

31st MacPherson Tourney to take over Community Centre this month



By Jeff Doner

Over the next few weeks, anticipation will build among St. Andrew's College students and faculty as the 31st annual MacPherson Hockey Tournament from January 31 to February 2 approaches.

This year the tournament will host clubs from Ontario, Quebec and as far as New York.

The SAC senior boys team will look to continue a successful season against some formidable competition and has made sure to stay sharp over the holidays.

"We went to Boston over the Christmas break to play in the St. Sebastian's school tournament and we won that over the host school, and then just this past weekend we were in Marlboro, Massachusetts playing in a showcase there just before the school break starts," said head coach David Manning.

The team currently boasts a 22-3 record this season, putting them first in both of the leagues they play in.

Manning said he is pleased with the way his team has come together this season and hopes his team stays focused for the stretch.

"I think at the end of the day the big characteristic of our team is our work ethic from our top scorers down to our checking forwards and our defenceman," he said.

"Everyone is working well with their abilities and so because of that we're able to push the pace of the game and continue to be right on top of our opponents from the opening whistle, right down to the final buzzer and that's tough for teams to sustain against that pressure."

Manning will be hoping to see some of that when the tournament rolls around later this month.

"It's our home tournament and we obviously like to do well in front of our student body, teachers, parents and whatnot, so any time we perform at home we want to perform well," he said.

"We were lucky enough to come out on top last year against UCC in the championship game and obviously this is marked on the boys' calendars as an exciting time, not only as a hockey tournament, but a huge school event in general, so we want to perform well for everybody for sure."

The tournament is named after Mr. MacPherson, a former assistant headmaster at SAC from 1957 ? 1982. It has held long standing traditions since it started in 1984, including an opening ceremony featuring pipes and drums and a ceremonial puck drop in front of the home crowd.

Coach Manning also sees the tournament as a good stepping stone into the playoffs.

?I think that we're going to head into a stretch of games here that are very important because we have some more league games coming up and we're going to travel up to Minnesota to play Shattuck, St. Mary's in a couple weeks, but I think the biggest thing for us, like any group, is consistency,? he said.

The CIS local league playoffs start after Family Day weekend and then the American league playoffs will take place on the last weekend of February.

?You just want to find the effort, work ethic and execution to a point that we know each and every time we show up that we're going to have a chance to win that game and be competitive,? Manning added.

?The big thing for us is to not believe in ourselves too much so that we don't take our foot off the gas pedal. I think we have to push ourselves to push the bar even higher and even become a better team than what we are now.?

The tournament is open to spectators and entry is free. For more information visit the tournament page at kilby.sac.on.ca/macpherson.