

SAC Saints capture 41st MacPherson Hockey Tournament



St. Andrew's College Saints defeated the Bishop Kearney School Selects 3-2 to win the 41st MacPherson Hockey Tournament on Sunday afternoon.

Power forward Alex Carscadden fired the overtime winner much to the delight of over 1,000 spectators who packed the LaBrier Family Arena for the showdown between the Saints and Selects?a replay of the 2024 Final between the Aurora prep school and the visitors from Rochester, NY.

The Saints defended their championship due to the timely heroics of Carscadden. The Princeton University commit made a strong move to the net off the right circle and snapped the puck past Selects keeper Sammy Doyon-Cataquiz with 8:41 left in three-on-three overtime. Carscadden's game-winner, his first of the tourney, caused a pile-on celly at centre ice. After the 6'1? inch forward was extricated from the heap of humanity, he described the thrill when the puck crossed the line.

?I suddenly realized I scored the OT winner. It felt amazing. Winning the tournament is so amazing. It's the biggest goal I've ever scored. Never scored an OT winner.?

Tournament MVP Kieren Dervin described the impact of defending their 2024 championship.

?It's a special tournament for all of us. To beat Bishop Kearney in back-to-back years is an accomplishment. It's something I'm never going to forget.?

The leading scorer at the 41st MacPherson was emotional about being selected MVP.

?It's such an honor. So many good kids have won this award. To win this the year after Dean Letourneau won it last year makes this even more special for me. Dean was such a great player here.?

Letourneau was a first-round selection of the Boston Bruins in the 2024 NHL Draft and Dervin's connection to SAC's illustrious hockey history was not lost on the high-scoring forward. The Penn State University commit collected five goals and six assists in SAC's five consecutive weekend victories and added that the tournament win would help the team as it enters a critical phase of the PHC season.

?It's definitely a nice confidence boost for us. We're heading to Minnesota to play Shattuck?St. Mary's next weekend then it's into the playoffs.?

Assistant Captain and Tournament All-Star goaltender Paolo Frasca was surrounded by 14 family members and friends during the

on-ice celebration.

?It's the best feeling. Being honored with friends and family in the stands is an unbelievable feeling. We feel loved; being surrounded by all our fans in the stands and to get the job done well is special.?

The Maple resident described the team effort needed to defend their MacPherson championship: ?Every single line scored for us, starting in the first game.?

The athletic netminder, who was named to the tournament All-Star Team for the second consecutive year, described the impact of winning MacPherson 41: ?It's fantastic. We were just a .500 team for the first part of the season, but it's been coming down to the wire and we've been pulling together. We're an emotional team and we've had to work on our maturity all year. We were looking forward to this weekend for a long time to see how improved we've become.?

The Saints demonstrated their improvement over the course of the three-day tourney. In the early minutes of Game 1 versus Victory Honda AAA, the Saints looked like they might get run out of their own rink by their guests from Plymouth, Michigan. SAC looked a wee bit groggy on Friday morning when Victory Honda forwards Evan Carver and Henrik Parish fired pucks past Saints goaltender Mateo Beites to take a 2-0 lead before the contest was eleven minutes old.

However, the Saints roused themselves from their slumber when Captain and Harvard University commit Aidan Lane received a pass on the left side of the crease, deked goalkeeper Andrew McClouth, and tucked the puck around the goal post.

The opening round game appeared to be a mismatch on paper as the Saints rolled into the tourney with a pair of wins in PHC league play?6-3 over South Kent School and 3-1 over Mount St. Charles?to improve their overall record to 30-10-1. Victory Honda 18U sported a 27-24-0 record heading into Friday morning's contest, but the home side trailed 2-1 going into the middle frame.

Then the Victory Honda U18 bubble burst amid a four-goal barrage by SAC. The comeback was initiated by the Saints' leading scorer and Cornell University commit Michael Dec, who fired a wrist shot from the left circle that beat McClouth cleanly at 8:46 to tie the game.

Less than two minutes later, Saints' Assistant Captain and Princeton University commit Luke Sinclair snapped one behind McClouth to give SAC its first lead. On the ensuing rush, Jake DiCapo beat McClouth at 6:34, compelling Victory Head Coach Brian Burke to call a timeout to repair the stricken Honda that was leaking oil from its crankcase.

The timeout was to no avail as Quinnipiac University commit Lucas Prud'Homme hammered one home from between the circles at 5:05 to make it 5-2 after McClouth had made a series of saves in the slot.

Dervin closed the scoring at 9:58 of the third period when he made a nifty move to deke McClouth and backhanded the puck into the yawning cage.

The Saints took their 6-2 opening game win over Victory Honda and replicated the result versus Culver Academies on Friday evening. A three-goal outburst in the third period finished off their guests from Indiana.

Lane tallied two to lead the Saints with Prud'Homme, Dervin, Nolan Long, and Sebastian Dell'Elce added one each to the four-goal victory in Game 2. Dell'Elce?a Quinnipiac University commit and resident of Nobleton?was selected to the Tournament All-Star team.

A similar recipe for success was used by SAC in their Game 3 win over the Long Island Gulls on Saturday morning. After battling Long Island to a scoreless stalemate after one period, the Saints' offence woke up when Jacob Bultje deked Gull goaltender Matus Ivanis and slid the puck into the net to evoke a relieved celebration by SAC at 14:39.

Dervin blazed off the left wing, created space, and slammed the puck between Ivanis's pads at 13:01 to give the Saints a 2-0 lead. The Tourney MVP fired his second goal of the game five minutes later when he stole the puck off the Gulls' lone defender and deked Ivanis with the identical feint to give the home side a three-goal margin.

Sam Esposito's power play marker from the right dot finished a fine three-way passing play that put the Gulls on the scoreboard with 2:35 left in the second. However, Bultje tallied his second of the game at 7:03 of the third period to quell a Long Island comeback, and secure SAC's 4-1 win in Game 3.

In the semifinal on Saturday night, SAC avenged a 5-2 loss to Northwood in mid-January by edging their guests from Lake Placid 2-1 to advance to the finals. Second period power play goals by Dervin and Bultje provided the required amount of offence to subdue Northwood from New York. SAC's leading playmaker Dec?who entered the tournament with 32 goals and 42 assists in 41 games? earned assists on both goals and Frasca turned aside 30 of the 31 shots he faced to earn the win. The Cornell-bound Dec finished the five-game tournament with two goals and seven assists to place third in the MacPherson scoring race.

By Jim Stewart