

Jr. C Bandits wrap up season in eighth place

By Jake Courtepatte

A pair of losses closed out the regular season for the Caledon Bandits of the Ontario Junior C Lacrosse League, securing an eighth-place finish and a top-level opponent in the opening round of the post-season.

The Caledon squad drew two of the league's toughest games in their final week of play, first visiting the Halton Hills Bulldogs last Wednesday.

Both teams were evenly matched throughout the first 20 minutes, with Colin Sinclair and Jordan MacArthur both finding the back of the net to draw at two goals apiece.

But the Bulldogs were relentless in their attack in the second period, scoring four times to take a 6-4 lead into the final frame.

Sinclair completed a hat trick just two minutes in, but a pair of tallies from the Bulldogs secured a final score of 8-5.

Friday's final home game at the Caledon Community Complex was not as close an affair, as the experienced Warriors team from Six Nations attacked the net ruthlessly. They snuck eight goals past goaltender Jeremy Outopolous in the first period, led by superstars Wesley Whitlow and Sid Powless.

When all was said and done, Whitlow and Powless combined for 26 points in a 19-7 game.

Sam McCanna, Andrew Rybka and Sinclair all had multi-point games for the Bandits.

The home loss was the fourth in two weeks following a strong 11-5 showing against the Shelburne Vets, officially finishing in eighth place in the nine-team East division with a 3-13-0 record. The Vets are in ninth with a game to go, but are four points back of the Bandits.

The previous week saw the Bandits pick up their third win of the season, and second over the Vets at the Centre Dufferin Complex in an 11-5 game.

With points becoming even more crucial as the Ontario Junior C Lacrosse League season winds down, the slumping Bandits made quick work of Vets' goaltender Rhett Fleming. A win off the opening draw set up Jarrett Petrie with a chance to dish to Chris Dimartino alone in front, who opened the scoring just seconds into the game.

Shelburne fired back on the ensuing faceoff, tying the game less than a minute in, followed by a stalemate for the next half period. Eventually the Bandits took control, scoring five goals in the final five minutes of the first, including a long range blast from Petrie with 0.7 seconds on the clock to take a 7-2 lead.

Both teams converted twice in the second period, but Shelburne's strategy to pull their goalie early in the third led to two empty-netters for the Bandits and the eventual win.

Petrie, who has led the Bandits in scoring all season, notched four goals and an assist in the win. The team's second top scorer, Colin Sinclair, had five points of his own.

A pair of tough games followed over the weekend as the team faced the Warriors and Wild on the road. The Bandits lost each by 11 goals.

Andrew Rybka, Jordan Oshowy, Scott Edwards and Petrie all earned two points in a 15-4 loss to the Warriors Saturday, while the top ranked Wilmot Wild handed the Bandits an 18-7 loss Sunday.

Petrie was in on six of the seven Caledon goals, while Sinclair added four points and Austin Heughan added three.

The finish is almost a carbon copy of the 2015 Bandits, who played to a 4-12-0 record before being ousted in the first round by the Fergus Thistles.

As of press-time, the Bandits playoff opponent has not been confirmed, as teams continue to complete their regular season schedules into this weekend. They will face either the Wilmot Wild or the Thistles, both of whom they fell in all four games against this season.

If the Bandits are to challenge their tough competition, they will have to hope for some heavy offensive output from their top-scoring trio of Petrie, Sinclair, and McCanna, who combined for over half of Caledon's 111 goals throughout the season.

Playoff schedules are tentatively set to begin early next week, with the Bandits guaranteed to open somewhere on the road. Keep up-to-date with stats and schedules at www.banditslacrosse.com



Jarrett Petrie finished the OJCLL regular season as the Caledon Bandits' top scorer, notching 25 goals and 20 assists in 15 games. Photo by Jake Courtepatte