

Cougars bounce back in a huge way

By Robert Belardi

Schomberg Cougars forward Marc Bottero moved into second in league scoring with 27 goals after this week, as the Cougars regained their mojo against two tough opponents. Having juggled his lineup the week prior, head coach of the Cougars Stan Kondrotas was rather weary about this past week's match-ups. There were players that were going to be missing and naturally that would worry any bench boss. But the commitment of his group has been clear from the onset and these boys will always adjust to whatever the nature of the game is to get the job done. In his eyes, it was time to pair the big boys together. "What I did is I just put the big boys together. I had Kokelj, Bottero and Taylor is back and healthy and playing really well," Kondrotas said. "You got Luke (Miehm) who is good. Gallow has really stepped it up. The boys are buying in and the compete level is much better. Their readiness to play is exceptionally better." The Cougars welcomed the pesky Penetang Kings to the Trisan Centre last Thursday and boy did the Cougars get off to one of the hottest starts they've had all season. Whatever Cougars forward Zach Gallow ate or drank that day, it surely did the trick. Under three minutes into the game, Gallow scored two goals ending his three-game scoreless drought. Towards the end of the frame, captain Cameron Kokelj whistled one past Kings netminder Zach Mather to begin this game with a commanding three-goal advantage. In the second period, Gallow sealed his hat-trick from Jonathan Calleja. Garrett Watson got the Kings on the board just over two minutes later, but Cougars forward Jordyn Palazzo added another to make it 5-1. The Kings battled hard as Mike Redick and Marcus Stolte gave the opposition some life. The Cougars have done exceptionally well at eliminating the oppositions momentum all year long. Bottero scored with 4:03 left to go in the second and Kolkej added his second of the game less than a minute later. In the third, Kokelj would seal his hat-trick and the second hattrick of the game for the home side. The Cougars outshot the Kings 38-26 in a dominant 8-4 performance and the boys would replicate this kind of outing on the road in Caledon last Sunday. The Cougars outshot the Golden Hawks 39-17 in this one and were clinical on the power play. "Our power play was outstanding. Four for five. I can't ask for better than that," Kondrotas said. Scoring comes fast and early in some games in Jr. C but it was the Golden Hawks who got on the board first. Justin Callisto snuck one past Matteo Tarantino 1:25 into the first period to give the home side the edge. Former Golden Hawk Luke Miehm, retaliated 10 minutes later that evened the game heading into the second. Andrew Hrinco scored his second of the year and Bottero got on the board all in a span of seven minutes that swung momentum in the Cougars' favour. Noah Crispo did bring the game within one, but in the third period Kolkej potted home his 25th of the year and Bottero added his 27th to give the Cougars a 5-2 road win. With this win, the Cougars are tied for third spot on 35 points with the Orillia Terriers. The Cougars host the Terriers at 7:30 p.m. this Thursday, before welcoming back the Caledon Golden Hawks this Saturday at 7 p.m. on Saturday.