

Golden Hawks eliminated in first round of GMOHL playoffs

By Jake Courtepatte

It just wasn't in the cards for the Caledon Golden Hawks' fifth season in the Georgian Mid-Ontario Hockey League.

For the fifth straight year, the Junior C club was knocked out in the quarter-final playoff round, this time by the Penetang Kings in four straight games. The two teams had never met in the GMOHL postseason.

Penetang swiftly took the series lead last Monday by firing 42 pucks at the Caledon net in a 3-1 win.

Things were just not going Caledon's way, as they were forced to look for defensive assistance after just four periods of play in the series. Defenseman Alex Palumbo caught a skate blade under his pant leg in a freak accident in the first period of the second game at Teen Ranch, causing him to leave the match and the series.

The Hawks mustered up just two goals in total over the next two games, off the sticks of James Pitsadiotis and Ryan Mouser.

After being outscored 14-3 over the first three games of the series, the Hawks challenged the Kings with a valiant effort in the fourth and deciding game.

Giving up a 2-0 lead only midway through the first two periods, Michael Andrews, Christian Bonaldi and Christian Mariconda put the team on a roll to string together five unanswered tallies. Over the course of just over 20 minutes, the three combined for nine points to take a 5-2 lead.

However, fate was not on their side, as three Penetang third period goals forced an overtime. King Brandon Frandsen put the series away eight minutes into the extra frame.

Sam Procopio was handed the start in net after James Cyfko allowed five goals on 17 shots in the third game's 6-1 loss. The netminders didn't fare too well in the series, finishing with a combined 5.00 GAA and an .803 save percentage.

At the other end, Penetang's Adam Redgate was efficient in shutting down the Caledon offence all series, stopping 87 of the 91 shots he faced.

While only five separate Hawk players found the back of the net in the series, it cannot be said that they didn't try to notch more points. Only Penetang and Schomberg have put more shots on net so far in this year's playoffs.

With the win, the defending league champions are the first team to make it out of the quarter-final round and are waiting to learn who their opponents will be in the next round.

Elsewhere in the league, the first-place Alliston Hornets lead the Fergus Devils 3-0, the Schomberg Cougars lead the Huntsville Otters 3-1, and the Orillia Terriers are looking for an upset up 2-1 over the second-place Stayner Siskins.

The Hawks have never made it out of the first round, coming closest last season falling in five games to the Cougars. They tied their team-best finish of fifth-place in the regular season this year, matching their 2014 finish.



Christian Bonaldi shields the puck from a Penetang player at Teen Ranch last Wednesday. The Hawks fell to the Kings 5-1, and lost the first-round series in four games. Photo by Jake Courtepatte