

Young Admirals endure rough week with losses to the Junior Sabres, Blades, and Menace

By Jim Stewart

It was a rough week for the rookie-laden Caledon Admirals as they faced Buffalo, Oakville, and Milton in the space of six days.

After dropping a hard-fought 6-3 decision on Sunday in Buffalo to the sixth-place Junior Sabres, the Admirals lost back-to-back games decisively on Thursday and Friday.

At the Mayfield Recreation Complex on Thursday evening, the Admirals lost 7-2 to the tenth-place Oakville Blades. Matthew Indovina's hat trick paced Oakville's offence. Indovina's 27th of the season gave the Blades a 4-0 lead at 7:36 of the second period.

Eric He's power play goal at 10:53 with helpers from Jack Fang and Owen Meli pulled the Admirals to within three of the visitors, but Tavio Kauzlauric restored Oakville's four-goal lead with 27 seconds left in the middle frame.

Jack Dean fired two third period goals to round out the Blades' scoring. Stefano Fiorini replied for the Admirals midway through the final frame. Cam Lang earned his 30th assist of the season on Fiorini's 4th.

The Blades outshot the Admirals 42-18.

At the Milton Memorial Arena on Friday evening in front of 280 fans, the Admirals lost 6-1 to the third-place Menace.

Milton's balanced attack received a short-handed goal from high-scoring Madden MacDougall at 15:03 of the first period. MacDougall's 24th of the season and his 33rd assist of the season in the second period earned him First Star of the Game honors.

Five consecutive goals by Graeme MacAuley, Owen Kindree, Ryder Cali, Tristan Trimble, and Justin Dezoiete gave the Menace a commanding 6-0 lead half-way through the second period. Caledon forward Deacon King cashed in his 12th of the season at 8:14 of the final frame to get the Admirals on the scoreboard. Curtis Freeman notched his 22nd assist and Ayden Agius earned his 15th helper on King's late-game marker. Milton outshot the Admirals 59-23.

In Buffalo on Sunday afternoon, the Junior Sabres' offence was paced by Tyler Isherwood's hat trick. Buffalo jumped out to a 3-0 first period lead on goals from Matthew Lee, Isherwood, and Alex Strachan.

Freeman fired a pair of goals seven minutes apart in the second period to pull Caledon to within one of the home team, but Isherwood scored his 20th at 16:38 to provide Buffalo with a two-goal lead heading into second intermission. Isherwood finished his hat trick at 13:46 of the third period and Dylan McFadden's 22nd of the season made it 6-2 for the Junior Sabres.

Braeden Van Gelder beat Junior Sabre goaltender Dylan Grover at 18:11 to pull the visitors to within three at the Lecom Harborcenter.

Prior to this troika of losses, the Admirals had been playing the role of spoiler especially by beating Georgetown twice down the stretch to affect the ninth-place Raiders' two-horse race with the King Rebellion for the final playoff spot in the OJHL West. Coach Chris Taylor's young charges inflicted what could be the knock out punch to Georgetown's playoff hopes. The Raiders' record in 2025 has drooped to 1-12 --including three consecutive losses this week to Pickering, Collingwood, and Buffalo to fall six points behind the Rebellion.

Admirals' General Manager Ken Jeysman noted the team's pair of recent wins versus the Raiders led to the demise of Georgetown's

playoff hopes.

Our two wins against them certainly didn't help Georgetown. They sold off many of their players as well which is different than our approach. We stuck to our premise to build and support a young team, keep it together, and we've shown we're supportive of their development.

Admirals GM Ken Jeysman provided context for his young hockey club's tough week: Most of these guys are 17-year-olds and they're not used to playing 12 games in three weeks. It's a long 56-game season for the rookies. They might have played 32-40 games last year so it's something they've had to adapt to. First, they had to learn to play in the league. Second, they had to get used to 3-hour rides to places like Leamington.

Despite this daunting context, Jeysman pointed to strong performances by his top line versus Buffalo, Milton, and Oakville, including rookie Curtis Freeman's three goals, Cam Lang garnering his 30th assist of the season, and Clarence Allain's movement into second in team scoring: Freeman is a consummate performer, and it especially shows during his play alongside Lang and Allaine. They were an offensive terror in Buffalo and dominated play against the Sabres, although the final score may not indicate that. All three have been a constant source of offence this season and are 1-2-3 in scoring.

The Admirals' General Manager complimented his top scorer, Cam Lang, on reaching the 40-point plateau in his inaugural OJHL season.

For a 17-year old to get 30 assists in his first year of Junior hockey is a great achievement. He listens to and absorbs our coaching staff's instruction.

Jeysman is looking to augment his roster during the off-season to build on the strength of his top line. Part of the plan to improve this rookie-laden team is to look outside of Peel for a few players to complement the 2025-26 roster. According to the Admirals' GM, the franchise is looking for a balance of local players and some imports that would require billets in the community: We don't want to have too many outside players since our focus is on developing local players, but sometimes there are terrific players available out of area. We're arranging for billets that could provide a family setting for our out-of-area players. We need to know our billeted players are in a safe environment with reliable hosts who can provide nutritious meals and where our players can feel home away from home.

If you're interested in billeting an Admirals player for the 2025-26 season, please email Caledon General Manager Ken Jeysman at jeysman1050@gmail.com.

Twelfth-place Caledon (10-40-2-0) hosts its second-last home game of the season when they welcome the seventh-place Cobourg Cougars (22-20-1-6) to the Mayfield Recreation Complex on Thursday, February 20. The Cougars will be looking to clinch the seventh-playoff seed in the OJHL East with a win over the Admirals. Puck drop will be 7:30 p.m.