

Pioneers to face defending champs in WCSLA finals

Ladner makes short work of Victoria in semi-finals

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JULY 31, 2019 02:00 PM



The defending WCSLA champion Nanaimo Timbermen stand between the Ladner Pioneers and a trip to the President's Cup national championships back east. The WCSLA finals will start next week at Sungod.

Photograph By MARK BOOTH

Ladner Pioneers didn't waste any time advancing to the West Coast Senior Lacrosse Association playoff finals for the third straight year.

The Pioneers completed a semi-final sweep of the Victoria Wolves with an 18-4 victory on Saturday night at the Ladner Leisure Centre.

The series lasted just five days after the Pioneers opened with a 10-4 victory last Tuesday thanks to eight unanswered goals out of the gate. They then blitzed the Wolves with six straight 24 hours later in an 11-6 win in the provincial capital. The series finale saw Ladner outscore the Wolves 11-0 in the second period.

"We definitely had some runs this series," understated Ladner head coach Ross Frehlick. "It can be tough when you have gone 19-2-0 (regular season and playoffs combined) and I told them they didn't look good in the first period on Saturday but then they go out and score 11 in the second. That was their response to me."

The result sets up a rematch with the Nanaimo Timbermen. The defending WCSLA champions took the Coquitlam Adanacs in four games.

The series won't start until after the B.C. Day weekend at Sungod Arena in North Delta as lacrosse makes way for ice installation at the LLC.

Ladner had little trouble with the Wolves minus its three out-of-province players — Ryan Benesch, Luke Willes and Cody Hawkins.

They are expected to be back in B.C. for a portion of the finals against an opponent the Pioneers have had trouble with dating back to last season. A 14-3 win at Nanaimo on July 13 snapped a five-game losing streak that including a pair of earlier meetings — the team's only defeats in 21 games.

WCSLA regular season scoring champion Tyler Kirkby led the way against Victoria with 15 points, including five goals. Mike Berekoff (4-8), Spencer Bromley (5-6), Dylan Lacroix (7-2), Ryan Keith (6-3), Cody Nass (4-4), Zach Herreweyers (0-7) and Riley Phillips (3-3) also enjoyed productive series.

Dan Lewis and Eric Kratz shared the goaltending duties and that is expected to continue in the finals.