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Sabres out of basement with two wins

by Mark Holmes
 After two home game wins this weekend the Acton Sabres are out of the league basement.

On Friday night the Sabres kept the fans on the edge of their seats as they edged the Georgetown Gemini 3-2 and on Saturday night the Milton Steamers felt the Sabres sting in a 4-1 upset.

The Sabres have been mired in last place since the beginning of the season with only three wins and a tie as of last week, but a two game sweep this weekend has tied Acton with Thornhill for eighth place.

"If the boys can beat Streetsville next week we could see the Sabres become serious contenders in the league this season," said general manager Frank Allsop. "A win against Streetsville would put the team's morale at an all time high," he said.

In Friday night's match the Sabres found themselves staying out of the penalty box and superb goaltending by Rick Landry robbed the Gemini of a win.

The Gemini opened the scoring at the 7:53 mark in the first period to take the lead 1-0, but minutes later Rick Dodds, assisted by Clint Watts and Mark Symes, pounded the puck past the Gemini goalie, Wayne Cowley.

For the remaining minutes of the first period and for the entire second, both the Sabres and the Gems offenses were shut-down. Good, clean, hard hitting hockey were the only words to describe the action that would have thrilled any NHL fan.

Then, early in the third period, the Georgetown squad struck to take the lead for the second time that evening.

However, the Sabres didn't slow down for a moment and at 10:06 they counted the tying goal. Paul Barratt, assisted by Dodds and Symes, blitzed the Gems defense and blistering slapshot from the point found its way past the opposing goalie.

Again both teams continued to play tremendous hockey staying evenly matched until a Georgetown penalty.

Mike Yalowica waited until the Gems penalty was almost over when he received passes from Denis Kirton and Ken

Kavanagh. Manoeuvring through a tight Gemini defense, Yalowica clinched the game, drilling the puck over the shoulder of the defending goaltender.

Even after the winning goal was scored one couldn't be sure who the winner would be. There was still 6:43 left on the clock and the Gems peppered goalie Rick Landry with numerous shots. Luckily, Landry managed to hold off the Georgetown assault and the Sabres were two more points up.

According to the Sabres new assistant coach, Steve Buchanan, the team wasn't playing their best, but sheer determination and strong team emotions kept them in the game.

"I've only had a chance to practice with the boys once so we haven't had much time to work on game plans or plays," said Buchanan. "We've got a short range goal to take both games this weekend and we're halfway there," he continued.

"It was a good game," concluded Buchanan, "and as far as I'm concerned the Sabres have only one way to go this season—up."

On Saturday night Acton controlled the game from open to close, something that they've never done before this season.

Brian Demone led the Sabres' attack with two third period markers as the local squad left the Steamers eating dust.

Randy Coverdale notched the only first period goal for the Sabres, with assists from Yalowica and Kavanagh at 5:04.

The Steamers came alive briefly late in the second period to tie the game at 14:37, but coming into the third the Sabres romped all over their opponents. Barratt, assisted by Demone and Kirton, rattled the puck past the Steamers goalie for a 2-1 lead.

Then, at 18:15 Demone, assisted by Dodds and John Turner, gave the Acton squad a two goal edge. Moments later Milton pulled their goalie and Demone plugged the puck past the Steamers defense to clinch the game 4-1.

The Sabres' next game will be at home December 23 as they take on Streetsville at 8 p.m.



Sabres goalie, Rick Landry, keeps an eye on the puck as an Acton defenceman holds back a marauding Gemini. Acton won Friday's match 3-2.

Hudson says . . .

"I was pushed out"

Gary Hudson didn't quit his coaching position with the Sabres, he says he feels he was pushed out.

Last week, after a team meeting December 12, Godwin Carachi, the team's new sponsor, and Molly Allsop, a spokesperson for general manager Frank Allsop, confirmed that Hudson had quit and Steve Buchanan had been named the new assistant coach. A member of the Sabre executive also confirmed Hudson had quit and at press time Hudson couldn't be reached for comment. No further details were given by either Allsop or Carachi.

According to the Hudson, who contacted this newspaper Friday, both he and Carachi had discussed replacing the former assistant coach, Keith McKinnon, as McKinnon had to leave his position. Hudson said that at that time Carachi had another assistant coach in mind.

Hudson continued that on December 9 he was informed, through the grapevine, of a team meeting being held on Saturday, December 10, and neither he nor Allsop were contacted.

Hudson said he called Carachi on December 9 and confirmed, with Carachi, that there was indeed a meeting. For a time both he and Carachi talked about the Sabres and in that conversation Hudson said he heard Carachi say he paid the team's bills and the owner wanted to tell the team what he expected of them.

"I didn't think the team needed to be told something like that or that they should receive any disciplinary measures for their performances on the ice. The boys have been playing darn good hockey for the last few weeks and I think the last thing they need is a kick in the pants," said Hudson.

