

Goalie Wren stops Blades again

Local resident helps Cougars down Oakville for third time this season

By Herb Garbutt
OAKVILLE BEAVER STAFF

Oakville Blades coach Don Edwards might not want to give away all the tricks of his trade.

Burlington Cougars goalie Oliver Wren, who has been benefiting from some private sessions with the former NHL netminder, stopped 44 shots as the Cougars edged Edwards' Blades 3-2 in overtime Sunday at Burlington's Central Arena.

The victory, Burlington's third in as many nights, moved the Cougars a point ahead of Oakville and into a third-place tie with Georgetown in the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League's West Conference.

For Wren, an Oakville resident, the win meant a little more.

"I always like playing Oakville," said Wren, who also backstopped the Cougars to a 3-2 overtime win over Oakville Oct. 22, making 34 saves in that contest. "We really needed the points and it's huge to come into this weekend and get all six. Knowing how tired the guys were tonight, it gives me even more motivation when I'm in net."

For Edwards' part, he was happy to earn a point but felt his team could have put a couple more past his protégé.

"He made some good saves but at other times we made him look good," said the coach. "We had our chances, we just didn't capitalize."

And the Blades certainly had plenty of chances in the third. They dominated the first 14 minutes of the final period until Brendan Taylor took a double minor for spearing. Though the Cougars didn't score with the man advantage, the penalty gave them the momentum and they carried that into overtime.

Mike Nemeth, who had earlier been stopped on a three-on-one break, side-stepped Paul Dawson's check in the corner, walked out in front and slipped the puck by Oakville goalie David Scamurra. "Every point we can get is important," Nemeth said. "A couple of wins and you can go from eighth to third."

With only four points separating six teams, it can also work the other way. Fortunately for the Cougars, they've built

some momentum.

Friday, Michael Bentivegna scored with four minutes to play to give the Cougars a 2-1 win over Brampton. The following night they scored three unanswered goals to down Georgetown 5-2. Greg Payne broke a 2-2 tie in the final minute of the second period, with Sean Wilson and John Kurtz, a shorthanded tally for his second goal of the game, adding to the lead in the third.

The Blades also had momentum working in their favour. They extended their unbeaten streak to six games with a 3-1 win over Georgetown on Saturday. Trailing 1-0, Matt Beca and Taylor scored power-play goals in the second before Bryan Peters added an insurance marker in the third.

But Sunday's loss left a bad taste in the mouth of the Blades' Kyle Friday, who fired

high on a breakaway in the third.

"I never want to lose. It looks bad," said Friday, who had a goal and an assist. "I thought we'd take it to them, that they would come out a bit sluggish."

And when Jesse Paul scored 25 seconds into the game, it appeared that was the case. But Wren shut the door, allowing Burlington to take the lead in the second on a pair of goals four minutes apart by Kyle McNeil. It remained that way until Friday scored on a two-man advantage in the final minute of the second.

The Cougars then weathered the storm in the final period.

"The guys were pretty tired, that was pretty obvious," said Cougar coach Wes Wiseman. "We lost (Teo) Fazio (game misconduct for checking from behind) so we were down to five D. I don't like trapping but we were just trying to save some energy and play for the tie or hope for a good opportunity."

NOTES: The Cougars have defeated Oakville in all three meetings this season, winning 6-3 Oct. 15 at Dominion Twin Rinks... Since Don Edwards took over as head coach and general manager, the Blades have lost only four times in regulation time. Technically, the team is 8-5-2-2 over that stretch, since the Blades' apparent 4-3 win in Hamilton Oct. 31 was later forfeited because Oakville played the game with an ineligible player... The Blades have earned at least one point in seven consecutive games... Matt Beca leads Oakville in scoring with 18 goals and 25 assists in 24 games, ranking him sixth overall in the league... The Blades travel to Georgetown tonight for a 7:30 start, then return home Friday for a 7:30 p.m. matchup against the Brampton Capitals at Dominion Twin Rinks. Oakville is also in action Saturday, visiting Hamilton.

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• Burlington Cougars goalie Oliver Wren

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