

Flyers reflect as Clan carry Scotland's hopes

Todd Dutiaume said it was easy to focus on the negatives from last season for Fife Flyers in the Viaplay Elite League but added: "There have been positives."

The club's head coach added that it was important that bosses get it right for next season and provide the club's fans with what they want, some success.

The Kirkcaldy club lost 5-0 at Guildford Flames on Sunday to bring the curtain down on the season and that disappointment came only 24-hours after the lift of beating Dundee Stars 4-0 at The Fife Ice Arena on Saturday to keep their play-off hopes alive.

But Dutiaume (pictured) said that the long trip to Guildford, who finished runners-up to Belfast Giants in the title race, proved difficult and the Canadian said: "Everybody needed to be engaged and fully-committed." He questioned whether all of the squad were fully-committed.

Dutiaume argued that it had been a long season and added: "We have to reflect and it is easy to focus on the negatives, but there have been a lot of positives. One of them was getting to the Challenge Cup Final.

"Although it ended disappointingly (Flyers lost 9-3 to Belfast Giants in Northern Ireland), bad teams don't get there."

Dutiaume admitted that Fife, sponsored by Wolseley, struggled

after that heavy defeat and he added: "We struggled mentally and we were a little fragile and had bad habits. You have seen us going into a shell."

Asked if he had a message for the fans, the coach said: "We have always had great support. We saw them (the supporters) rally round when we built up momentum in the Challenge Cup, but it has been difficult.

"There have been a lot of ups and downs (this season), but it is important that the organisation gets it right and gives the strong fan base what they want."

Fife finished ninth with 34 points from 54 outings, three points ahead of bottom club, Dundee Stars, and one adrift of Glasgow Clan. They also had the worst goals for total in the league, 118. Stars scored 142 and Clan 134.

It is the Braehead combine, sponsored by Aspray Glasgow West, who carry Scotland's hopes in the Viaplay Elite League play-offs.

They face newly-crowned champions, Belfast Giants, in the quarter-final this weekend, home and away, with the first game in Belfast in Saturday (7pm) and the second at Braehead on Sunday (6pm), and Clan associate coach, Dyson Stevenson, admitted: "It's been a hell of a campaign, but to finally get over the line is very pleasing although it hasn't been easy for us.

"When Stevie (Dixon) and myself took over the coaching reigns (after the sacking of Malcolm Cameron), the club said our target was to finish as high up the table as possible and make the play-offs.

"We've finally done what we set out to achieve, so not it's time to reset our goal and that's to upset the league champions."

PICTURE: Todd Dutiaume courtesy of Viaplay elite League
