

**SPORTS —**

# U14 A Boys find confidence in spirited win over Strathroy

By Spencer Seymour

So far this season, it hasn't been uncommon for a lacklustre finish to spoil an otherwise solid performance by the Frayne Custom Cabinets U14 A Boys St. Marys Rock. However, this past Monday, rather than come undone in the final frame, the Rock ratcheted their intensity and desire to win even higher and as a result, found four unanswered goals to down the Strathroy Jr. Rockets 6-3.

Head Coach Todd Dittmer told the Independent that he is hopeful the win on Monday could prove to be a catalyst for the rest of the season.

"They came to play tonight," Dittmer said following the win on Monday night. "It was a really good night for us as a group and I'm really proud of the way they competed tonight. They did everything we asked them to do and hopefully, they proved to themselves that they can be a really strong team night in and night out when they bring what they brought tonight."

St. Marys and Strathroy traded one-goal leads in the first two periods with the Rock getting goals from Scott Dewan in the first and Graeme Froud in the second, the first of two



Graeme Froud goes forehand-to-backhand to tuck home one of the Frayne Custom Cabinets U14 A Boys St. Marys Rock's four goals in the third period that propelled the team to a 6-3 win over the visiting Strathroy Jr. Rockets. (Photo by Spencer Seymour)

goals of the evening for both players. The true turning point of the game was the third period, which this season, has been where the U14 A Boys have had some issues when it comes to maintaining their strong play and closing out the game. However, after an early-period goal, the Rock went

ballistic, scoring four unanswered goals including the second of the night for Dewan and Froud, as well as the game-winner by Dom Marziali and a punctuation mark by Dan Dittmer that made it 6-3, the eventual final score.

Coach Dittmer said his team execut-

ed on everything the coaching staff had been preaching and it paid off in a big way.

"They did everything we asked them to do. They forechecked really hard the entire game. There were always two guys on the puck. Most importantly, their puck aggression and intensity levels were where we needed them and they had it for three periods. We can beat anybody in two periods but sometimes this year, we've struggled in the third a bit. But tonight, we seemed to get better in the third which was really positive for our team."

When asked what the difference was in Monday's game and other outings this season that didn't end with the desired result, Dittmer said a big part is the team recognizing how good they are when their mental strength is as solid as their two-way skillsets.

"With this team, I think it's a matter of confidence and mentally being in the right headspace to expect good things to happen. We have tons of skill and ability, and tonight, what I really liked was that it looked like we had the winning mentality and to me, that was the biggest factor in us coming away with the win."

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