

Cougars hit their stride, pick up fifth win in six games

By Jake Courtepatte

The Junior C Schomberg Cougars have moved into a position as a contender in the Georgian Mid-Ontario Hockey League, turning their poor start around for a successful run over the past few weeks.

Coming off a shootout loss the Saturday before in Orillia, the Cougars faced the Erin Shamrocks at the Trisan Centre last Thursday. The Cougars wasted no time getting on the board after a loss, when Brandon Savoy picked up his second of the year only 30 seconds in.

A goaltender battle ensued after that between Schomberg's Taylor Ewart and Erin's Tom Denstedt, keeping the puck out of both nets for over 25 minutes. However, Mike Nicolluci solved the Schomberg defence six minutes into the second, off a pass from brother Ben. The game went to the second intermission all tied up at ones.

Unfortunately for the Shamrocks in the third, forward JP Crescenzi was on a scoring streak he would not let up on. With three minutes left in the game, Crescenzi took a pass from Kiefer McIntosh to put the Cougars up for good 2-1.

The penalty kill was on fire on both ends, as all three goals were scored with full strength on the ice.

Despite a three-day break, Ewart continued his solid goaltending into the first period of Sunday's road matchup against the Caledon Golden Hawks. He turned aside nine Hawk shots in a shutout opening frame.

The offence struggled at the other end of the ice, unable to capitalize on three power play chances as the teams headed to the dressing room scoreless.

But the Hawks were insistent on burying themselves shorthanded, as less than a minute into the second Steven Klomp was handed a five-minute major for Checking From Behind.

This time the Cougars made no mistake, as Brandon Yorke picked up his team-leading sixth goal of the year on the power play. His line combined for three goals and five points, with goals also coming from Crescenzi and Francesco Corona. Schomberg led 3-1 after the second period.

After Caledon scored two in a row in the third, John Gage took the wind out of Caledon's sails less than 30 seconds after the tying goal with his third of the season. The Cougars would hold on for their second win in a row, and their fifth in six games.

A tough week ahead looks to threaten the Tigers' third-place spot in league standings with a record of 6-3-0-1, starting with a game against the Fergus Devils Thursday. Some animosity may still be left over from their match-up three weeks ago, when the teams combined for 141 minutes in penalties.

They then travel to Penetang Friday to face the first-place Kings, their first meeting of the season. The Kings remain undefeated at home.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.schombergcougars.com.