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Rebels outlast tough Bearcats

Last year marked a reversal in fortunes for the Georgetown Rebels and Acton Bearcats senior boys volleyball teams.

The Rebels have established themselves as a perennial powerhouse, almost walking through Halton as a tuneup for Ontario Federation of Schools Athletic Association (OFSAA) action (they have a record of 51-2 in league play since 1998). They made three straight appearances at the provincial tournament, winning it all in 2000. Then last year, the Rebels looked to be on their way again until they were upset by Oakville-Trafalgar in the Halton semifinal.

Acton for several years has more than held its own against the larger Halton schools, but always had trouble breaking through at the provincial level when it was on equal footing against schools its own size. Last year that breakthrough finally came with the school's first boys volleyball OFSAA medal—a bronze.

The teams' paths crossed in Monday's Halton quarterfinal, and although Georgetown prevailed with a 25-15, 25-22 win, the Rebels were not displaying the confidence of a team coming off its second straight undefeated regular season.

The Bearcats, 6-4 during the regular season, were still on a high from a huge 25-21, 25-22 upset of Oakville-Trafalgar, last year's AAAA OFSAA champion. The Rebels were idle after receiving a bye in the opening round.

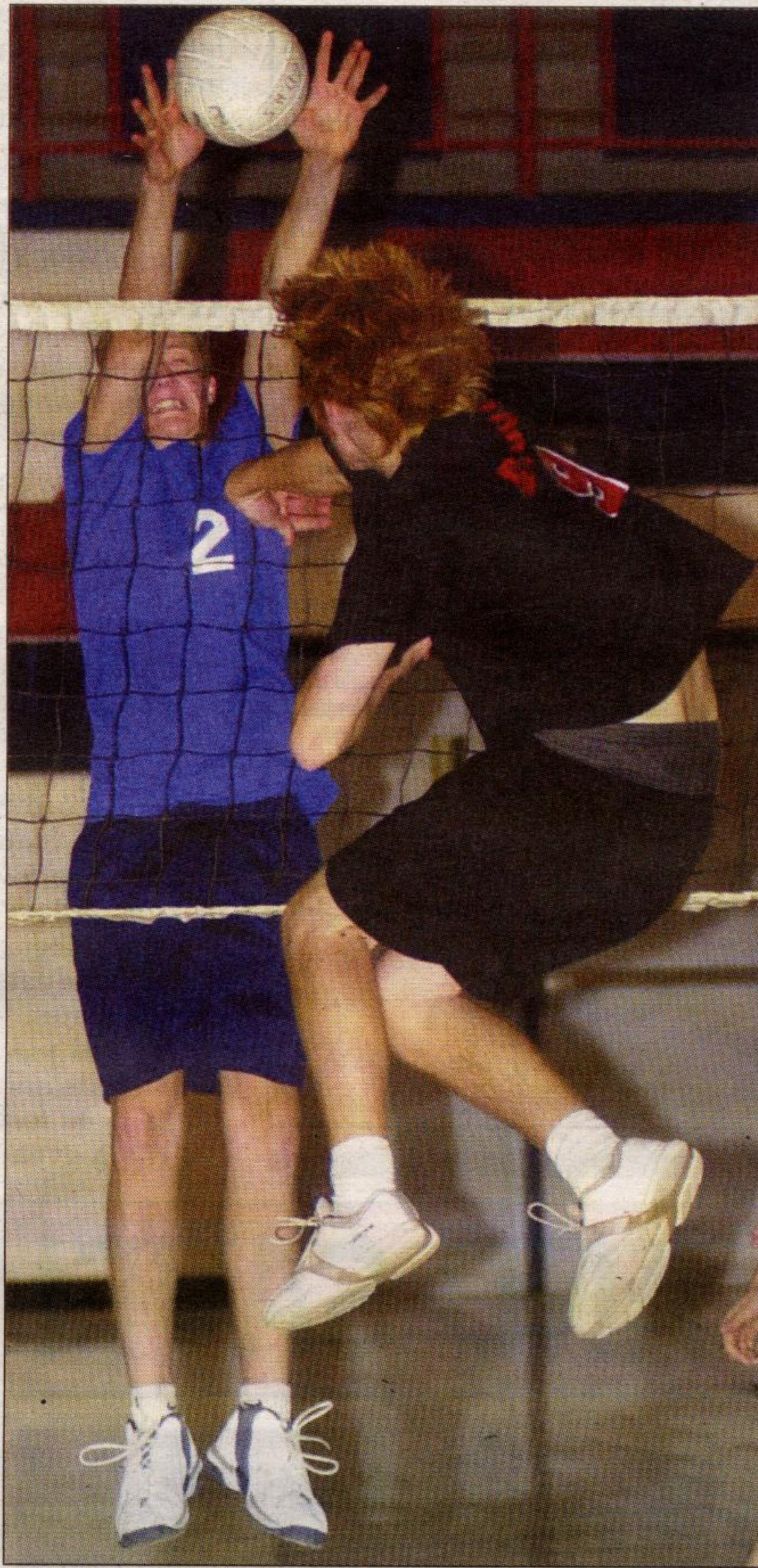
"They knocked off O-T and you have to give them a lot of credit for that. They're well coached and they have good athletes," said Rebel coach Jonas Kaciulis. "As much as they think they have pressure on them facing us, there's pressure on us. They get another opportunity to qualify for OFSAA. For us, this is it."

