

Golden Hawks fall behind in series with Penetang

By Jake Courtepatte

Home-ice advantage has so far not been a factor in the GMOHL semifinal series between the Caledon Golden Hawks and Penetang Kings, though the Hawks certainly hope that will change.

The fifth-seeded Hawks seemed to be in steady position when the teams split the first two games of the best-of-seven series, two of the three games in total to be played on Penetang ice.

After dropping the first match 4-2 last Wednesday, goaltender Sam Procopio settled in between the pipes for game two as the Hawks cruised to a 3-1 victory.

But the return to Caledon East Sunday did not go as planned for the Golden Hawks, who find themselves in a 2-1 hole and two losses away from a post-season exit.

Things started to go awry midway through the first period, when play turned chaotic in front of Procopio's net, resulting in the goalie being pushed out of position. Falling bodies knocked the puck in for the first goal of the game, and Procopio's argument to the referees fell on deaf ears.

Just minutes later, another bad break for Procopio came in the form of an awkward bounce off the backboards right onto the stick of Penetang's Michael Paul out front, who made no mistake in lifting it over Procopio's shoulder.

The Hawks, meanwhile, couldn't provide any scoring support in the first. The only offence they mustered in the first 20 minutes came on a power play at the tail end of the period, but the Caledon snipers were well boxed out.

Caledon's first real chance of the game came midway through the second frame, when captain Nicholas McNutt blocked a shot at the Hawks' blue line on the penalty kill and went in alone, all the while bothered by a trailing d-man and not getting much in terms of a shot.

Christian Mariconda finally breathed some life into his team near the end of the second, on a ridiculous solo effort to drive to the net and wait out the Penetang goaltender to make it 2-1.

Unfortunately, that was it for the Caledon sticks. Penetang made it 3-1 less than a minute into the third, as the Hawks couldn't capitalize on one more chance in a six-on-four opportunity on the power play with an extra man.

Matthew Pyz was called for an iffy high-sticking minor with less than two minutes to go to kill the remaining momentum.

The Kings were to be looking to take a stranglehold on the series in game four Tuesday night following press-time, with game five returning to Penetang Wednesday. If needed, both game six and game seven will be played at Caledon East Friday and Sunday respectively.

Sunday's loss was the Hawks' first of the post-season in their home barn.

Puck drop Friday will be at 9 p.m.

In the league's other semifinal, the seventh-seed Erin Shamrocks have jumped out to a surprising 2-1 series lead over the powerhouse Alliston Hornets, although the Hornets took game three by a score of 9-1 Sunday. Both series' are slated to be completed by the end of the week.

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



Caledon's Daniel Stretton gets real close with Penetang goaltender Andrew North at Caledon East Sunday. The Golden Hawks trail the Kings 2-1 in the GMOHL best-of-seven semifinal. Photo by Jake Courtepatte