

Home opener Sept. 15 ? Golden Hawks test team in first tournament

By Brian Lockhart

‘It’s a good opportunity for us to look at the new recruits,’ said Caledon Golden Hawks General Manager Ben Davis of the squad’s involvement in the Alliston Hornets’ annual pre-season Junior C Tournament this coming weekend. ‘It’s an opportunity for Sandy (McCarthy) to see what the new guys and recruits can do.’

The tournament gets underway today (Thursday) at the New Tecumseth Recreation Centre in Alliston and finishes up Sunday with the final game.

Teams from five junior C leagues are entered in the competition.

Sandy McCarthy will be on the bench as head coach of the Golden Hawks this season, after spending the last two years on the Alliston Hornets’ bench and leading that team to two Georgian Mid Ontario Junior C Hockey League championships.

McCarthy, a former NHL player with years spent with the Calgary Flames, Tampa Bay Lightning, Philadelphia Flyers, Carolina Hurricanes, New York Rangers and Boston Bruins, made the switch to Caledon at the end of the 2012-13 season.

‘By bringing Sandy here, we are trying to improve both the on-ice team and the off-ice team,’ Davis said. ‘His playing and coaching experience is very enticing, and meeting and talking with Sandy he fits into the same hockey mentality we have. He’ll get the most out of the players.’

The Golden Hawks had a decent season last year, starting out strong then hitting a mid-season slump to end with 19 wins, 19 losses, one overtime loss and a single shoot-out loss.

The Hawks are still putting the team together, with final try-outs an ongoing process.

‘We haven’t completed the roster yet,’ Davis said. ‘We still get calls daily. With junior A and junior B teams still cutting down, a lot of guys are still figuring out where they should be. We’ve signed a good chunk of the players that we’ve asked to return this season, but there are still some guys on the team that are still being evaluated.’

The GMOHL league expanded again this year with the addition of the Orillia Terriers, making it a 10-team league that will play in three divisions. The Hawks are in the South division along with the Erin Shamrocks and Fergus Devils.

‘We’re going to be a little younger as a team this year,’ Davis said of the current line-up. ‘I think we’ll be a faster, more competitive team.’

The Golden Hawks season will start Sept. 14, with their first game on the road against Erin.

They will play their first home game in the regular Sunday night slot at Caledon East arena Sept. 15, when they host Fergus.

The puck drop is scheduled for 7 p.m.