

Siskins take the lead in back-and-forth series with Golden Hawks

By Jake Courtepatte

The Caledon Golden Hawks and Stayner Siskins have exchanged a pair of blowouts through three games of their best-of-seven first round series in the Georgian Mid-Ontario Hockey League.

With home-ice advantage going to the Siskins after an 18-17-5 finish, four points up on the Hawks, they took it to the Caledon squad in a 10-1 routing to open the series last Thursday.

Ten straight goals, including two on the powerplay, one shorthanded, and one penalty shot, snuck past Caledon goaltender Evan Barlow. Only forward Michael Andrews, without a goal in 29 regular season games, scored with five seconds left on the clock to break the shutout.

Barlow faced 46 shots in his junior C playoff debut. It was only the rookie goaltender's third start all year.

Saturday afternoon at Caledon East, however, it was the Hawks' turn to take it to the Siskins. Sam Procopio was between the pipes, stopping all but two of the 34 shots he faced, while 10 different players got on the scoreboard in an 8-2 finish. Randy Chen, Tyler Whitten, John Cyfko, Ryan Mouser, Nicholas McNutt, Daniel Cafagna and Christian Mariconda all had a multi-point night.

Game three in Stayner Sunday saw the first close match up of the series, although the reasoning can be placed squarely on the shoulders of Procopio, who faced 51 shots in total from the Siskins. Both teams exchanged powerplay goals in the opening period, with Chen getting on the board first, before a scoreless second period where Procopio was forced to stop 22 shots in just 20 minutes. Stayner's Ricky Darrell put his team ahead less than a minute into the third, holding on and adding an empty-netter in the dying minutes for a 3-1 win and a 2-1 series lead.

Game four returned to Caledon Tuesday night after press-time. If Stayner can take a stranglehold on the series on the road, they could close it out at home tonight (Thursday).

If needed, game six goes back to Caledon East Friday and game seven will go to Stayner Sunday.

The Hawks are looking to advance past the first round of the GMOHL postseason for the first time in the franchise's six-year history. No matter the outcome, any advancing team already knows they are yet to face their most looming challenge in the Alliston Hornets, who wrapped up their series Monday in a four-game sweep of the Schomberg Cougars.

Elsewhere around the league, the seventh-place Erin Shamrocks lead the second-place Huntsville Otters 2-1, and the sixth-place Penetang Kings lead the third-place Midland Flyers 2-1.

All first round outcomes will be determined by the end of the weekend.

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