

'The type of player we needed'

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He's not afraid to drop the gloves if it comes to that and last season scrapped with Spruce Kings forward Matt Painchaud when the Kings visited Cowichan Valley.

"He's the type of player we needed here," said Kings general manager Mike Hawes. "He's good offensively but he's also defensively responsible. He's a player the coaching staff will be able to rely on in all situations and those are good guys to have on your team."

"He played a lot in Cowichan, and he was a big part of their team and I expect him to do the same here playing a bigger role for our team."

Allan stands six feet tall and weighs 185 pounds but he's only average in stature compared to his teammates. The Kings recruited some sizable bodies over the summer, addressing one of the team's weaknesses last season which led to a first-round playoff exit.

That bulking-up process is obvious to Allan and he can look to Chichkin as an example. Now in his fourth BCHL season after stints with Langley, Trail and Cowichan, Chichkin is a six-foot-three, 206-pound behemoth with fleet feet.

"He has good hands, he can skate, he loves jumping into the play, and he's tough to get around," said Allan. "He's very good defensively and he's good at moving the



ALLAN

puck and he has a good first pass from the net.

"We have a lot of size, and not only do we have size but we have big guys who can skate. We play on a smaller rink and we hope to use our size to our advantage."

Gray going back to midget

Austin didn't stick with the Prince George Spruce Kings but he won't be far away this hockey season.

The Spruce Kings reassigned the 16-year-old forward and Prince George minor hockey product to the Cariboo Cougars major midget team and have listed him as an affiliate player.

"Austin had a tremendous training camp and played extremely well in two exhibition games for us. He is a very special player who possesses great speed and has a skill set that will enable him to be a very good player at our level in the years to come," said Spruce Kings general manager Mike Hawes. "He will excel at the major midget level this season and then will join us full-time next season and be a very big part of our

team moving forward. Our fans will get to see Austin often this season as he will be our first call-up when we need a player due to injury."

Earlier this summer, Gray had a tryout with the Portland Winterhawks. He's signed a letter of commitment to join the Kings for the 2015-16 season. He played last season for the Coast Inn of the North Tier 1 midget Cougars.

That leaves the Spruce Kings with 23 players on the roster as they prepare for a home-and-home exhibition series with the Vernon Vipers tonight in Vernon and Saturday at the Coliseum. Saturday's game will conclude the BCHL preseason for the Kings.

— Citizen staff



Chris Kirk bites his club after missing a putt for birdie on the 18th hole during first round of play in the Tour Championship golf tournament Thursday in Atlanta.

Kirk, Horschel take big step toward \$10M prize

Doug FERGUSON *The Associated Press*

ATLANTA — Chris Kirk and Billy Horschel have little in common except a clean card of 4-under 66 at the Tour Championship and their chances at the biggest payoff in golf.

Kirk and Horschel, the top two seeds going into the FedEx Cup finale at East Lake, played in the final group and traded birdies — neither of them made a bogey — over four hours in steamy weather to share the lead.

They need only to win the Tour Championship to claim the FedEx Cup and its \$10 million bonus.

"Billy has obviously been playing some pretty incredible golf with winning last week and finishing second the week before," Kirk said. "And I've been doing all right myself."

Kirk is a 29-year-old who went to Georgia and plays golf without a pulse. Even when he chipped in from 80 feet on the 17th hole, he simply smiled and bowed his head before slapping hands with his caddie.

Horschel is a 27-year-old who went to Florida, brash enough to wear octopus prints on his pants in the final round at a U.S. Open, to flip his cap around backward and to pump his fist for routine pars.

They grew up playing amateur golf against each other. They were teammates in the Walker Cup.

And they are leading the race to the FedEx Cup.

"We're probably two completely opposite people in the sense that he just looks like he's moving very slow and nothing affects him," Horschel said. "I look like I'm running around the golf course — literally last Sunday. But Chris and I get along very well. We seem to always play well when we're paired together."

Horschel won the BMW Championship last week and was seen sprinting off the fairway toward a portable toilet because

he couldn't hold it anymore. Kirk won the Deutsche Bank Championship the previous week, and he surprised even himself when twice — a career high — he pumped his fist after making a putt.

They didn't have the course to themselves.

Masters champion Bubba Watson made seven birdies to offset a few mistakes, such as trying to hit a shot through a gap in the trees. It worked at Augusta National two years ago. His ball clipped a branch Thursday, leading to double bogey.

A bogey from the bunker on the par-3 18th hole gave him a 67, leaving him in reasonable shape. Watson was tied with Patrick Reed, Jim Furyk and Jason Day.

The top five seeds need only to win the Tour Championship to claim the FedEx Cup. Watson is third.

