

Depleted Golden Hawks roster limps through 1-1 weekend

By Jake Courtepatte

The recent success of the Caledon Golden Hawks has not come without its price.

Without a regulation loss in more than a month, the junior C club entered the New Tecumseth Rec Centre to take on the league-leading Alliston Hornets Friday, missing some of their key cogs to injury, namely Avery Rodriguez, high-scoring defenceman James Pitsadiotis and number-one goaltender Sam Procopio.

Even without some of their star players, the Hornets knew the Hawks would put up a fight: One of their two losses all season was at the hands of the Hawks in late October.

Brendan Macham stepped between the pipes to replace Procopio, while the Hawks' other top scorers looked to fill in for the injured Pitsadiotis. The top line of Daniel Cafagna, Nicholas McNutt and Christian Mariconda combined as they have all year to open the scoring less than a minute in, with McNutt catching Alliston goaltender Tyler Brindle unprepared off a scrum on the Hawks' first shot.

Randy Chen, always a workhorse in the Caledon lineup, drew two stick penalties in the opening 20 minutes while the Hawks maintained a 1-0 lead.

It was in the second period, however, when the shortened and inexperienced roster began to show. Just minutes into the frame, Alliston's Jordan Schwartz danced around the Caledon defence just a little too easily before finding the short side on Macham to tie the game.

Macham stood no chance on Alliston's go-ahead goal midway through the frame, a pass in front that ricocheted off a skate and in. The nail in the coffin came in the final minute of the second, with Alliston going up by two on a two-on-one play as a result of poor positioning.

One more snuck by Macham in the third, as well as an empty-netter, for a final score of Alliston 5, Caledon 1.

With Procopio still on the injured reserve, call-up Evan Barlow was in the crease to face the Midland Flyers at Caledon East Sunday. Pitsadiotis remained on the sidelines as well.

But, like clockwork, Cafagna, McNutt and Mariconda combined for the first two goals of the game, with Ryan Mouser and Jared Barilla also picking up assists. The six foot two inch Barlow, in his second start as a Hawk, stood tall in turning aside all nine shots he faced in the first period.

Caledon notched two goals to Midland's one in the second frame, off the sticks of Kevin Pleasance and Sean Nottle, to take a 4-1 lead into the third.

They got a scare in the third, as Midland poured on 10 shots and brought the score to 4-3, but the defence was able to shut it down in the final 15 minutes to survive for a win.

Barlow was stellar in the win, moving to 2-0 on the season after stopping 25 of the 28 shots he faced.

The split weekend keeps the Golden Hawks solidified in fifth place in the nine-team league, once again improving their home record while worsening their lackluster road record.

A busy weekend lies ahead with two on the road, first visiting the Stayner Siskins (11-9-4) tonight (Thursday) before meeting the Orillia Terriers (4-21-1) Saturday. The weekly Sunday home game against the Siskins could prove to be the season's rubber match between the two, as the Hawks currently hold a 2-1 advantage.

Puck drop Sunday is 7 p.m. at Caledon East.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.jrcgoldenhawks.pointstreaksites.com



Caledon defenceman Colby Shatilla clears a puck out of the front of Brendan Macham's net at New Tecumseth Rec Centre Friday.

The Golden Hawks fell to the Alliston Hornets 5-1.Photo by Jake Courtepatte