

St. Andrew's bolsters hockey program with new tournament



By Jake Courtepatte

The MacPherson tournament has a new ally.

Just two weeks before the annual historic varsity tournament at LaBrier Arena on the St. Andrew's campus, the Saints have initiated a varsity B tournament to reiterate their commitment to their hockey programs.

The Gary West Senior Boys Hockey Tournament kicked off its inaugural running on Friday, playing host to six varsity teams from across Canada and the United States. It purposely coincided with Monday's holiday for Americans, allowing two teams from south of the border to participate.

Like Mr. MacPherson, assistant to the Headmaster for a quarter century, Mr. West holds a prominent position in St. Andrew's history. Mr. West taught at SAC for 33 years, juggling his duties as a teacher, coach, and athletic director.

"Gary was highly respected and well-liked; I think you'd be hard pressed to hear a negative comment about him," says Greg Reid, Assistant Headmaster and Assistant Coach of the Varsity B Hockey team.

Reid was the mastermind behind the new tournament, working since last year to get it off the ground.

"It helps contribute to a more robust schedule for the Varsity B team by including more games against non-traditional opponents who are playing at the varsity level," said Reid. "That is to say that four of the teams this year are their school's top team as opposed to St. Andrew's second senior team."

SAC went 1-2-2 in the tournament, taking down Gilmour Academy of Ohio on Saturday. The winners of the tournament were the nearby King City Secondary School Lions, who put up two wins and two ties, including a tie with the Saints on Friday, to secure the championship.

"The Saints for their part outshot their opponents in every game but had trouble finding the back of the net and gave up too many odd-man rushes in their losses," said Joel Morrissey, Head Coach.

All six teams have confirmed their intentions to participate in next year's tournament, while St. Edward's High School from Lakewood, Ohio and Nichols School from Buffalo will round out an eight-team field.

With an overwhelming amount of hockey talent, SAC's varsity B team provides what Reid calls "an alternative to community hockey", with a handful potentially making the jump to the A team for their grade 12 year, a team that has won back-to-back independent school championships.

The focus at SAC now turns to the MacPherson tournament, a long standing tradition at SAC, which will play host to eight teams representing the provinces of Alberta, Ontario, and Quebec, and the states of Maine, Pennsylvania, and New York at LaBrier Arena next weekend.

"Since its inception in 1984, this tournament has become a highly-anticipated tradition for our school and the larger community," said Kevin McHenry, Headmaster.