

Caledon Admirals cool off in New Year after 4-1 win in North York and hard-fought 2-2 tie against the #1-ranked Trenton Golden Hawks

By Jim Stewart

Rookie-laden hockey teams like the Caledon Admirals are prone to peaks and valleys in their performance as players adjust over the course of 56-game schedule to the rigors of the OJHL.

After a sustained improvement to close out the 2024 portion of their schedule, the young club started 2025 with a pair of disappointing losses: a 5-0 whitewashing at the hands of the Mississauga Chargers and 9-4 loss on home ice to the King Rebellion.

Head Coach Chris Taylor took the latest setbacks in stride and felt that the Christmas layoff affected his surging hockey club adversely.

"We had been off for ten days when we played Mississauga. The guys came out flat and it was a lack of maturity. To their credit, the Chargers came at us from the start. We down 3-0 pretty quickly and it was hard to come back."

Coach Taylor thought the club played a much better game against the Rebellion despite the final score.

"We had a hot start against King and got up two goals, but they pushed back really hard. It was more than the team could handle. It was a one-off situation and I know they'll bounce back in their next game."

Taylor's confidence in his crew is evident and it has rubbed off on the young team. His Admirals continued their midseason metamorphosis by defeating the Rangers 4-1 in North York in their last Sunday game before Christmas. Even more impressive than their decisive road win in Toronto was the Admirals' hard-fought 2-2 double overtime tie earned on Thursday night against the high-flying Trenton Golden Hawks, the #1-ranked team in the Canadian Junior Hockey League.

The Admirals' recent remarkable run, during which they have compiled a 5-8-1-0 record after opening the season 1-20-0-0, has had an impact on the team's demeanor and this was evident in North York during their matinee at Herb Carnegie Arena.

Although the Rangers opened the scoring when Tyron Fevry beat Caledon goaltender Blake Sloan only 36 seconds into the contest, the Admirals responded immediately to the home side's opening cannon fire. At 1:28, the Admirals fired back when Stefano Fiorini beat North York netminder Nicolas Morvan, a PJHL callup who was having a fine year between the pipes with the Schomberg Cougars. Fiorini's tying goal was set up by Curtis Freeman's 13th assist of the season.

Just over two minutes later, Cam Lang's team-leading 20th assist set up Nasser Abou-Marie's power play goal to give the visitors a 2-1 lead and the young Caledon team exuded confidence for the rest of the contest.

Coach Taylor noted that the Lang and Abou-Marie have been a potent combination for the team.

"Cam is a natural playmaker and he makes it happen out there. Nasser has developed a nice finishing touch and gets the dirty goals because he has great hands."

Shylen McGahey augmented the Admirals' lead at 6:40 of the middle frame and Lang's unassisted marker one minute into the third period provided Caledon with a three-goal lead to subdue North York.

Lang's marker had a big impact on the team, according to Coach Taylor.

"Cam's breakaway goal put the game away. It gave us some relief on the road and you could tell that the goal finished off North

York.?

Beating the Rangers on the road was an uplifting win for the Admirals, but stealing a point from the best Junior A team in Canada the following week at the Mayfield Icebox served as a high water mark for Caledon thus far in the 2024-25 campaign.

Caledon netminder Calem Yorke turned aside 41 of 43 shots to earn the tie versus the juggernaut that is the Trenton Golden Hawks (28-3-2-0). Trenton's .879 winning percentage led the OJHL at the Christmas Break, but the Admirals seemed unfazed when it hosted the nation's top-ranked Junior A club.

Coach Taylor was effusive in his praise regarding his team's effort against Trenton.

?It was our best performance of the season. There was a general belief in the team that we could play with them, based on the way we had been playing and practicing coming into the game. We got great goaltending and there was a different energy on the bench. Everybody had their best game. We took it to them from the first period on.?

Caledon forward Owen Meli?who sunk the Toronto Patriots with a big double overtime goal on November 30 ? opened the scoring at 8:10 of the first period and the young Admirals held the slim lead for over twenty minutes of play. Yorke turned aside 13 shots in the first period, but Trenton evened the score at 10:15 of the middle frame when Devin Mauro tallied his 17th of the season.

Mason Landry gave the Golden Hawks their first lead of the game at 5:48 of the third period, but red-hot Abou-Marie notched his tenth of the season at 15:03 of the final frame to tie the game and send it to overtime.

The Admirals were outshot 9-1 in the two extra periods, but Yorke ?made some great saves,? according to his Head Coach, and allowed Caledon to earn a hard-fought point against a veteran Trenton squad that is running away with the OJHL East.