

# Sports forum

by bob burtt

With the schedule within four days of completion teams in the Mid-Ontario Junior B Hockey League will find themselves pitted against one another in playoff action very soon.

Only a fool would dare to cast a prediction concerning the outcome of the playoffs. With the top teams in the league coasting and getting knocked off on a fairly regular basis by the lower rated clubs in the league anything can happen.

In both the Eastern and Western divisions of the league the last place clubs who appeared doomed to that position two weeks ago assumed the role of giant beaters. Oakville gave Milton good reason to wonder if they'd get to see playoff games this year when they beat the two top place teams in either division and stole two points from Burlington as well.

### Toronto caught fire

In the other division a revamped Toronto squad who appeared in need of basic skating lessons in November caught fire and are now engaged in a nip and tuck battle with Bolton for the final playoff spot in the East.

There is little question about the Hespeler team holding first place in the West but their game to game appearance hasn't been so impressive and it would be a presumption to give them anything more than even money to get out of their own division.

While Burlington can't be discounted too easily Merchants have had fair success with them. Rumors have it the Burlington goaltender who was rated as just short of sensational has been promoted to Junior A ranks. With him out of the way the Burlington club will lose a lot of their thunder.

### Sticky wicket

That leaves only Streetsville in this division. The Derbies' record hasn't been all that exciting this year but they're tough in Milton and the Merchants know it. Recollections of last year's playoff against that club will send Merchant fans shuddering.

Throw all this together and you have confusion. She's anybody's ball game at this stage of the game. The optimistic way of looking at things is to reason that the Merchants have been through their bad times and are ready to play up to their potential.

Their potential is clearly a lot happier picture than their record this far. If they read the potential they have no one will touch them, not in this league anyway.

### Crowds are growing

Crowds at junior Merchant games have been on the upswing for the last couple of games. Good fan support always means a lot to a club whether it be on the Pee Wee or professional level. It is a real plus to know it is "us and the fans against the other guys rather than us against the other guys and the fans."

**BLUELINE BANTER:** It is Minor Hockey Night in Milton Friday and a full program is being sponsored at the arena. Several minor hockey games are planned and to highlight the evening the minor hockey sponsors and coaches will clash in a fun game.

Doug Hearn of Milton still leads the scoring on the RPI college hockey team. He has 17 goals and 16 assists so far this season including exhibition games. He has racked up 18 points in 14 games during regular league action.

## Merchants win a playoff spot

Milton Merchants secured a spot in the playoffs when they defeated Oakville Blades of the Mid-Ontario Junior B group and then tied Hespeler Sunday night in Hespeler.

WEST GROUP							
	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Hespeler	31	18	9	4	182	121	40
Burlington	31	15	12	4	125	134	34
Streetsville	32	14	13	5	165	166	33
Milton	31	11	16	4	139	158	26
Oakville	32	9	20	3	128	173	21

EAST GROUP							
	GP	W	L	T	GF	GA	Pts
Orillia	32	26	3	3	239	117	55
Newmarket	32	20	10	2	166	123	42
Barrie	31	13	14	4	150	160	30
Toronto	34	8	22	4	110	194	20
Bolton	32	8	21	5	122	180	17

### LAST WEEK'S RESULTS:

- Jan. 19: Streetsville 7, Bolton 3; Oakville 8, Burlington 2.
- Jan. 20: Newmarket 2, Toronto 2.
- Jan. 21: Milton 7, Bolton 2; Toronto 7, Barrie 3; Newmarket 5, Hespeler 3.
- Jan. 22: Streetsville 7, Burlington 4; Milton 5, Oakville 2.
- Jan. 24: Milton 4, Hespeler 4; Barrie 7, Newmarket 7; Orillia 9, Toronto 3.

## Bantam B's win, lose, tie

Milton Delnin's Bantam B's copped a 3-2 win in an exhibition hockey game against Bowmanville in Bowmanville Saturday. Tony Pedulla scored twice and Bob Langridge got the winner.

Chris Neal, Randy Hamilton and Paul Sprout all picked up assists.

Returning to Chinguacousy for a regular league game the club lost 3-2. Bob Langridge scored both Milton goals with assists going to Sprout. Hamilton and Al McKinnon both picked up assists.

Third game  
Playing their third game in two days the club broke even, battling Guelph to a 2-2 tie. Kerry Kane scored from Mike Arnold and Brad Smith, then Tony Pedulla tied it up from Norm Mowbray and Ron Rowley.

Woman to friends at bridge party: "Girls, I've resolved to never again repeat gossip so, for heaven's sake, listen the FIRST time."