Hudson continued, after Saturday's meeting another team meeting was called for the following Monday (December 12) and again, Hudson said, he wasn't informed of the meeting.

On December 12 Hudson said he showed up for the team meeting and was introduced to Steve Buchanan, who was to be his assistant coach. When the two were alone Hudson said he asked Buchanan what Carachi expected Buchanan to do with the team. Hudson said Buchanan replied that he was to take over the team.

"I was shocked when he told me that," said Hudson. Hudson said Buchanan told him that he was the new coach and Hudson was to be his assistant.

At that point Hudson said he left the room and when he returned Allsop, Carachi, Buchanan and the team had gone to the Sabres' dressing room, Hudson said he went down to the dressing room and found Buchanan telling the team about the new situation and what his plans were for the future.

Hudson said one of the players asked what was going to happen to Hudson and Buchanan answered that it would have to be worked out.

"At that point I walked out," explained Hudson. "What would you do in my position? I was demoralized in front of the team and I had to leave."

"I really didn't want to create any hard feelings, but after what I put into the team, I didn't think I deserved that kind of treatment," continued Hudson.

"I really enjoyed coaching those boys. They're a great bunch of kids and they worked their hearts out for me," Hudson went on. "I think that the Sabres will make it to the play-offs no matter who's coaching them."

Another item that Hudson commented on regarded some new players in which the team was interested. Hudson said he had friends coaching Junior A hockey and two players, a first round draft pick and a third round draft choice for Junior A, were available.

Hudson said he contacted the coaches and set up a meeting between the Sabres and the new players to make a deal. Hudson said Carachi wanted to let the players sit for a week or two.

"He (Carachi) made the two coaches angry when he did that, and he's only been involved with the team for two weeks," stated Hudson.

Upon leaving the Sabres, Hudson said he received his card so he can continue coaching with another hockey club.

"I'll be darned if I'll sit out for the rest of the season," said Hudson, "and I just wanted the people of Acton to know my side of the story. I've never quit a team in my life and I especially wouldn't walk out on a great bunch of guys like the Sabres."



Gary Hudson says he has never quit a team in his life and he especially wouldn't quit a great team like the Sabres.

Carachi . . .

"No major changes yet"

After reviewing comments made by the former Sabres' coach Gary Hudson, both Godwin Carachi, the Sabres sponsor, and general manager Frank Allsop, said they disagree with what Hudson said.

Carachi said that he didn't think Hudson had his facts straight and he disagreed with the circumstances Hudson said led up to his leaving the Sabres. General Manager Allsop agreed with Carachi and said he had no further comments.

According to Carachi a meeting Decem-

Steve Buchanan named Sabres assistant coach

The Sabres new assistant coach, Steve Buchanan, filled the shoes of former Sabres head Gary Hudson to take the local squad to a 3-2 win over the Georgetown Gemini Friday night.

Buchanan said he hasn't really had time to work with the players, but he has devised several short and long term plans for the team.

"Our goal for this weekend is to win both games," said Buchanan, "and after tonight we're half way there."

Buchanan said that in the past the Sabres haven't had any respect from either the town or opposing teams and he's out to change that.

"I want to give the Sabres respectability," said Buchanan. "I don't want to comment on our long range plans right now," he con-

tinued, "but I think we've got a good team and I think we can go places."

Buchanan is in his final year of a business management diploma course at Laurier University in Waterloo and he said he wants to be a part of Junior hockey in the future.

Buchanan grew up in Goderich, Ontario, and graduated from minor hockey in that town. He has also played Junior hockey in Acton, Georgetown and Guelph and for a time helped out with Acton minor hockey.

For the past 10 years Buchanan has headed Goderich Minor Hockey and has led the Goderich Atom A team to numerous league championships and an OMHA championship.

"I've always wanted to coach a Junior B team," concluded Buchanan, "and I'm fully committed to becoming a good coach."



Tracy Bruce also performed well at the club competition but stiff competitors edged her out in the finals.



Jennifer Pearce and Laura Masales (foreground) and Kerry Butler and Kim Pumphrey practices for their turn in the Ladies' Interpretive event at the Acton Figure Skating club competition.



Kari Cripps also performed well at the club competitions held Thursday.



Kerry Butler skated gracefully for the judges at the Acton Figure Skating Club competitions, Thursday.

with top spot going to Pearce, second to Perry and third to Masales. Colorful costumes glittered under the lights in the Ladies' Interpretive event was Gillian Brain, Tracy Frizzell, Jennifer Pearce, Kim Pumphrey, Laura Masales, Kari Cripps, Stacey Perry, Paula McPherson, Kara Leatherland, Nancy Norton, Michelle Perry and Debbie Bartels competed. The end result was a first place finish by Perry, second place went to Perry and third went to Pearce. Also on the agenda Thursday night were three exhibition free style skates by Colleen Petty, Kent Petty and Christopher Griggs.