

Golden Hawks split home and away season openers

By Brian Lockhart
and Jake Courtepatte

The Caledon Jr. C Golden Hawks looked pretty slick in their home opener against the Fergus Devils at Caledon East Sunday night. They topped the Devils 4-1 to split the first two matches of their fifth season in the Georgian Mid-Ontario Junior C Hockey League. It was a nice turn-around for the squad after they lost their first game of the season 5-1 to the Erin Shamrocks Saturday, in what Head Coach Sandy McCarthy admitted was just not a well played game.

However, the Hawks looked like a well-structured squad in Sunday's game.

"I think if we had capitalized on all our chances, it would have been a different score," McCarthy said of Saturday's game. "We had some really quality chances."

McCarthy's philosophy has changed slightly from last year, when the squad had a power-start to the season but struggled in the latter part then bowed out early in the playoffs.

"We were 18 and three, or something like that, then we hit the wall after that. So now, I'd rather hit the wall now, then start building blocks as the season goes so we're cruising into the playoffs at high speed. We're trying to get our structure with the new team and the new players. Each game we play, we're getting a new block under that structure."

The Hawks' season opened on the road in Erin, who finished six points behind Caledon last season for sixth place in the GMOHL standings.

Despite having to kill off almost a full two minutes of five-on-three early in the first period, strong goaltending from Hawk James Cyfko kept the game scoreless after one.

After successfully killing off another five-on-three just one minute into the second period, the Hawks got their own chance when Shamrock Tyler Topham was sent off for cross-checking.

Newcomer Ryan Mouser capitalized, putting the Golden Hawks ahead 1?0.

However, the Shamrock squad didn't flinch, as speedy centre Joe Heath tied the game up just two minutes later.

The Shamrocks' special teams would dominate the rest of the period, winning a crucial offensive zone draw after Jake Mottershaw was sent off for high-sticking. Topham would pot one of his two goals on the night just five seconds into the powerplay.

Chris Grenier then put an early nail in the coffin, getting a shorthanded break with less than two minutes left in the second to put Erin up by two.

Erin added two more goals in the third period, sending the Golden Hawks home with a 5?1 loss.

The Hawks took to the ice the next day at Caledon East, determined to give the home crowd a better show against the Devils.

Adam Breen, now in his second year with the Hawks, opened the scoring early on the powerplay after an errant Devils' player collided with goaltender Sam Procopio.

Fergus came fighting back less than a minute later, with Paolo Chemello finding room under the glove of Procopio to tie the game at one.

In the dying minutes of the period, the Hawks were able to preserve the tie heading to the dressing room when Procopio got a piece of the puck with his shoulder on a shorthanded breakaway by Devil Mikael Ruffini.

After a pair of Caledon goals put the home squad up by two late in the second period, the game turned chippy. Caledon three-year veteran Cody Forgione squared off against Dominic Wealthall. Both players were ejected for fighting.

Hawks 2013-2014 leading scorer Daniel Cafagna added an insurance marker in the third, when a breakout pass on the powerplay by Procopio led to a rare goaltender assist.

The Hawks have an up-and-down week ahead of them, as they will be visiting the reigning league champion Penetang Kings this Friday, before another Sunday home game against last year's league basement-dwellers the Midland Flyers.

The puck drop is schedule for 7 p.m.

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



Caledon Golden Hawks goalie Sam Procopio makes a save on close-in attempt during the third period of Sunday night's game against the Fergus Devils. The Hawks came out on top with a 4-1 win in their home opener. Photo by Brian Lockhart