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Wild close in on second place after convincing win Sunday

By Bill Rea
 It's only a couple of weeks old, but 2007 has been a pretty fair year, so far, for the King Wild.

The local junior A heroes have two wins in three starts so far, and their loss was last Sunday at the hands of the league-leading Bradford Rattlers.

Their latest outing was at home Sunday, against the second-place Richmond Hill Rams, and the Wild spent most of the evening dominating their foes on the way to a solid 6-1 win.

The victory made Head Coach Paul Hampton a happy man, as he pointed out this was one occasion when the team came out meaning business right from the start. "And our goal-tending was outstanding," he

added.

Craig Byford was between the pipes, as the Rams out shot King 47-46.

The Wild has picked up a little new blood. Sunday was the first game for newcomer Sean Pollard, and he introduced himself to the organization by collecting a hat trick.

"It just felt like the right place to be," commented the 20-year-old Bradford resident after completing his first match for the team.

Despite the performance, he didn't promise hat tricks every night.

The club was coming off a tough loss to Bradford the week before, but Pollard thought things were looking good.

"I just think we need to settle down and play as a

team," he said.

Hampton commented most players in Pollard's situation bring a lot of adrenaline to their first game with a new team, but he liked the impact he seemed to be having in the dressing room.

"He brings some experience," he observed, pointing out he was quick to Byford's aid when he was getting roughed up late in the second period. "It shows he knows what the game's about and he knows what the team's about."

Kurt Zdrillich got two of the other Wild markers and Marc Zanette collected the other one. Mike Bodley helped out on two of the goals, and single assists were notched by John Sturino, Kyle Baulne, John Adams, Matt Marchese and Jordan Gidaro.

It was a different story the previous Sunday, as the Wild made a valiant effort against a Bradford team that has only posted four losses all year, and all of them were after regulation time (King can take a bow for one of them).

The Rattlers had run up a 3-0 lead, but the Wild spent the last couple of minutes of the second period closing the gap. Ryan Aikins connected on an unassisted effort with about three

minutes left in the frame, then Gidaro converted a set-up from Marchese during a goalmouth scramble just before the buzzer sounded.

Bradford collected two more goals in the first half of the third period, but Ryan Williamson made a diving play with 2:22 left on the clock. The Rattlers put the match away with a goal into the empty King net in the last minute for the 6-3 final.

A couple of evenings prior to that, the Wild handed the South Muskoka Shield a 6-3 doubling in Gravenhurst.

Zanette notched two of the markers in this outing, with Matt Brereton, Bodley, Brendon Farrugia and Gidaro scoring one apiece. Dan Douglas collected two assists for the evening, with singles going to Adams, Williamson, Zdrillich,

Sturino and Gidaro.

Sunday's win gives the Wild 39 points in the Greater Metro Junior A Hockey League standings, just two back of the second-place Rams with two games in hand. The Rattlers remain well out in front with 58.

The Wild have one game this week. It will be Saturday night when they host the Shield, starting at 8:30 p.m.

Three host teams take title in Nobleking tournament

There was plenty of exciting hockey available last week as the NobleKing Minor Hockey Association hosted its annual rep tournament.

Teams from as far away as Sudbury and Cornwall were on hand to compete in the eight divisional contests. In the end, the host squads prevailed in three of the divisions, made it to the finals in a fourth and were semi-finalists in two more.

The novice reps, sponsored by The CIP Group, struggled a bit in the preliminary matches, but they really stepped up when it counted to take the title.

They opened with a solid win against their foes from Fort Erie, but were nipped in their second outing 6-4 by Aurora. The side recovered with a 6-0 win over East Gwillimbury to earn a spot in the semis.

The Knights drew Cooksville as their opponents in that match and handed their foes their first loss in the tournament, topping them 5-2.

The hosts were in command for most of the championship game, although their Beeton opponents were able to mount a bit of a third-period comeback. The final score was 7-4 for the victorious Knights.

The ranks in the atom division were a little thin, so a Nobleking Select team was entered, but failed to win any games. The atom reps, sponsored by Melody Homes and Deltaplast

Machinery Ltd., fell 3-1 to the squad from Innisfil in their first outing, but were able to beat the select teams and edge Aurora 2-1. The

Knights, Innisfil and Aurora each posted 2-1 records, so a formula involving total

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Sean Pollard made a pretty good first impression in his debut with the Wild, scoring three goals Sunday against Richmond Hill.



There was a struggle for the puck between novice Knights and their Beeton foes in the tournament final match, but the Knights took the game 7-4.



This lunge for the puck by Ryan Williamson paid off in a goal for the Wild last Sunday, but it wasn't enough to prevent a 6-3 defeat at the hands of the Bradford Rattlers.

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