

# KIDDLE, Kim (con't)

ries about conditions in the British league were confirmed by Kiddle while others were not.

"The calibre (of play) is like I expected," he said. "It's like Junior A, a little bit harder hitting, with more high sticks than anything. They hit from behind a lot and the referees don't really call it."

Yes, the referees. Kiddle laughs.

"People think officiating is bad here," he said. "It ain't."

As for Whitley's home rink, Kiddle says it isn't exactly Madison Square Garden. In fact, it isn't even Dick Ellis Rink.

"You wouldn't believe it," he says. "The corners have big wows in them. And the players benches are just wicked."

Still, every rink in the league also houses a pub from which fans can watch the action, and Kiddle said for both his games the buildings were full to capacity.

"They (fans) were hanging from the rafters," he said.

Unbelievably, access to skate sharpening — something taken for granted in Canada — was limited.

"I couldn't get anybody to sharpen my skates because — this is how cheap the owner is — they wouldn't pay a guy 20 pounds a week to keep our skates sharpened," said Kiddle.

Still, living conditions were comfortable. Kiddle was bunked down in a three-bedroom apartment shared with former Kingston Canadian Scott Morrison and his wife.

And it remains the shot at pro hockey that the 29-year-old Kiddle has been working towards.

He says he'll return if the current situation is resolved.

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