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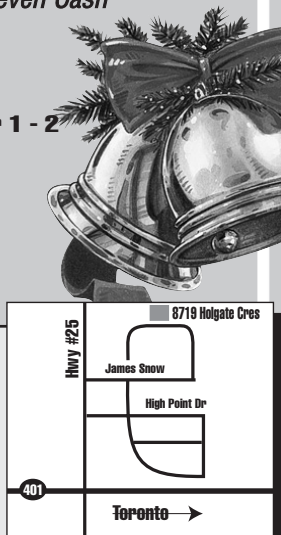
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Georgetown Raiders' defenceman Chris Borges, forward Mark McGowan and goalie Paul Claxton dive to try and block a shot by Milton's Allen Petretic during the late stages of the first period on Saturday of their

OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League matchup. Petretic managed to open the scoring on this play and the Raiders needed another big final-period comeback to post a 4-2 win.
Photo by Eamonn Maher

Raiders show Pryde in edging Hawks

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

The comeback kids were at it again on Saturday night as the host Georgetown Raiders rallied with three third-period goals to defeat their rivals from Milton 4-2 in an OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League contest.

On at least a half-dozen occasions this season, the 13-6-1 Raiders have struggled in the early going, only to roar back to earn points.

Winger Marcus Pryde, who had just one goal in eight starts with Georgetown heading into Saturday's tilt, got the wheels turning with a goal late in the second period to cut the IceHawks' lead to 2-1. The evening's first star then potted the winner with a superb wrist shot on a two-on-one with just under five minutes left in regulation to give the Raiders their first win in three tries against Milton in 2007-08.

"That's the Marcus Pryde I traded for and told the coaching staff would be an important player for us," said Raiders' director of hockey operations Lonnie Freeman.

"We hadn't seen that guy yet. That

was a big win for us and I'm proud of the way all the guys stepped up."

An uneventful first period appeared to turn disastrous for the Raiders at the 14-minute mark when rookie centreman Andy Bathgate went down in agony with a left leg injury. The 16-year-old has five goals and 14 assists in 20 games this season and has been garnering plenty of interest from NHL scouts for the 2009 entry draft, so Freeman was relieved to report Tuesday that the injury is a deep bruise that might keep Bathgate out for a week.

"Thankfully it's not as serious as we first thought it might be and he's recovering nicely. It's like a charley horse and we're just erring on the side of caution with him."

Milton's second goal came when Georgetown's Fred Gervasi banked a clearing attempt off teammate Andrew Ella, but Gervasi atoned by tying the score early in the final frame. The Raiders also had just four defencemen after Chris Borges was ejected for a boarding major late in the second period.

IceHawk goalie Dillon Branco, acquired from Streetsville last week, again frustrated the Raiders, who

went 0 for 12 on the power play, until the third-period breakthrough.

Trevor Branning added an empty-net marker to secure the victory.

Forward Cory Park from Mississauga made his debut for Georgetown in Saturday's game. The 6-foot-1 210-pounder spent two seasons with Burlington and was picked up from Lindsay for fellow 20-year-old Justin Lacey, who had 20 points in 18 games for the Raiders.

Captain Evan Zych returns to the lineup tonight (Wednesday) when Georgetown hosts Mississauga at the Alcott Arena beginning at 8 p.m. Zych missed three games while playing for Team Canada East at the World Jr. A Challenge in Trail, B.C. last week. TCE lost to Team Canada West 4-1 in Sunday's finale.

Also on tap for the Raiders this week is a trip to Milton Friday night and a rematch with Mississauga in Port Credit Saturday evening.

Georgetown remains four points back of first-place Oakville in the West Division standings, although they hold games in hand on each of the teams above them.

(Eamonn Maher can be reached at emaher@independentfreepress.com)

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