

Bandits in first place after three games

By Brian Lockhart

They may be only three games into the 2013 season, but being at the top of the pack is always a good thing, no matter how far into the schedule you are.

The Caledon Bandits finished the opening week in first place of the Ontario Junior C Lacrosse League point standings after winning two of their first three games.

The season opener May 8 ended with a 14-12 loss to the Halton Hills Bulldogs, but that was after a gruelling game that saw the first three periods end in an 11-11 tie.

The teams returned for the regulation overtime period with Halton gaining the edge in overtime play and leaving with the two-goal win.

Game two May 10 proved to be a solid defensive effort for the Bandits when they shut down Mimico in the first two periods, allowing no goals but scoring four to lead 4-0 going into the final 20 minutes.

Caledon's Michael Rybka, Jake Debiasi, Sam McCanna and Austin Heughan scored the Bandits' goals in the first two frames. Rybka turned it up a notch, scoring two more in the third period, followed by singles from Jesse Noll and Brent Shaw.

The final was 8-4.

The return to Mayfield arena for the home opener May 14 pitted the Bandits against the Shelburne Vets.

Despite scoring the only goal in the first period, the Caledon squad stumbled in the second, allowing Shelburne to score three goals in the first five minutes.

The first period goal came from McCanna.

The Bandits' response was to come back hard later in the period when McCanna notched his second of the game, followed by two more goals from Rybka and Chris Sehl.

“Our defence did a great job. We only had three more shots on them, so that says a lot,” said Bandits' assistant coach Jeff Sehl. “Our goalie (Nicholas DiMaso) did a great job with the rebounds.”

With a one-goal lead heading into the final period, the Bandits managed to notch two more against the Shelburne squad's single to leave with a 6-4 win, and their second victory of the season.

Noll scored the Bandits' fifth of the night with Rybka getting number six, his second of the game.

“Our offence needs to pick their shots,” Sehl said after the game, reflecting on how the squad works in practice. “We work a lot on getting opportunities.”

The team's roster is being finalized, with only some minor tweaking left to go.

“As of now, we're working on one more player. After that, it's pretty much set,” Sehl said.

The squad had a week off before heading down to Hamilton to take on the Bengals.

“We've got the weekend off then a game down in Hamilton,” Sehl observed. “That's always been a tough game for us. We'll work on our offence and we'll be okay.”

The Bandits will return home to Mayfield arena May 28, to host Halton Hills.

The game is scheduled to start at 8 p.m.