

CLIPPER SPORTS

SCI Sabres girls look to take next step

By Tony Zerucha

The Springfield Sabres girls team will have a new look on the ice and behind the bench this season in hopes of building on a breakthrough 2023-24 campaign that saw them reach the MWHSHL division semi-finals.

The Sabres tied for the second-stingiest team by allowing only 47 goals in 23 games. They reeled off a 10-game winning streak and displayed more balanced scoring. Grace Wozney earned five shutouts and posted a 1.99 goals-against average and a .909 save percentage.

New head coach Evan Heinemann is a veteran MWHSHL head coach, having guided the River East Kodiaks' program for seven seasons. After two years at Springfield Middle School, Heinemann moved across the parking lot to SCI and jumped at the chance to lead the Sabres.

"I've always enjoyed being on the ice and coaching," Heinemann said.

He's encouraged by a record turnout in camp that saw more than 20 players vying for roster spots. Many of those who made the grade are young, as six Grade 9 students will suit up in 2024-25. Overall, 10 rookies are in the lineup. "So we're young, but everyone is

working hard at practice, and it's looking very promising," Heinemann said.

Seven veterans will be relied upon to provide leadership this season. Kera Lesuk is the captain, while the assistants are Finnley Hildebrand, Lily Hurley and Aunicka Da Silva.

"We have some great returning vets and leaders; they've been awesome on and off the ice to the new players," Heinemann said. "The girls even paired up a vet with one or two of the rookies. This goes to show what a strong foundation this program was built on."

Heinemann's game plan begins with building on speed and getting good pucks to the net. He credits the entire roster for constantly seeking improvement. Combine that effort with enthusiasm and leadership and there was plenty of optimism in the Sabres locker room in anticipation of the Oct. 15 home opener against the SJR Eagles. Results were not available at press time.

"I know we will find success by the year's end," Heinemann concluded.

The Sabres open with a three-game homestand, which also includes Oct. 17 at 3:30 p.m. against Murdoch MacKay and Oct. 22 versus the Dakota Lancers. Other teams in their division are the ESS Barons, PCI Saints and Beliveau Barracudas.



File photo

Captain Kera Lesuk is one of seven veterans that will be relied upon heavily.

Xtreme crush Landmark

By Tony Zerucha

The Springfield Xtreme opened the 2024-25 HTJHL season with a bang on Oct. 12 by pasting the Landmark Blues 12-2 in Oakbank.

Springfield actually found themselves down 2-1 before the game was nine minutes old. They quickly righted the ship, scoring 11 unanswered goals.

David Hazlitt, Colin Rabichuk and Ben Chambers each scored twice, with singles off the sticks of Nathan Bartecki, Evan Jasper, Mikey Jette, Brady Chambers, Connor Toth and Connor Eggerman. Ben and Brady Chambers, Sam Sass, Chase

Janas, Jette and Aidan Osborne enjoyed three-point nights.

The Xtreme outshot the Blues 68-19 to give Dylan Kizlik an easy win. Credit the home side with maintaining their discipline, as they only allowed two power-play chances. A frustrated Blues squad gave Springfield 13 power play opportunities, which produced four goals.

Springfield hosts the Mitchell Mustangs on Oct. 19 at 8 p.m. Their Oct. 20 matchup against the Steinbach Huskies is technically a home game but will be played in Niverville as part of an HTJHL showcase day.

Selects top Kenora to improve to .500

By Tony Zerucha

The Eastman Selects improved their record to 3-3 with a 6-3 pruning of the Kenora Thistles on Oct. 12.

Coach Bruce Sirrell's squad built a 5-0 lead six minutes into the second period that was too much for the Thistles to overcome. Josh Borgfjord's second of

the season gave Eastman an early lead at 1:24. Daniel De Gagné also scored his second four minutes later to double the score to 2-0. Calyb Moore closed out the first-period scoring with his third of the campaign at 16:38.

Two goals in 36 seconds gave the Selects a commanding 5-0 lead at

6:05 of the middle stanza. Moore and Grayson Slaney were the marksmen. While Kenora broke the goose egg at 7:09, Moore completed his hat trick at 9:29 to restore the five-goal cushion. The Thistles scored twice in the final period but lost 6-3.

De Gagné had two points. Sam Fontaine made 28 saves for the win. The Selects fired 37 pucks at Thistle goalie Morgan Blackwood.

Eastman begins a three-game road trip in Teulon on Oct. 18 when they face the Interlake Lightning. The bus then heads to Winnipeg for a 2 p.m. matinee on Oct. 20 against the Winnipeg Thrashers before concluding on Oct. 23 against the Winnipeg Wild.

Moore and Noah Stott are part of a group tied for fifth in league scoring with nine points in six games. Stott's six goals tie him for third, while Moore is part of a quartet tied for fifth. Stott's six goals and nine points lead league rookies.

The Selects power play ranks sixth with a 17.2 per cent success rate. Their penalty killers are seventh-best at 82.6 per cent. Eastman has had 29 power-play chances while surrendering 23.



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