

St. Andrew's College Saints capture silver in 42nd Annual MacPherson Hockey Tournament

The SAC Saints' drive for a three-peat stalled on Sunday afternoon at the 42nd Annual MacPherson Tournament.

The Saints, who finished first in the Hamilton Division after winning two of their three opening round games, were edged 3-2 by their Prep Hockey Conference rival Northwood at the La Brier Family Arena.

The Saints captured gold at the prestigious eight-team tournament in 2024 and 2025 and were seeking a third consecutive title after knocking off the GOHL U18 All-Stars 4-1 in Saturday night's semifinal.

The path to this year's final was an arduous one for the talented Saints.

Saints split opening round games on Friday

SAC's Varsity hockey team opened the MacPherson with a tidy 3-0 win over Victory Honda, an 18U AAA team from Ann Arbor, Michigan. Andy Huang scored two goals and James Roy added one to pace the Saints' attack. SAC goaltender Noah La Gambina notched the shutout on Friday morning.

However, in Game 2 on Friday night, the Saints fell to Northwood 3-2 to put a damper on the pageantry associated with the MacPherson's compelling Opening Ceremonies. Charlie Sullivan and Nolan Long tallied one goal each for the Saints in the narrow loss to their rivals from Lake Placid.

Four-goal third period explosion impels Saints to 5-3 comeback victory over Selects

Evan Pahanich and Alex Carscadden fired two goals each in the third period to catalyze SAC's 5-3 comeback win over the Bishop Kearney Selects on Saturday morning.

Prior to the heroics of Pahanich and Carscadden, the Saints trailed 2-1 heading into the third period.

1:45 into the final frame, Pahanich notched his first goal of the season when his wrist shot, unleashed above the right faceoff circle, clanged inside the right post, past Selects' goaltender Giovanni Scally, and into the net to tie the game 2-2.

Unfortunately, SAC forward Cooper Bordeaux bumped into Scally two minutes later, drew a goalie interference penalty, and the Saints suffered the consequences. Seconds into the Selects' power play, big left winger Rocco Afonso found open space between the circles and one-timed a perfect pass past Saints' netminder La Gambina to restore the Rochester school's lead.

The red-clad Saints, just 1-1 after their games on Friday, were on the verge of elimination from their own tournament when defender Luca DiPlacido's neutral zone infraction nullified his team's power play and put SAC shorthanded for four minutes.

However, the 4-on-4 hockey that resulted turned quickly in SAC's favor when Pahanich fired his second goal of the game from the right point. The puck skittered through the slot and past Scally to tie the game 3-3.

On the ensuing rush, Carscadden's last year's OT scoring hero in the MacPherson Final jammed the puck through Scally's wickets to give the Saints a 4-3 lead with 6:51 left on the clock. The 6'1", 181-pound power forward described his game-winning-goal: "James Roy made a great pass and I brought it to my backhand. I didn't see it go in, but the guys rushed me."

With Scally out of the net with 1:08 remaining, the Saints withstood the Selects' final push. Carscadden fired an empty netter from the slot to take the suspense out of the remaining 39.1 seconds.

The Princeton Tigers commit and Guelph Storm draft pick credited Pahanich for creating the turning point in the game: "When Evan scored his first goal of the year, it really picked the team up. It was huge for us. The whole team pushed after that because we knew we had to have a win in regulation to get to the semifinals. It was definitely one of our biggest wins of the season."

With the regulation win, the Saints earned the top seed in the Hamilton Division on a tiebreaker with Northwood and Victory Honda who also accrued 2-1 records after the opening round of play.

Saints scuttle GOHL U18 4-1 in semifinal to advance to MacPherson championship

In the crossover semifinal, SAC took on the #2 team from the Meagher Division, the GOHL U18 All-Stars.

The white-clad Saints struck first. Five minutes into the crossover contest, forward Ryan Murray lofted the puck from just above the right circle. His high shot handcuffed GOHL goaltender William Computaro and it dropped into the net to stake SAC to a 1-0 lead. Murray described his marker: "I was thinking, just throw it on net. I took one step toward the net, but I didn't see it go in. It was good to get an early goal."

