

Junior C Bandits ready to hit the floor for the season

By Bill Rea

It's that time of year; time for action to resume in Canada's national sport, and the Caledon Bandits are getting ready.

The local junior C lacrosse heroes have been concentrating on tryouts for the last couple of weeks, with their season slated to open May 6 in Oakville.

"We're still picking the team," General Manager Tom Brennan commented at last Thursday's tryouts in Inglewood.

He added they are waiting to see what players are going to become available once the Brampton Excelsiors set their roster for the coming year. The Excelsiors are the Bandits' junior B affiliates.

The Bandits will have to play their first couple of matches on the road. Their home barn this season will be at the arena in Caledon East, and the ice won't be coming off until the middle of May.

Their home opener is scheduled for May 23 when they will entertain the Wilmot Wild.

The club is looking to the coming season with high hopes, and better results than the last couple of years. Last season's playoff run ended early for the Bandits, as they were excused in a three-game sweep by the Fergus Thistles.

Things are "looking good," according to Head Coach Craig Skillen. He said some of the players are still dealing with school commitments. "I think we're looking alright."

Brennan said it looks like a number of veterans are interested in returning to the ranks, although he added they are looking for another goaltender.

Jeremy Outopoulos is looking to return for his second year between the pipes.

"Goal tending and defence is going to be the key," Brennan remarked. "It always is."

This is Skillen's first year coaching at this level, although he played two seasons with the Bandits when they were a junior B club in the mid 1980s.

He said he's a defensive-minded coach, although he added he's impressed with the mixture of talent he has.

"We'll be a fast team as well," he added.

This year's schedule will see the Bandits opening on the Road May 6 against the Oakville Buzz, starting at 7 p.m. Other games are set for May 7 against the Six Nations Warriors at 2 p.m.; May 12 visiting Mimico at 8 p.m.; May 23 at home against the Wild at 8 p.m.; May 26 hosting Brantford at 8 p.m.; May 30 with Mimico in Caledon East at 8 p.m.; June 3 with the Bandits travelling to Cornwall to face the Celtics at 2 p.m.; June 6 hosting Halton Hills at 8 p.m.; June 9 in Brantford at 8 p.m.; June 11 in Wilmot at 3 p.m.; June 13 when the Bandits will host Fergus at 8 p.m.; June 16, when they will return the visit to Fergus at 8 p.m.; June 20 when they will host Six Nations at 8 p.m.; June 21 in Halton Hills at 8 p.m.; and June 27 in Caledon East against Oakville at 8 p.m.



Second year goalie Jeremy Outopoulos was stopping shots at last Thursday's tryouts in Inglewood.