

Outstanding Owen the key

Hot-stop Shane Owen (pictured) was once again the difference between Fife Flyers registering a win and losing as the club cling to hopes to squeezing into the end-of-season, Premier Sports Elite League play-offs.

The 31-year-old Canadian, now in his third season with the Kirkcaldy club, was pivotal in the overtime win over Glasgow Clan and Clan's coach Malcolm Cameron sportingly said that the hot-stop had an "outstanding" game.

Owen's heroics coupled with Jonas Emmerdahl's game-winner 2min 58sec into the extra session take the Kirkcaldy club on to 33 points from 47 games, five behind second-bottom Manchester Storm.

Both clubs have played 47 games but they are both chasing Guildford Flames, who occupy the eighth and final play-off position, and Coventry Blaze who are seventh. Both have 42 points, Flames from 46 games and Blaze from 45 fixtures.

Ahead of them are sixth-placed Dundee Stars on 43 points from 45 fixtures and Glasgow, sponsored by Aspray Glasgow West, who are fifth with 44 points from 46 starts.

Jeff Hutchins, Fife's Edinburgh-based assistant coach, revealed that the squad held a talk-in ahead of the game about being ready to go from the first whistle and the need to put the effort in.

The Clan v Flyers clash is, he said, a "big rivalry game" and that, no matter what the standings are, the coaching team had stressed that the squad should play for the fans and play for pride.

He said: "I thought the guys did a good job in coming out ready to go, to play physical, chippy and to be fair both

teams did a good job. It was an entertaining game in a highly-charged atmosphere. Well done to everyone involved.”

Hutchins, whose team are sponsored by UNISON Fife Health Branch, added: “Shane has been someone who has been reliable for us for a number of years and hopefully he continues to do so for us but you can’t take anything away from the defence corps and the forwards who stuck in and played hard for the majority of the game.

“I liked their resolve and we were ready to go in overtime when we had a great play from Greg (Chase) and Emmer (Emmderdahl).”

The playcaller felt that the power play goal scored by Flyers’ skipper Matt Carter 58 seconds into the final session to take them 2-1 ahead was the turning point in the game. He said: “It gave us a boost and we almost saw the game out in regulation.”

Clan netted through Mathieu Roy inside the final two minutes and Hutchins said: “These things happen, but I’m happy with the night.”

Next up for Flyers is a trip to Coventry on Saturday (April 3) and a visit from Dundee 24-hours later a game which comes at the end of a gruelling weekend for the Tayside team who visit Cardiff Devils on Friday (19.30) and then visit Glasgow on Saturday (19.00).

Stars coach Omar Pacha said their 7-2 defeat at Coventry on Sunday was a bad game for the club who lost 14 goals in 24-hours at the weekend after their 7-3 capitulation at Guildford Flames on Saturday.

Pacha said: “Full credit to Coventry, they played a hell of a hockey game. They made it hard on us but that was one of our worst.”