
Pioneers out of title hunt at President's Cup

Three games in a 24-hour stretch takes its toll on Ladner at nationals

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It was another tough loss to league rival and host Nanaimo on Wednesday night that went a long way from preventing Pete McFetridge and the Ladner Pioneers from reaching the semi-finals at the President's Cup national championships.
Photograph By MARK BOOTH

Ladner Pioneers closed the gap significantly on the top end teams from their efforts a year ago but it still wasn't enough to advance to the semi-finals at the President's Cup national senior "B" lacrosse championships in Nanaimo.

The Pioneers were officially eliminated from gold medal contention soon after their 16-6 loss to Oakville Titans on Thursday morning. It was Ladner's third game in less than 24 hours and clearly the brutal schedule had taken its toll — especially in a match-up against the Ontario champions who thrive in transition.

The pivotal stretch began with the Pioneers holding off the Can-Am League's Onondaga Redhawks 8-5 on Wednesday morning to improve to 3-1-0 behind a hat trick from Bryan Poole and 26 saves from goaltender Brodie MacDonald.

They returned to the floor that night for an all-B.C. clash with league rival Nanaimo and could have put the host's playoff hopes in serious jeopardy with a win.

Ladner took a 2-1 lead into the second period when the Timbermen swung the momentum with three goals by the 2:21 mark including a pair just eight seconds apart. Jake Carey and Dylan Lacroix tied the game at 4-4 but Nanaimo would go on another three-goal run and this time the Pioneers' comeback efforts fell short in an 8-6 loss.

The Timbermen (4-2-0) would go on to lock up a semi-final berth and will be joined on Saturday by St. Albert (5-1-0), Caughnawaga (5-1-0) and Oakville (4-1-1).

Ladner (3-3-0) will play St. Albert on Friday night to conclude round-robin play and will also have consolation games on Saturday and Sunday.

The Pioneers are in position to finish fifth for the second straight tournament, but they were substantially outclassed by the podium bound teams in 2017, losing by an average of nine goals.

Arguably their best effort of this tournament was a 9-8 loss on Tuesday to Caughnawaga as they stayed step-for-step with the Three Nations powerhouse. The game winner came with 1:09 remaining and the teams were tied at 2-2 and 5-5 after each period.