

Golden Hawks sign new coach ? Sandy McCarthy leaves Alliston for Caledon



By Brian Lockhart

The Caledon Golden Hawks have signed on a new head coach for the 2013-14 season.

Sandy McCarthy, who has spent the past two seasons with the Alliston Hornets was confirmed as the new head coach of the Junior C hockey club, replacing Garret Rutledge who left at the end of this season.

McCarthy lead the Hornets to two consecutive Georgian Mid-Ontario Hockey League (GMOHL) championships in his two years on the Alliston bench.

"The Caledon Golden Hawks have welcomed Sandy McCarthy to the club," said Hawks spokesperson Mark Perry. "It was kind of a spur of the moment thing. We had to wait for the season to be over (before asking McCarthy to join)."

Rumors were already circulating in hockey circles for a few days prior to the announcement that some changes were taking place, and that McCarthy was involved.

Why a coach would chose to go from a championship winning team to a club with a 19-21 record last season raises a few questions, but Perry said everything about the move is positive.

"We were in limbo for a while when the season was over," Perry said of replacing outgoing Rutledge. "We talked to a few other people. This move only would have worked well with Rick's (Bartlett) blessing. It shows a lot of character. We have a good relationship with the Hornets."

Bartlett is the current general manager of Hornets.

Perry said bringing on a new coach will help the team with the discipline it needs.

"This year was a disappointment for us," he said. "We lacked structure and discipline. Here's a .500 club that needs a challenge. It will be a nice challenge for Sandy. I think he'll flourish here."

The Hawks are also bringing in a new assistant coach on the bench.

The challenge, Perry said, is to work with the team and gain their confidence.

"To be a successful coach, you need to win them over and have some people skills," he said. "At the end of the day, you have to win the team over to your side."

McCarthy joined the Alliston Hornets in 2011 and immediately became popular among both players and fans.

He is a big guy (six foot three) and was known for his intimidating presence on the ice during his time as a player in the National Hockey League. On the bench, he has remained a very level-headed coach who doesn't easily get rattled.

McCarthy played 11 seasons in the NHL, beginning in 1993, playing his first five years with the Calgary Flames. He retired in 2004 after a year with the New York Rangers.

Having a winning coach as well as a former professional player join the club, Perry said, will boost the morale of the team before they even start to practise.

"I've been talking to some of the kids and they are very excited about this," Perry said.

The Golden Hawks have been in the GMOHL for three years, having joined for the start of the 2010-11 season.