

Bandits end regular season with win over Hamilton



The Caledon Bandits ended the regular season on a high note, defeating the second-place Hamilton Bengals 8-7 at Mayfield Arena Tuesday night. The first playoff round is now underway. Photo by Brian Lockhart

By Brian Lockhart

Now they just have to wait for the outcome of other games to see where they will land in the standings and who they will battle against in the playoffs.

The Caledon Bandits won their final regular season home game with a narrow 8-7 victory over the Hamilton Bengals at Mayfield Arena Tuesday.

The Bandits were leading by four goals in the second period when the Bengals rallied to score four and challenged the Caledon squad in the final frame of action.

"The first and second, we were really strong," said Bandits' head coach Mike Gillian. "The second period is usually our weak period. They kept it consistent, they kept it going from all the success we had in the first period."

The visitors turned up the pressure after coming within one goal of tying it up, but the Bandits response was to shut them down in the final minutes.

"Their defence, in the third period, I think, played us harder than they did in the first two periods," Gillian said. "The guys stuck to the game plan. We were short more than we wanted to be."

With a little more than a minute left on the clock, a time-out was called and both teams crowded the benches to work out their final strategy for the last minute of the game.

"It's clock management," Gillian explained. "You've got to get it in their head that we have time on the shot clock to kill. We don't need another goal. We just need them staying out of our net. We have to stay calm. It's clock management. We have 30 (seconds) to kill. After that 30, we're golden."

The Bandits were in the third spot in the Ontario Junior C Lacrosse League West Division standings after Tuesday's game with 16 points. But that could change, depending on the outcome of other games in the league over the week. Both Wilmot and Fergus have 16 points and could move up and drop the Bandits to fourth place.

"We have to do what we've been doing all year and focus," Gillian said. "Every week we work on the same things, and from here it's all up-hill."

In the OJCLL West Division, Halton Hills is currently in top spot with 29 points, followed by Hamilton with 22.

Halton Hills is also the over-all league winner with Cornwall of the East Division in second place with 26 points.

There will be reports of the first round of the OJCLL playoffs next week.