Less than three minutes into the second period, Murray contributed mightily to the Saints' second goal when he slid a perfect lead pass to Marcus Magri. The speedy Magri cut in behind the GOHL defenders and snapped a shot from the left circle that beat Computaro cleanly high glove side to give the home side a two-goal margin. Murray described how the scoring play developed and applauded his teammate's shooting ability: "I just got to an open spot with the puck. My first look was to Marcus cutting through. He has a crazy shot. He can put it where he wants to and he did. He's very skillful."

Magri's "goalscorer's goal" showcased the Saints' offensive skills, but the Player of the Game for SAC was goaltender Chase Petrova who kept the GOHL All-Stars off the scoreboard for most of the contest. Petrova flashed the leather on numerous occasions to frustrate the talented squad clad in Vegas Golden Knights colors. Murray praised his goaltender's performance: "He's known for being a good, consistent goalie who makes these side-to-side sensational saves that win games for us."

Petrova continued making his sensational stops into the final frame and the SAC offence provided their goaltender with two more insurance goals. 1:31 into the third period, Computaro misplayed a puck behind his net and Jake DiCapo buried the biscuit into the vacated GOHL cage to make it 3-0. Computaro's error prompted a goaltending change and backup netminder Seth Roman took his place between the pipes.

After Petrova plucked one out of thin air to preserve his shutout with 3:59 left on the clock, GOHL pulled Roman and pressed the Saints. However, Luca DiPlacido slid a loose puck 140 feet into the dead centre of the empty net to foil the All-Stars' comeback attempt.

DiPlacido's bullseye gave SAC a commanding 4-0 lead, but the rugged 6'2", 210-pound defender drew a four-minute head contact penalty moments later to put the GOHL's power play unit back out on the ice. With 23.3 seconds remaining, Alexander Forrest fired a wrist shot that beat a screened Petrova to get the Junior B All-Stars on the scoreboard and avoid being shut out by the host club.

Murray summarized the secret to SAC's success in the semifinal: "It was mostly about sticking to our systems and making sure that we were outworking them. We focused on stopping them from being too creative with the puck and limited their scoring opportunities."

Saints stymied in quest for three-peat in entertaining game with Northwood

SAC Captain Finn Kearns was gracious in defeat after Sunday afternoon's tough 3-2 loss to Northwood. The articulate on-ice leader complimented the high quality play of the club from Lake Placid: "They played two flawless games and deserve to be champions. We knew going in that Northwood had an amazing hockey team."

Kearns also praised the efforts of his teammates throughout the championship final: "We were a younger team and we played them hard. Even when we were down by two late in the third period, no one stopped. Despite all our best efforts at the end, we came up a little short. Most importantly, I thought we played with a lot of pride."

Trailing 3-1, Kearns showed the way for the Saints. His low laser slapshot from just inside the blue line above the right faceoff circle beat Northwood goaltender Owen McLean between the pads to draw SAC to within one with 12:13 left on the clock. The smooth-skating defender described his big goal: "I got it through with urgency. It was an old school goal. One of my upsides is getting pucks to the net."

Kearns's timely marker elicited a furious effort by the Saints to get the equalizer, but the team came up just short due to McLean's heroics and an incredible lack of puck luck in the waning seconds. The SAC Captain's gritty efforts in the championship earned him Player of the Game honors.

The Saints opened the scoring with the prettiest power play goal of the afternoon. A brilliant tic-tac-toe passing play featuring Jacob Bultje and Nolan Long culminated in red-hot Carscadden unleashing a wicked wrist shot that beat McLean for the go-ahead goal with 1:53 left in the first period. Carscadden's goal-scoring heroics earned him a spot on the tournament All-Star team.

The Saints held their precarious 1-0 lead until there were exactly three minutes remaining in the middle frame. SAC goalie Noah LaGambina made a series of spectacular saves to repel high quality scoring chances by Northwood during the second period. However, Max Stracar roofed a rebound past a sprawled LaGambina to even the score.

SAC opened the third period on the PK. The Saints killed off most of the infraction, but Stracar struck again with one second left in the Northwood power play when he sniped a wrist shot from the left faceoff circle. Stracar's shot beat LaGambina high blocker side to give the navy blue clad squad its first lead of the game at 2-1.

Less than two minutes later, Parker Thompson rifled a snap shot off the right post and past LaGambina to give Northwood a 3-1 lead. It was the game-winning goal that ended the Saints' dream of a three-peat.

By Jim Stewart Local Journalism Initiative Reporter