

Dinning Cup returns to Madill after two-years

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WINGHAM – After a two-year break, F.E. Madill was able to host the 14th Matthew Dinning Memorial Cup rugby tournament on April 27.

This year's tournament was more focused on skill and team building, as many of the players have zero experience on the rugby pitch due to the previous cancellation of high school sports during the COVID-19 pandemic.

The tournament saw three junior boys' teams participate: F.E. Madill Secondary School, St. Anne's Catholic School, and Kincardine District Secondary School (KDSS).

Following tradition, Lincoln Dinning was in attendance to not only thank the teams for attending but also to share his son's story.

"Matthew was my son, he walked these halls, he ran these fields and he loved sports, especially rugby and hockey," he said.

Matthew Dinning was killed in action while serving in Afghanistan in 2006. The tournament was started by a former teacher Andy

Jones in 2007 and has been carried on by LeeAnn McDonald-Ellis.

"Speaking of tradition, thirteen other teams have plaques here to say they are the champions," McDonald-Ellis announced to the players. "Although we are not really here to score tries, we have scored tries and so we have a winner – Kincardine are the 14th annual champions."

Not only was KDSS congratulated for winning the tournament, but also for the return of their junior boys' rugby team after more than 10 years.

Each team was also given a plaque to present to their most valuable player. Madill named Jackson Dolson as their team's MVP.

As a way to build skills, referee Peter Darbishire gave the players some constructive criticism after the matches to better their game, and he hoped to inspire them to consider playing club rugby.

"I have been playing rugby since I was nine years old, and that was over 60 years ago," Darbishire told the junior boys' teams in attendance. "Club rugby is a lot of fun and you can make a lot of life-long friends."



Kelsey Bent Photo

F.E. Madill named Jackson Dolson the most valuable player after the Dinning Cup on April 27. He is pictured simultaneously holding off a Kincardine player while facing a second.



Kelsey Bent Photos

(Top) Pictured running with the ball is Griffin Marshall during the April 26 senior boy's rugby match in Wingham.

(Bottom) Varsity girl's rugby team's Raelynn Pennington avoids two St. Anne's players. Madill players will hit the road, with all three teams playing Stratford District Secondary School on May 6.



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The F.E. Madill senior girls' soccer team lost 5-1 to St. Michael Catholic Secondary School on April 26 at home. This was the first game of their spring season. The Mustangs are back on the pitch May 5 in an away game against Central Huron Secondary School. Pictured mid-air is Melissa Jacobs.

McNee: Stanley Cup Playoffs set to be one wild ride

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(C1) Colorado Avalanche vs. (WC2) Nashville Predators

Many people are predicting the Avs to go the distance this year, and it's not a bad looking bet.

Colorado's series with Nashville is easily the biggest mismatch on paper of the first round, especially with Predators goalie Juuse Saros questionable to play at all due to injury. This one is going to be a slaughter, plain and simple.

Avalanche in four.

(C2) Minnesota Wild vs. (C3) St. Louis Blues

This is the other coin flip I referenced. Both teams are extremely skilled and deep, it's truly difficult to find flaws on either side.

The Wild are due to make some post-season noise, but it's unfortunate they drew the Blues in the first round. St. Louis was hotter than a pistol down the home stretch, and they have the experience and ability to go far – they are in fact my pick to come out of the wild West this year. This series is going to be a peach.

Blues in seven.

(P1) Calgary Flames vs. (WC1)

Dallas Stars

A lot of people might think I'm nuts for taking the underdog Stars in this one, but every year underdogs in some fashion or another have their day.

The Flames had an excellent season and feature three 40-goal scorers in their top-six, but there's something about Dallas teams in the post-season that always seem to scrap out the wins when they have no business doing so. Case in point 2020, when they clawed all the way to the Cup Final. I don't think they'll make it that far again, but they will make it past Calgary.

Stars in six.

(P2) Edmonton Oilers vs. (P3) Los Angeles Kings

If the Leafs had a Western Conference equivalent, I think in many ways it would be the Oilers.

Both have great lineups but question marks in goal, and both are a bit fragile mentally in terms of the pressure in their respective markets. Edmonton fans are ravenous to see Connor McDavid and Leon Draisatl deliver in the post-season, but I think the Kings have the ability to knock them off their game. They aren't crazy far

removed from winning those two Cups in 2012 and 2014, and experience speaks volumes at this time of year.

I may not be very popular picking all three Canadian teams to go out in the first round, but I never was one for making friends when it comes to sports.

Kings in six.

Thanks for reading and I'll see you back here in a fortnight.

This is a bi-weekly opinion column; for question or comment contact Dan McNee at dmcnee@midwesternnewspapers.com.