

Goaltenders Chad Walker and Christopher Thompson star in Golden Hawks-Cougars? 2-2 OT Tie

By Jim Stewart

The goalies stole the show on Thursday night at the Trisan Centre as the Caledon Golden Hawks and Schomberg Cougars fought to a 2-2 overtime tie.

Schomberg (11-3-0-1) with their 23rd point of the season moved ahead of the Stayner Siskins in the standings and back into first place in the PJHL's North Carruthers Division.

The much-improved Golden Hawks (5-8-1-2) moved ahead of the Penetang Kings into fifth place with the point earned on the road.

But this game was about much more than just jockeying for position in the standings. It was about two goalies who captivated the crowd at the Trisan Centre for four periods of entertaining Junior hockey.

Cougars' rookie netminder Christopher Thompson extended his undefeated streak to three games and made two incredibly athletic saves in the extra period to preserve the tie for the home team.

Golden Hawks' goalie Chad Walker was even more spectacular in the waning seconds of the game as the Cougars made a final press during 3-on-3 hockey.

Caledon's agile goaltender made two breakaway saves on Cougar forward Zach Gallow one at 1:45 and the other with a mere four seconds left on the clock to retain a crucial road point for Caledon. The swift-skating Gallow created opportunities with so much open ice, but Walker got the better of him on this night to preserve the 2-2 deadlock.

Cougars Coach Mark Hrinco praised both goaltenders for their heroics, especially in the overtime period.

It was a goalie duel for sure out there tonight.

Coach Hrinco applauded the play of Chad Walker and acknowledged the difficulty of beating the Golden Hawks' goaltender conventionally.

If we don't get traffic in front of [Walker], he'll make 10-Bell' saves all night.

He provided accolades for his goaltender as well.

Christopher was equally good for us tonight. He earned the point for our team. We didn't get the win tonight, but Chris certainly got us the point we needed.

Coach Hrinco was also complimentary towards the Golden Hawks' play: They're much better, especially compared to last year. In the past, they were a heavy-hitting team, but they're winning games with skill and speed as well as a better work ethic and positioning. Their goalie steals wins for them for sure.

In addition to applauding a good game played by Caledon, Coach Hrinco was also pleased by his team's in-game adjustments after a poor first period.

I was happy to see our ability to recalibrate well in the second and third period and play our game. Our puck movement and speed were much better and we played less selfishly. Our ability to correct the mistakes of the first period was the best thing we did

tonight.?

The mistakes to which Coach Hrinco referred included surrendering the opening goal of the game to the visitors. The Golden Hawks took a 1-0 lead when Joseph Poma with an assist from Nicholas Volpe poked in a power play goal at 12:37 and Walker stood tall in the Caledon cage for the remaining seven minutes to repel a late period push by the Cougars.

Schomberg outshot Caledon 11-7 in the first period.

The first-place Cougars found their stride in the middle frame. Walker stopped a 2-0 breakaway by blocking Spencer Natale's wrist shot, but Natale atoned for the missed opportunity seconds later by banging in a Michael Ciarvella rebound to tie the game 1-1 at 14:49.

Thompson made a big breakaway save at 11:30 to keep the score tied and the Cougars took their first lead of the game three minutes later when Matthew Lychek deposited a door step rebound behind Walker.

Joey Furlano and Jordyn Palazzo earned assists on Lychek's sixth goal of the season.

Schomberg held its tenuous 2-1 lead for over twenty minutes, aided by two spectacular saves by Thompson at 7:50 and 5:57, but Caledon's Andrew Perrino beat the Cougars' netminder during a goalmouth scramble to tie the game with 4:39 remaining in the final frame. Perrino's unassisted marker was his third goal of the season.

Both Thompson and Walker were impressive in the remaining minutes of regulation and overtime loomed for both the tired tenders. Their stellar efforts to keep the opposition off the scoreboard in sudden-death OT were successful, both squads earned a point after seventy minutes of excellent PJHL hockey, and Schomberg and Caledon moved up the North Carruthers Division standings into first and fifth, respectively.

The tied game offered solace for both hard-working teams, but the real winners on Thursday were the fans who attended this hockey game at the Trisan Centre. It was the PJHL at its best.