Those concerns were realized in the second game. After Georgetown took the opener, Acton jumped out to a 7-2 lead. The Rebels regrouped in a time out and took nine of the next 10 points for an 11-8 lead. The teams traded points until Acton staged a late rally to tie the game 22-22. But the Rebels would come up with a key block and go on for the 25-22 victory.

"Our team has really come together," said Bearcat coach Chris Braun. "Our team plays well when their spirits are high and they're excited. That's what happened against O-T. We went in confident and got a few quick points. Against Georgetown, we know they were undefeated. We were looking forward to playing them but we weren't disappointed. Nobody was down after that game because we played well."

Despite the loss, the Bearcats' season continues as they vie for a berth in the OFSAA AA playoffs. It will be new territory for the Bearcats, who were previously classed as an A school. Last year Acton had 509 students, just over the A class' 500 limit. Although it is under this year (499), OFSAA uses the previous year's registration for classification.

"In a way it's a good thing," Braun said. "The guys



Acton's Mark Boycott gets plenty of air as he spikes the ball but Georgetown's Nick Turnhout gets his hands up for the block in Monday's Halton senior boys volleyball quarterfinal game. Georgetown won 25-15, 25-22 and advances to Thursday's semifinal. Acton continues in the AA playoffs today against E.C. Drury. Photo by Herb Garbutt

are ready for the challenge."

Acton begins the AA playoffs today (Wednesday), hosting E.C. Drury at 3:30 p.m.

For the Rebels, they will host the Halton semifinal on Thursday at 3:30 p.m. And a Halton championship is no longer being looked upon as a given.

"Acton didn't give that (win) to us. We had to take it. That's how we have to approach every game the rest of the way. The regular season is fun but from now on it's work—hard work. The goal for the team is winning Haltons and to be in a position to be in OFSAA."

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

Raiders pushed, but extend win streak

It was as close to a meaningful game as you will see until February.

With a nine-point edge in the Provincial Jr. A Hockey League's West Conference, it wasn't as if first place was on the line for the Georgetown Raiders Monday night. There was a matter of extending an unbeaten streak to the 20-game mark and the Hamilton Red Wings are the Raiders' closest rival, so in terms of drama it will have to suffice for now.

The Raiders' 4-2 win in Hamilton was a far cry from Saturday's 9-2 laughter over the Buffalo Lightning. Hamilton might have got caught looking ahead in the schedule as it lost to Mississauga Saturday. The same could not be said of the Raiders, who dominated Buffalo, outshooting them 64-19.

But the Raiders knew the Wings would be looking to bounce back Monday.

"They're going to be p— off," said Tyler Leggo, after scoring twice against Buffalo. "They're going to come out playing hard."

Hamilton did, striking first six minutes into the game. The Raiders regained control with three goals in seven minutes midway through the period to build a 3-1 lead. That held until Hamilton scored two minutes into the third but Raider defenceman Phil Sbrocchi answered three minutes later to restore the lead.

Sbrocchi, acquired from Milton prior to the season more for his contributions in the defensive end, had three points. Ryan Del Monte, Daryl Knowles and Vince Laise also scored.

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John Wheaton of the Georgetown Raiders bats a puck toward Buffalo goalie Bryan Kalczynski in Saturday's Provincial Jr. A Hockey League game. The Raiders won 9-2. Photo by Herb Garbutt



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