Rory McIlroy is at No. 4, and he didn't hurt himself. McIlroy wasn't at his best, though he made enough birdies and key par saves for a 69 that kept him very much in the hunt.

"You can really shoot yourself out of it," McIlroy said. "Even though I didn't play great, I kept it together."

Hunter Mahan might have shot himself out of it. Mahan is seeded fifth and opened with a 74. Only one other player in the 29-man field — Geoff Ogilvy, who is just happy to have made it to the Tour Championship — had a worse score.

Mahan, one of three captain's picks for the Ryder Cup, has broken par once in his last nine rounds since winning The Barclays.

Kirk was left off the Ryder Cup team, even though he has two wins this season and had just won a FedEx Cup playoff event the day before U.S. captain Tom Watson announced his three picks. Horschel might be the hottest in golf at the moment. He is prone to go on big streaks like this.

They have only one cup in mind, and they took a big step toward it Thursday.

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Kodiak Chrome shines in soccer final

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Kodiak Chrome capped an undefeated season in the Prince George Women's Soccer Association and in the process left Connie Ratkaj with a splitting headache.

The Division 1 regular season champions defeated Ratkaj and her Mountain Air Kettle Corn squad 5-1 in Wednesday's playoff final at Michelle Lamarche Field.

From start to finish, Kodiak Chrome was the team to beat in the five-team top division and, including two playoff wins, ended up with an 18-0-3 record.

"It was an absolutely fantastic season, we had really strong turnouts for almost all our games and the girls just clicked," said Kodiak Chrome defender/manager Caitlyn Marquis. "We're pretty proud of ourselves."

Josslynn Spence, Camilla Lemoine, Jessica Brand, Kia Sleeman and Kadie Trippel scored for Kodiak Chrome on goalie Kelly Jenkins. Chelsea Shimoyama was the lone Mountain Air goal scorer.

Formerly known as Interlopez, Kodiak Chrome made up for their postseason disappointment of last year, when they won the regular season but finished fourth in the playoffs. This year's team included veterans such as Sydney Hall, who led all Div. 1 scorers with 25 goals in 19 games, Jessica Erickson, who picked up eight goals in the regular season, Jessica Brand, Jordan Hall, Nicole Cummins and the Rossi twins, Carrissa and Cory. Both Halls also play university soccer for the UNBC Timberwolves and were not available for the playoffs.

Jordan Hall, the Timberwolves goalie, played out as a runner most of the season and all 19 members of Kodiak Chrome took a turn in net, playing at least one half of a game.

"We had a team that really supported each other well and that made it easy to play with everyone," said Marquis. "We have girls who are university players and all-star players and some who are not so skilled and everyone had to step up and that led to our success."

In the semifinal round a week ago, Kodiak

Chrome defeated Accelerated Physiotherapy 2-1, while Mountain Air Kettle Corn scored a 2-1 win over Xconditioning.

Kodiak Chrome was leading the final 3-0 late in the first half when Ratkaj jumped up for a header on a high pass attempt. The 38-year-old sweeper got her head on the ball but also smashed nose-first into the forehead of Trippel. The impact left Ratkaj with a broken nose. She left the field and missed the second half and that left her team with just 10 players.

"They were Number 1, the strongest team — they had youth, they were fast and skilled and we were hoping for a tie," said Ratkaj, who plans to retire from Div. 1 play. "We had eight players to start and they had two or three subs, so it was looking bleak, but we had a couple girls show up and we were at a full squad until I left."

Ratkaj said the league did a great job of dispersing the elite players among the five Div. 1 teams and that contributed to a lot of close games during the four-month season. Mountain Air Kettle Corn finished fourth in the league with a 7-9-3 record.

In the Division 3 final, also played on Wednesday, Westcana Electric blanked Tillmanns 2-0. Lorrie Bartlett and Cyndi Lewis were the goal scorers. Teresa Ellison earned the shutout in the Westcana nets.

In Thursday's playoff finals, Scottie's Hotties and Caribou Brewmasters met in the Division 2 final and Can You Dig It Contracting met QML Contracting for Div. 4 playoff bragging rights.

• The PGWSA is combining with the North Cariboo Senior Soccer (Men's) League for the second annual seven-a-side coed tournament, which starts Sunday at 10 a.m. at North Cariboo Field.

• Finals in all three divisions of the NCSL will also be played on Sunday, also at North Cariboo Field. It starts with the 45-and-older final at 1 p.m. which pits the Caledonians against Subway, followed at 3 p.m. by the 30-and-over final, featuring Queensway Auto World against Eden Spas/Geotech. Westwood Pub and Rolling Mix Concrete will meet in the Open Division final at 5 p.m.

See what's new in the auto world every Thursday in the Driver's Seat

