

Admirals? three power play goals cue rally in 4-3 comeback win over Oakville Blades

By JIM STEWART

The Caledon Admirals fired three power play goals, including Clarence Allain's game-winner, in a 4-3 come-from-behind win over the Blades in Oakville on Friday night.

Caledon Head Coach Chris Taylor was pleased with the efficacy of his team's power play and penalty killing at the Sixteen Mile Sports Complex.

"Our special teams did a great job on the Olympic-sized ice in Oakville. It's great to see these improvements, especially since the team has been working so often on the power play and penalty killing in practice. They've been relentless recently. The PK went 4 for 4 and getting three goals on the power play is a really good sign."

The biggest of the power play goals was scored by Allain, who cobbled together a three-point night in Oakville. Coach Taylor applauded Allain's game-winner and his linemates' contributions to the Admirals' road win.

"Clarence's goal was the result of the hard work and playmaking of Ayden Agius and Cam Lang. Clarence was sitting back door. He's a smart player and finds the openings for Lang to get him the puck. Clarence picked up assists on our other two power play goals and he flourished on the Olympic-size ice. He gets more time and space on the big surface."

Coach Taylor elaborated on Allain's improvement over the course of the season "in many ways mirroring the recent successes of the Admirals squad.

"He's gotten a lot more comfortable and mature. Clarence has the skill to play in any league. He's adapted well to the physical and mental demands of junior hockey."

Allain's three-point night and the team's success in Oakville compared favorably to the Admirals' 7-4 home ice loss on Thursday versus the Niagara Falls Canucks. Coach Taylor connected his team's back-to-back performances.

"We played well against Niagara Falls and the score didn't indicate the overall effort since the Canucks scored two empty net goals. We ran into a hot goalie in the first two periods, and we didn't get enough bounces. We outplayed Niagara Falls in the third period and created lots of chances. I thought our guys took that excellent third period effort against the Canucks into Friday in Oakville."

Coach Taylor also applauded the play of Admirals goaltender Blake Sloan versus the Blades.

"He played really well, but I also thought we defended much better on Friday night. We limited Oakville to a lot of perimeter shots until the final five minutes. Blake shut them down when we needed him. He stepped up and made key saves down the stretch."

Sloan turned aside 30 of the 33 shots he faced, but it was the Blades who jumped out to a 2-0 lead on a pair of goals by Lucas Tye. The Oakville forward scored with 44 seconds left in the first period and tallied again 15 seconds into the second period.

Caledon responded to Tye's outburst by scoring two power play goals in less than three minutes "the first by Owen Meli at 5:57 and the second by Nasser Abou-Marie at 8:47" to pull into a 2-2 tie.

Luca Rosati restored the Blades' one-goal lead at 13:04 of the middle frame, but three minutes later, Admirals forward Deacon King notched his tenth of the season to deadlock the game at 3-3.

Allain earned his third point of the game at 7:45 when his tenth goal of the season gave Caledon its first lead in Oakville. Cam Lang picked up his team-leading 24th assist of the season on Allain's game-winner.

It was Caledon's first win of the season against the Blades?another indicator that the Admirals are righting the ship. Oakville won the two previous meetings?4-1 in early-December and 5-2 in late-October?when the rookie-laden Admirals lineup was struggling mightily with the rigors of junior hockey. The Admirals are 4-7-1-0 (.375) in their last 12 games after accruing a 3-23-0-0 (.115) record in their first 26 games.

Caledon hosts the fifth-place Buffalo Junior Sabres (21-16-1-1) on Thursday, January 16. Puck drop at the Mayfield Recreation Complex is 7.30 p.m.