

# AWWRIGHT!!!

## First Optimists then T-Birds capture OMHA titles



Victory mob: T-Birds' players jumped on goalie Wayne Wyckoff following their 5-0 shutout win over South London Sunday at Memorial Arena. It was the second OMHA title for this team. Last year, they won in the single-A minor peewee OMHA division.

### Strong efforts guide Optimists

Bedlam echoed through Memorial Arena when Milton Optimists minor peewees dumped Fort Erie 4-2 to capture the OMHA AA championship Friday night.

The hard-working Optimists balanced a potent offence with some of their strongest defensive play of the year to shut down Fort Erie's powerful scorers and gain three consecutive wins after beginning with an opening-game loss.

"We played some of the finest disciplined hockey our team has ever played," explained Optimists' assistant coach Murray Van Wart.

Discipline was the key word as Optimists put out a total team effort and although several players stood out from the crowd, it was the team's complete effort which allowed Optimists to recover from the first-game loss and take the championship.

After Fort Erie took the opener in the best-of-five series by a 6-1 margin a week ago Friday, coach Bob Davidson altered his game plan according to Fort Erie's style and it paid dividends.

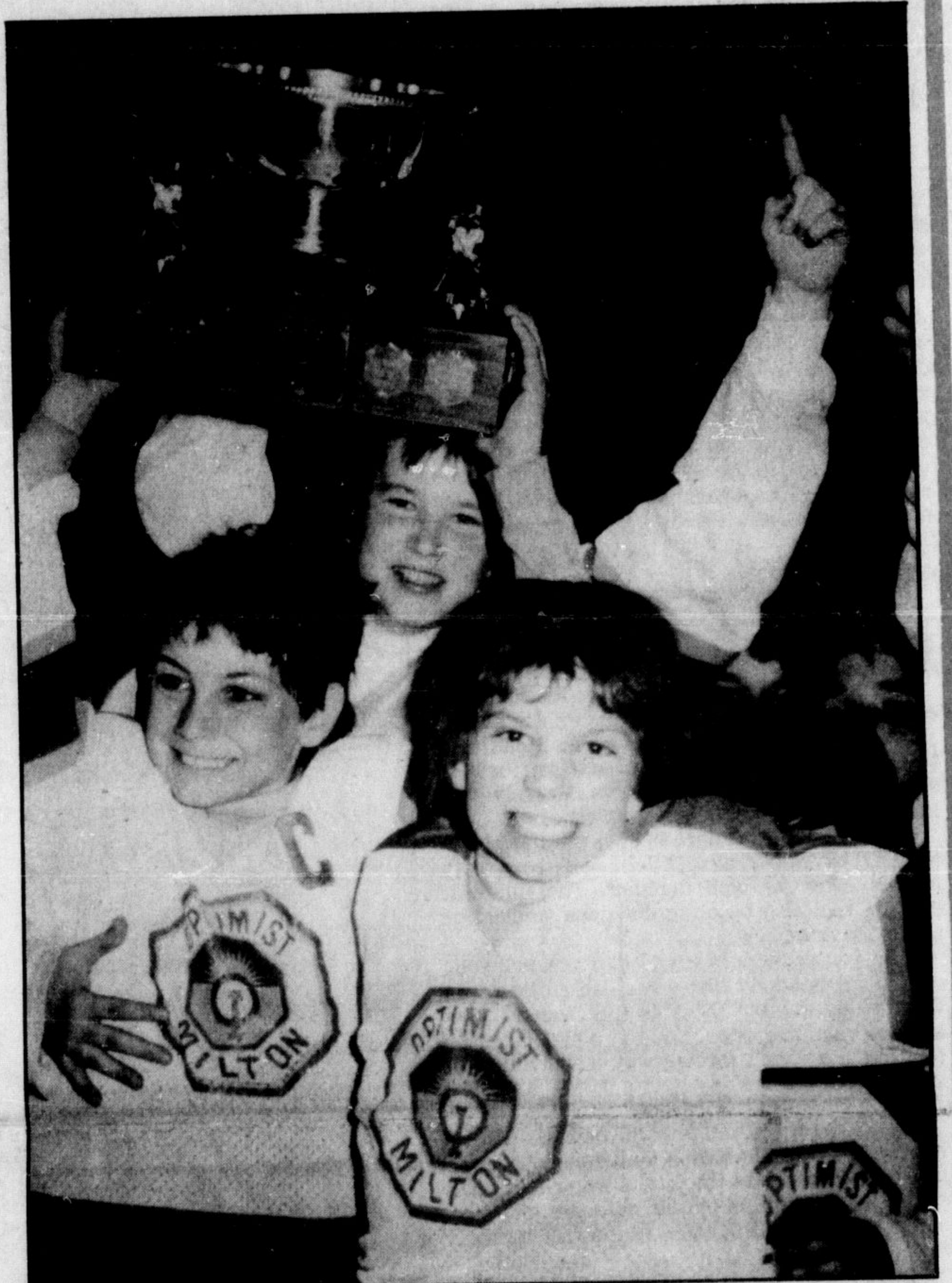
He shut down the high-scoring defence duo of Chris Candella and Stan Drulia by employing the forechecking abilities of Milton's Sean Davidson and Darren Shaw. The two players responded to the challenge in fine style which allowed Milton to take the second game 7-4, win the third 5-4 in overtime and wrap it up with the 4-2 whitewash.