A DETERMINED MILTON MERCHANT CREW halted a winning streak for Oakville Blades here Friday night. The Merchants earned a playoff spot with a tie in Hespeler Sunday night. Here Merchant forwards apply pressure around the Oakville net in Friday's game.—(Staff Photo)

## Champion Sports Page

# Merchants stop giant beaters with 5-2 victory over Blades

The trumpets blew, the Merchants skated for 60 minutes or three periods of hockey and the Oakville Blades all but kissed goodbye to their hopes of securing the fourth and final playoff spot in the Mid-Ontario Junior B. Hockey League Friday night.

That may be an oversimplification of the happening but in effect that is what happened when Milton Merchants met and defeated the Oakville Blades in the 5-2 contest here Friday night.

### Halt blades

The trend that saw last place Blades steam rolling over the leaders in both divisions and a trend that saw Merchants lose on a fairly regular basis pitted the two in a battle for the final playoff position. Blades on a winning streak had established themselves as giant kettlers, beating Hespeler, Orillia and Burlington in three games.

Going into that game the Blades had three games left to play and needed the Friday night win to tie the Merchants.

Oakville jumped to an early 1-0 lead on a goal from Ray Chisholm. Midway through the first period Rick Stillaway converted a Don Hearn, Mike Craig play to tie the score.

### Two flukes

Rick Redshaw beat Roberts on a fluky goal late in the second period. Redshaw attempted to loft the puck into the Merchant zone but it went in off a stick.

Don Hearn got the second goal back on a softy before the period ended. The second period saw Merchant score two unanswered goals and go ahead for the first time in the game. They never gave up their lead.

Duane Hay scored the winning goal from Hearn and Bruce Lewis put Greg Chuchmach in the clear for the insurance goal at

18.20 of the second period. Ron Shepherd and Chuchmach broke in fast during the third period. Shepherd scooped the puck to Chuchmach and a quick shot caught the corner.

### First star

Chuchmach played one of his best games of the season, skating hard both ways all through the game and cashing in on two occasions to lead the scoring. He deserved the first star label given to him. Ken Parton who made his return to regular league action was in top form. Parton blacked more shots himself than actually got to Roberts. Parton was second star and Rich Stillaway rated a third star honor for an outstanding game.

The Merchants played well for three periods and skated both ways. Parton's return bolstered the defense and made a big difference.

Roberts came up with some acrobatic saves that illustrated the goaler's great potential. Even though Roberts has to be credited

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## MILTON ARENA

THURSDAY, Jan. 28  
Figure Skating 4.30 - 7.30 p.m.

FRIDAY, Jan. 29  
6.30 - 9.30 minor hockey  
Minor Hockey  
Coaches vs. sponsors  
10.15 Minor Hockey

SATURDAY, Jan. 30  
Public Skating 2 - 4 p.m. - 25c  
Tri County Hockey  
Pee Wee 4.45 p.m.  
Bantam 5.45 p.m.

SUNDAY, Jan. 31  
3 p.m. Burlington vs. Merchants

MONDAY, Feb. 1  
Tri County 7 - 10 p.m.  
Novice, Midget & Juvenile

TUESDAY, Feb. 2  
Figure Skating 4.30 - 7.30 p.m.  
Pro-Am 9.15 p.m.

WEDNESDAY, Feb. 3  
Public Skating 2 - 4 p.m. - 25c and 10c  
M.M.H. House League 5.15 - 9.00 p.m.

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## Merchants in playoffs tie loop leaders 4-4

A dramatic third period comeback gave Milton Merchants a 4-4 tie with league leading Hespeler Sunday in Hespeler, and provided Milton with the fourth and final playoff spot in the Mid-Ontario Junior B. hockey league.

Several Oakville players made the trip to see Merchants doom them as a last place club. Merchants beat Oakville in Milton Friday 5-2.

**Simpson is hot**  
Randy Simpson played exceptional hockey in the Milton nets, during the first period especially, and gave the club a chance to get their legs under them, coach Carl Hymers said.

The first period ended 1-1 and each club scored again in the second period. Hespeler fired two goals within the first 10 minutes of the third period and they looked like they were on their way.

It wasn't until the last two and a half minutes of the game that the Merchants got their break. Hespeler took two minor penalties, one right after another. Hay scored with Hespeler one man short on a pattern play from the point.

**Nice play**  
With less than a minute left in the game Mike Craig grabbed his own rebound and rapped it in to tie the game and put Milton in, and Oakville out of the playoffs. Rick Stillaway scored once during the game on a nice pass play from Don Hearn and Mike Craig. Hay scored twice in the game and was rated number two star for his efforts. Simpson was honored as a number one star for a fine effort between the pipes. Mike Craig earned a third star rating.

"The boys were real happy after that one," Hymers noted. He credited Ken Parton with an honorable mention although he wasn't named as one of the three stars in the game.

**Wind up schedule**  
Merchants were to have played last night in Oakville, and have two games left against Burlington before they wrap things up in regular season's play

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