

U9 Caledon Hawks fly high to close their season with marvelous March momentum]

By Jim Stewart

All coaches want their teams playing their best when the season matters most and U9 Caledon Hawks Head Coach Jason Hayes got his wish in March.

His young squad finished the season with four wins in its final five games, including a four-game winning streak versus Guelph, Halton Hills, and Milton before being eliminated by Oakville to end their 2022-23 season.

Coach Hayes's highlight was finishing the 'March Season' tied for third after finishing the regular season in sixth place. It was a great accomplishment from our players.

The Hawks' rapid improvement from a 4-8 record in the regular season to 3-3 for the March playoff season was a pleasing development for Coach Hayes. He noted that the most satisfying part of coaching this U9 rep hockey team was seeing the kids grow throughout the season. Watching the team become a close-knit group, and really play as a team instead of individuals. This was a very satisfying part of the role as coach.

Hayes attributed his team's success in March to the U9 Hawks' growth on the ice, but also off the ice.

The players really started to trust one another and play together as a team. Instead of trying to do everything alone, they were feeding off each other and leaning on one another to compete as one.

This was evident to Murray Townsend, a representative of the U9 Hawks, who encapsulated his team's rapid improvement during the final month of the season. He noted that The Caledon Hawks U9 Tier 1 team saved their best for last, closing out their season with a four-game winning streak in their final five games. It started with a 7-1 thrashing of Guelph. Cole Castator, earned the hat-trick, with help on two goals by Isaiah Sargent. Jake Law and Anthony Louro, added to the onslaught. Emmett Lee started in net and shared the victory with the acrobatic Emmett Donaldson, who kept Guelph off the scoresheet in the third period. The Cirque de Donaldson isn't just a one man show. His twin, Wesley, kept the goals out on defence, and entertained with his coast-to-coast rushes.

Townsend's enthusiasm for the U9 Hawks is evident in his recollection of the team's best streak of the season.

Next up was a 2-1 victory over Halton Hills. Sargent added to his highlight reel by scoring the opening marker on a spectacular penalty shot and then added the winner. Helping to keep the opposition at bay was Alexandra McGrath, known for her perseverance. She never gives up. Assistant captain Luke Francey is as good as it gets helping out his own goalies and he made life miserable for opposing forwards.

In their next win a 2-1 victory over Milton Townsend noted that, once again it was Sargent who came up big, scoring both goals against Milton. Helping out on offence was Liam Mayers who was the hardest worker. Emmett Lee went the distance in net and preserved the victory with some spectacular saves.

Townsend continued his detailed delineation of the Hawks' momentous movement through March and their fourth consecutive win.

Milton was the victim again in a 4-1 win. Castator opened the scoring with help from smooth-skating Caleb Hayes, who then scored the second goal when he fired top shelf. Jack McClure, one of the team's top scorers all season, pounced on a rebound off the end boards and tucked it into the open side of the net for the third marker. Assistant captain, Giordano Hinton, who wears the same No. 55 as Mark Giordano of the Maple Leafs, exhibited the same grit and determination as the NHLer when he caught up to a two-man breakaway from center ice and dove for the puck, knocking it out of harm's way.

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