"The kids followed the game plan right to the 'T' since game one," added Van Wart. Davidson was hoarse after the game caused by his constant yelling from the bench as well as the celebration which followed the game.

It was Davidson's second OMHA championship in a row. Last year he guided the minor peewees (which became the major peewees) past Dunnville. In defeating Fort Erie, Optimists defeated a team which were OMHA zone champions the past two years as major and minor atoms.

But much of the credit belongs to the players who didn't quit after losing the opener at home. Instead, Optimists regrouped and played some of their finest hockey of the year.

In the final game, Optimists received an outstanding effort from Tim Rayner. The forward was a constant checker and scored the back-breaking goal short-handed.



We did it: Milton Optimists minor peewees capped a strong season with the OMHA championship Friday. Holding the trophy is captain Mike Del Papa. Bruce Cameron is behind Del Papa while Todd Horne is on the right. Optimists battled back after losing the opener to defeat Fort Erie in four games.

After a shot down the ice, Rayner outraced the Fort Erie netminder and calmly deked the goalie who was 30 feet out of his cage before firing the puck into the vacated goal. The marker put Milton ahead 4-2 late in the second period and Fort Erie couldn't get untracked in the final frame.

Optimists opened the scoring in the first period when Rayner shot his first of the night while lying on the ice. His backhand seemed to catch everyone off guard while a scramble ensued in front of the goal.

Sean Davidson made it 2-0 when his shot from the side of the goal deflected into the net.

Fort Erie bounced back to close within one and then tied the score with Peter Taylor notching both goals from in front of the goal from good passing plays.

However, as they have all series, Optimists recovered to regain the lead for

good. Sean Davidson notched the winner after Rayner made a great play to keep the puck inside the Fort Erie Zone before passing to Davidson. After picking up the loose puck near the blue line, Rayner wheeled around and neatly deked several Fort Erie players before slipping a pass to Davidson. Davidson made no mistake shooting along the ice into the goal.

Coach Davidson instituted several small tactics in an attempt to throw Fort Erie coach Barry Willer off guard. Davidson changed the sweater numbers of Sean Davidson, Eric Chudleigh and Darren Shaw.

"We changed the numbers only because we had the last change and we wanted to confuse them," explained Davidson. "In the game in Fort Erie, they had the last change and used Candella on Shaw and Drulia on Davidson which was different

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### T-Birds make it two



On top: Perri Hood (A) and Tim Pollen (C) say it all after T-Birds defeated South London for the OMHA title. Pollen played one of his strongest games in the final, finishing the 76-game schedule with 145 goals.

They're making it a habit. For the second year in a row, Milton Trafalgar Ford major peewees are the OMHA champions. Doing it in fine style, T-Birds rallied from a loss in the first game to take the best-of-five series in four games topping off the series with a 5-0 whitewash of South London Sunday afternoon at Memorial Arena.

This same group of kids, plus or minus a few, captured the OMHA single-A title last year as minor peewees. Moving up a notch to double-A competition this year, T-Birds had a more difficult time but persevered to take the title.

"Everyone went from the word go," explained Milton coach Dawson Ellison of the final game. "We held them to just eight shots in the first two periods."

The shining light shone clearly on T-Bird captain Tim Pollen who brilliantly played one of his strongest games of the year especially at the beginning when T-Birds established their dominance in the contest.

The fleet-skating centre controlled the play whenever he was on the ice and opened the scoring six minutes into the game. Pollen picked up a pass from Bruce Syer at his own blue line and skated the length of the ice before firing a wrist shot past Vince Braca in the South London net.

Late in the first period, Milton goalie Shawn Carnegie injured his finger when he hit his hand on the post. Carnegie was rushed to Milton District Hospital where a splint was put on his finger enabling him to return to the arena and participate in the post-game celebrations.

T-Birds' assistant coach Bill Maxwell said he felt Milton played a strong checking game.

"They forechecked really well," he said. "They were really pressing all game."

Just 53 seconds after Pollen's opening goal, Perri Hood put T-Birds ahead by two. Milton pressed around the South London goal and Lassaline and Pollen combined to set up Hood who was unattended in front of the goal and he calmly backhanded the puck into the net.

The second period belonged to Paul Rowan who scored a goal at each end of the period to put T-Birds up 4-0 for an almost insurmountable lead.

Paul Wilson delayed the victory celebration by a few seconds when he scored just eight seconds from the end of the game but no one really seemed to mind. After the first period, the outcome really wasn't in doubt.

In the third game of the series played Saturday night at South London, T-Birds

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We're Number One: Optimists celebrate showing clearly which town has the best minor peewee hockey team in AA OMHA competition. The team isn't finished yet. Optimists will travel to Rhode Island next weekend for a tournament which will see them play their stiffest competition yet.