

Cougars looking to build off last season's success

By Jake Courtepatte

The Schomberg Cougars surprised the Georgian Mid-Ontario Hockey League with a berth in the finals last season, their greatest success since the Junior C team's championship win in 2003.

They will be looking to add to that success during the 2015/16 season, despite a turnover of players.

Fans first got a taste of this year's squad last Thursday at the Trisan Centre, where the Cougars hosted the Uxbridge Bruins of the Central Ontario league in a pre-season match-up.

The first two periods were almost neck-and-neck, with the Cougars getting their fair share of power play minutes through 12 Uxbridge minor penalties. They capitalized only once, when Blake Culley scored the first Cougars' goal of the year off assists from fellow veterans Liam Spurgeon and John Gage.

Newcomer Sean Caulfield allowed two early goals in the third, and was tagged for the loss when the Cougars failed to mount a comeback. Two late Schomberg goals left the score at 4-3 for Uxbridge.

While a number of names are missing off this year's roster, the meat of the previous roster remains. The team's top scorers in Culley, Gage, and Brandon Yorke, all forty-point scorers last season, will return to the roster.

Taylor Ewart and Luke Gamoyda return in goal for the Cougars. Cam Russell, acquired from the Midland Flyers before last season's playoffs, was sent to Huntsville late last month.

The Cougars, who finished in sixth-place in the league through the regular season, performed exceedingly well in the playoffs. They knocked off the third-seeded Huntsville Otters in six games in the first round, before sweeping the reigning champion Penetang Kings to reach the finals.

There they fell to the powerhouse Alliston Hornets in the championship, swept in four games.

The Cougars will be taking part in the Hornets' annual pre-season tournament next weekend, along with 11 other teams from around the league and Ontario. The regular season opens up against the Stayner Siskins on Sept. 17, at home at the Trisan Centre.

Puck drop is at 8:30p.m.

For stats, schedules, and more information, visit www.jrccougars.pointstreaksites.com.