime when he converted a three-way passing play with Cam Lang and Freeman and beat Georgetown goaltender Noah Mavin. Lang and Freeman earned their 25th and 17th assists of the season, respectively, on the tying goal by Haeney.

After a scoreless first extra period, Lang played overtime hero when his power play goal provided the margin of victory with 16 seconds left on the clock. Freeman earned his third point of the game with an assist on Lang's dramatic game winner. Oddly enough, it was into an empty net. Coach Taylor explained the context:

?Georgetown is fighting for a playoff spot so they were looking for two points and pulled their goalie. Agius did most of the work on the winning goal. He secured the puck, passed it to Freeman who sent Lang on a breakaway pass, and Lang fired it into the empty net. It was a bit anticlimactic. We didn't play our best game in Georgetown, but we found a way to win. We were chasing Georgetown all game so getting a goal late in the game to send it into overtime was nice. It's something we haven't done too often this year. I was proud of their effort late in the third period and in overtime.?

In Caledon on Thursday, Eric He's power play goal at 8:03 broke a scoreless tie to give the Admirals a 1-0 lead. Curtis Freeman

earned his 16th assist of the season on the Admirals' go-ahead goal. Coach Taylor complimented Freeman's helper.

?That was a beautiful setup by Curtis on He's goal. He had a very productive pair of games with five points.?

Freeman's power play goal at 16:53 gave the home team a two-goal margin heading into the second intermission.

The Junior Sabres (21-16-2-1) rallied in the final frame to salvage a point on the road.

Dylan McFadden's 18th of the season got Buffalo on the scoreboard four minutes into the third period.

McFadden fired the tying goal with 1:58 left in the game. Cam Doran earned his 22nd assist of the season on McFadden's marker.

Coach Taylor expressed his disappointment that the Admirals didn't beat Buffalo in regulation.

?We were up 2-0 and it was a far different game than we played in Georgetown. Buffalo got a lucky bounce on their first goal in the third period?the puck deflected twice and went high over Yorke ? and they scored late in the game to tie it up.?

The teams fought to scoreless overtime periods and a significant factor in Caledon's success was the steady play of goaltender Calem Yorke. The rookie netminder blocked all eight Sabre shots in the fourth and fifth periods of play and turned in an excellent effort between the pipes.

In all, Yorke repelled 44 of the 46 shots he faced in 70 minutes of work and earned Taylor's praise:

?Yorkey played really well. He had great focus. He was calm and forced face-offs to slow down Buffalo. As they pushed hard at the end of the game and in overtime, he slowed the game down for us. When your goalie is making saves look easy, there is no panic. He's found his stride as a junior goalie.?

Coach Taylor was pleased with his team's effort against a pair of playoff contenders like Georgetown and Buffalo.

?The dressing room is really positive. The guys are motivated, full of energy, and confident. The guys are also seeing that they are competitive in this league. We're embracing the role of spoilers.?

The Admirals host the Milton Menace on Thursday, January 23 at The Icebox.

Opening faceoff is 7:30 p.m. Caledon's Junior A squad travels to King Township to battle the Rebellion on January 26 and will take part in the Zancor Centre's grand opening.

The Admirals have been fine tuning their role as spoiler in the last four weeks and could diminish the Rebellion's slim playoff hopes with a road victory at the sparkling new recreational centre in King City. Puck drop is 3 p.m.