

Mayfield Mavs cruise to ROPSSAA hockey championship

Written By JAKE COURTEPATTE

A balanced roster and an offensive prowess proved to be the perfect combination for the Mayfield Mavericks, who took the ROPSSAA Tier II championship game over the Loyola Warriors.

It took just one period for the Mavericks to jump out to a two-goal lead, one they would never surrender at the CAA Centre in Brampton.

A score of 5-2 after the second period had the Mavs tasting gold early, closing out the final buzzer with a score of 6-2 to claim the championship title.

"This season, Mayfield has had lots of offensive skill," said head coach Kevin Rea.

Posting a record of 4-2-0 in the regular season, Mayfield had far and away the most goals of any team in ROPSSAA's North division, thirteen more than that of the division champion Robert F. Hall Wolfpack.

It was against the rival Wolfpack that Mayfield looked to gain entry into the championship final, after besting St. Francis Xavier in the quarterfinal in early January.

With the hope of avenging a loss to the Wolfpack just a month prior, the Mavericks engaged in a back-and-forth effort that eventually ended with a 5-4 overtime win in favour of the Mavs, a game Coach Rea called "exceptionally well played."

The win was a perfect culmination of an effort by a relatively-new team, composed of nine returnees and nine newcomers to the squad: as well as an equal number of junior and senior students, despite the fact that grades range from nine to twelve.

"The team had a 4-2 regular season record, getting off to a slow start as the new players got integrated into the team," said Rea. "The team improved with every game, and clinched second place in the division and a playoff berth."

Yet despite the team's offensive prowess, Rea believes it took an entire team effort to bring Mayfield the championship.

"The turning point for the team was how they improved defensively as the players bought into the team play concepts," said Rea, who pointed to Lucas Vidinha, a defenseman who capitalized on some key chances in the postseason.

John Belford and Ty Harris led the way for Mayfield between the pipes, while leading scorers Cooper Bertrand, Jack McNichol, Nathan Ruff, and Eddie Hawkins carried the brunt of the load up front.

Mayfield will be closing out their season at the annual tournament at York University in February.

As the winners of the North and South divisions in the regular season, Robert F. Hall will go on to play a one-game, win-and-you're-in qualifier against Iona CSS in February to try to earn an entry into the OFSAA Championship in March.

In the Tier I division, Our Lady of Mount Carmel sits atop the standings thanks to a two-game winning streak at 4-1-1, with St. Michael CSS close behind at 3-1-1. Playoff schedules will be released following the end of the regular season in late February.