



## **Carolina Women Capture Silver at Nationals**

Team CAHA made an impressive debut at their first National tournament appearance. This past month the team traveled to Marlborough, Massachusetts to compete in the 2012 USA Hockey Girls' and Women's National Championship tournament. The ladies opened the tournament against the Minnesota Blue J's, understandably there were some pre-game jitters and nerves which led to a tentative start. However the girls were able to settle in and begin utilizing their speed advantage. Kristy Knight opened the scoring with 6:34 left in the 1<sup>st</sup> period and Jessica Harrington followed up with the eventual game winner to take a 2-0 lead. The girls carried that lead into the 3<sup>rd</sup> period before Jake Jacobson punched home another goal, though the Blue J's were able to respond and cashed in a goal of their own in the final two minutes.

With a 3-1 win under their belt the team's confidence started to grow which set off a memorable run. The second game was defined by an offensive outburst in which Team CAHA found the back of the net 10 times and featured seven different goal scorers en route to a 10-1 win over LA Traffic. Gabrielle Szemly opened the scoring two minutes into the game. A hat trick by Kristy Knight and a pair of goals from Carolyn Imhoff set the tone.

The final game of pool play was against last year's silver medalist the Lady Monarchs out of Manchester, New Hampshire. Lauren Miller got the nod and helped the team finish pool play with a perfect 3-0 record. Lauren made several crucial saves but her best save of the night came during a pivotal penalty kill when a Lady Monarch forward collected a rebound with nothing but a wide open net in front of her, only to be denied by Lauren's glove which seemingly came out of nowhere. The save propelled the ladies to a 3-2 victory, Nicole Adden netted a pair of beautiful goals that opened the scoring and Kristy Knight lit the lamp for the third goal.

With the #1 seed in the National pool, Team CAHA advanced to the quarterfinals to meet a familiar foe Gulf Coast Sea Gals out of Fort Meyer, Florida. The Sea Gals were fired up and ready to avenge the double overtime heart breaking loss that occurred only a few weeks earlier at the Southeastern District tournament.

Michelle Vedder continued her brilliant play in net and was able to help the team weather the initial onslaught. The Sea Gals held a 10-2 shot advantage but could not beat Michelle. After that the girls began clawing back and started turning the momentum in their favor. The game went back and forth before Kristy Knight broke the deadlock with an unassisted tally. The game continued to grind on in what was easily the most physical game of the tournament and a penalty filled contest. The Sea Gals finally capitalized with 5:32 remaining in the 3<sup>rd</sup> period to draw even. Team CAHA found themselves shorthanded in the final minute of regulations. After a few intense flurries the girls were able to push the game into overtime and eventually kill the remainder of the penalty. The intensity only picked up in the overtime of the elimination game though team CAHA showed poise and Kristy Knight once again came up huge by cashing in late in the first overtime period.

The semifinal game was a defensive chess match against the Bay City Black Stars (San Francisco). The 5<sup>th</sup> game of the tournament started to take its toll on both teams as the tempo of the game was significantly slower than the previous contests. Both teams relied heavily on their goalies and Michelle Vedder was once again equal to the task and notched her ninth shutout of the season which added to her all-time Team CAHA record for the most shutouts in a single season. Kristy Knight also proved why she was widely regarded as one of the best players in the tournament scoring yet another clutch goal which was the game winner in a 1-0 victory and also her eighth goal of the tournament.

The ladies now found themselves in the National championship game which was also the team's 50<sup>th</sup> game of the 2011-2012 season. The improbable run in their first tournament appearance had them squaring off with the defending National Champions Utah Thunder. Ironically both squads entered the final with identical records and stats - 5 wins (with one coming in overtime) , 19 goals for and only 5 goals against. The teams were evenly matched and Team CAHA was able to control portions of the game and outshot the Thunder 19-11 however Utah showed the confidence of a defending champion and was able to open the scoring when they used their team speed to score off the rush. The ladies continued to push but couldn't find the equalizer. The Thunder was able to ice the game with an insurance goal late in the third and defended their crown with a 2-0 win.

While the girls were extremely close to winning the National Championship they were happy to bring home the silver medal. The silver medal run also helped gain awareness of women's hockey in the Carolinas and they hope that it will encourage more females to play.

Team CAHA finished with a final record of 31-16-3 and set several team records that will be difficult to surpass –

#### *Team Records*

Most wins in a season – 31 (previous record 21)

Longest winning streak – 10 (previous record 9)

Goals for – 156 (previous record 140)

#### *Player Records*

Most Points in a season – 64 Kristy Knight

Most Goals in a season – 41 Kristy Knight

Most Shutouts in a season – 9 Michelle Vedder

The team has already begun planning for the 2012-2013 season and have announced tryouts which will be held at the Raleigh Iceplex July 14<sup>th</sup> 12-1:30pm and 4:30-5:30pm. For more information about Team CAHA please visit their website at [www.a2-enterprises.com/teamcaha](http://www.a2-enterprises.com/teamcaha) or contact Kevin Thomas at [kjthoma2@gmail.com](mailto:kjthoma2@gmail.com).

