

Ladner Pioneers win first provincial title in 10 years

Team takes momentum to President's Cup after rallying to defeat Royal City in five games

[Mark Booth](#) / Delta Optimist

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Ladner Pioneers are heading to nationals next week in Ontario as provincial champions after outlasting the Royal City Capitals. Photograph By Mark Booth

Ladner Pioneers are heading east next week as provincial champions.

The storied senior "B" lacrosse club captured its first B.C. title in a decade Wednesday night with a 10-4 game five victory over the Royal City Capitals at Sungod Arena.

The result completed a dominant season in the West Coast Senior Lacrosse Association and sends the Pioneers to the President's Cup with momentum. The national championships start Aug. 27 in Six Nations, ON.

After taking the series opener, Ladner dropped two straight games and was on the verge of coming up short again in the playoffs. Instead, the WCSLA regular season champions dug deep with a pair of impressive performances in front of superb goaltending from Kevin Hill.

The Pioneers rolled to a 13-4 win on Tuesday at Queen's Park Arena and the momentum continued into game five. The hosts broke a tight game open by outscoring the Capitals 5-1 in the second period. Hill was named the playoff MVP after he turned aside 98 of the 106 shots he faced over the final two games.

"I have been saying all along, going to nationals doesn't mean anything unless you take both titles - league and provincials," said Sam Clare who has been huge for Ladner all season, leading the team's lethal transition game as a converted defender. "It shows everyone back east we are here to ball as well."

Ladner was dominated in a 14-7 game three loss then fell 8-6 at home two nights later.

"We laid a stinker at Queen's Park then came back here and played hard. We at least got back to the lacrosse we are supposed to be playing," added team captain Nate Clare. "We needed to get the offence going and had a meeting before (game three). We re-looked at what we wanted to do and executed it. We just needed to shoot the ball more."

Royal City was the one team to stay step-for-step with Ladner all season, yet only had three close losses to show for it until its success in the finals. It meant the Pioneers had to respond with their backs against the wall for the very first time.

"We didn't have adversity all year long. We lost some of our mojo and it took a couple of games to get it going again," said head coach Ross Frehlick. "We really responded well yesterday and then you get a goalie with a .920 save percentage.

"It's a hell of a lot better going to President's as a champion rather than a three-game losing streak."

David Yee, Wyatt Pinder and Nate Clare each scored twice in the clinching game.

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