

Cougars wrestle with Otters in GMOHL rubber match

By Jake Courtepatte

Last Thursday's snowstorm wreaked havoc on the Georgian Mid-Ontario Hockey League schedule, including the cancellation of the Schomberg Cougars' weekly home matchup.

That left their only chance for moving up the standings at the hands of the Huntsville Otters, having split the season series 1-1 before Friday night's road game.

Blake Culley drew first blood on the Cougar's first power play of the game five minutes in, extending his point streak to an impressive six games.

After the Otters tied it up before the end of the frame, team-leading goal scorer J.P. Crescenzi came out hungry in the second period. He did the work himself on an unassisted goal just two minutes in, then was helped by Derek Neilly and Joseph Mete later in the period to give the Cougars a 3-1 lead.

Unfortunately for the Cougars, two late goals including a marker with seven seconds left in the period gave the Otters the momentum into the third.

After a flurry of chances from both teams, Schomberg headed to overtime for only the third time this year.

The excitement didn't last long, as Otter Jared Stevens buried the game winner just eighteen seconds into the extra frame.

Despite the loss, goaltender Taylor Ewart made 34 of 38 saves. His counterpart on the Otters was forced to make 37 of 40 for the win.

Crescenzi's two tallies earned him second star honours in the game.

The loss brings their current streak to three games, and six of their last eight played.

But in a tightly-packed lead where every point counts, the single point maintains a one-point cushion over the Midland Flyers for seventh in the GMOHL.

It's a dry month on the Cougars' schedule, as they will see action for only the fourth time in December this Thursday when they host the Fergus Devils.

The Christmas break allows room for just one more game before the end of the month, meeting the Devils in an away game on the 28th.

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