

St. Mike's Thunder bitten by Bulldogs in Peel hockey final

By Jake Courtepatte

A cruise to the ROPSSAA Tier 1 final did not prepare the St. Michael Thunder for the surging St. Aloysius Gonzaga Bulldogs recently.

After a bye to the semifinal, in which the Thunder took down Our Lady of Mount Carmel 8-1, they met a Bulldog team at Vic Johnston Arena in Oakville hungry for goals after a close preliminary match of their own. Gonzaga had almost been on the wrong end of a surprise upset against a 5-7 Loyola squad, advancing to the final via shootout.

The Bulldogs took it to the Thunder right from the opening faceoff, missing the net on a breakaway in the opening minute. They were able to open the scoring five minutes later, taking advantage of a St. Mike's change.

They doubled the lead to 2-0 by the end of the first period.

The Thunder got on the board early in the second, taking advantage of their second power play of the game when Rocco Andreatchi sent a one-timer from a sharp angle to the back of the net.

Only a few minutes later, Thomas McKeown made Gonzaga pay on the power play again with a shot from the point that found its way through traffic.

With the St. Mike's crowd now buzzing, it was Gonzaga that retook the lead before the end of the middle frame, adding a heartbreaker in the final second to take a 4-2 lead into the second intermission.

The lead was lengthened to 5-2 in the third, while the Thunder attempted to mount a late comeback. It proved to be insurmountable, burying two in the final seven minutes, but eventually coming up short in a 5-4 win for Gonzaga.

The Thunder entered the game as one of only two teams to best the Bulldogs all year, a 5-3 decision back in late November.

Gonzaga is currently in Windsor competing in the OFSAA championship for provincial bragging rights.



The St. Michael Thunder came up just short of a comeback in the ROPSSAA Tier 1 hockey final, falling 5-4 to the Gonzaga Bulldogs at Vic Johnston Arena in Oakville. Photo by Jake Courtepatte