

Golden Hawks looking to dethrone Kings in GMOHL playoffs

By Jake Courtepatte

With another GMOHL season come and gone, it's a satisfactory finale once again for the Caledon Golden Hawks who find themselves in fifth-place heading into the post-season.

This means they have drawn a best-of-seven series match up with the Penetang Kings, the 2014 GMOHL champions and a perennial powerhouse.

The Kings saw their stock fall this year to a fourth-place finish after a promising start to the season.

Meanwhile, the Hawks coasted to a respectable .500 record, bringing a case of déjà vu as they land in the same position as last season.

Fans of both sides were offered a sneak preview, as the two teams faced off against each other in the final game of the regular season Friday.

Hawks goaltender James Cyfko proved that he was in peak postseason form stopping all sixteen shots he faced in the first period, en route to a scoreless tie after twenty minutes.

He was beaten twice early in the second, but would not be fooled a third time. James Pitsadiotis put a power play marker on the board late in the frame, with veteran Daniel Cafagna tying the game in the third to send the game to overtime.

With extra time solving nothing, both Cafagna and Christian Mariconda were successful on back-to-back shootout attempts to end the season on a high note 3-2.

A rest period was not in the cards for these teams as they opened up their quarter-final series on Monday in Penetang.

Cyfko was once again a force to be reckoned with between the pipes, stopping 39 of the 41 shots he faced in the contest.

Unfortunately, the offense in front of him just could not match his success. Steven Klomp, who had three goals in last season's 4-1 quarter-final series loss to the Schomberg Cougars, picked up the Hawks only goal in a 3-1 defeat.

Penetang's Matt Meher added the empty-netter to notch three points in the contest.

January was a successful, albeit difficult month for the Hawks as four of their eight games went to overtime or a shootout. It's a long road ahead for the team looking to make its first significant playoff impact since joining the Junior C league in 2010. The Hawks are yet to make it out of the first-round series.

What could work to the Golden Hawks advantage is their drop in penalty minutes from the highest in the league in 2013-14 to fifth in PIMS in 2014-15.

This year's more disciplined squad should be able to produce more and give up less playoff scoring chances than its counterpart a year earlier, when they totaled a whopping 204 penalty minutes through just five playoff games.

After looking to even the series hosting the Kings at home on Wednesday, the Hawks move back to Penetang Friday for Game 3 at 8 p.m.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.juniorcgoldenhawks.poinstreaksites.com.