



**Happy coach:** Looking jubilant is Mudcat coach Vic Porter after his squad defeated Aeros 7-5 Sunday to win the best-of-seven O'Donnell division championship four games to two.

# Aeros' Cinderella season ends on a Mudcat note

By Michael Boyle  
Milton Aeros' roller-coaster season came to an abrupt end when Dunnville Mudcats regained its form from last year and dumped Aeros in four consecutive games after Milton had won the opening two contests.

In beating Milton, Dunnville captured the championship of the O'Donnell division of the Intermediate B League for the second consecutive year. Dunnville now plays St. Mary's Stonetown Flyers, Roxburgh division winners, for the league championship. The series gets underway Friday at St. Mary's. The second game goes Tuesday at Dunnville. Both games are 8.30 p.m. starts.

Mudcats captured the series with a 7-5 victory Sunday afternoon before 750 people at Dunnville Memorial Arena's backyard-size rink. Earlier, Dunnville had turned the series around with a 6-2 overtime win Tuesday at Milton, a 5-2 win Thursday at Dunnville and a 9-1 shellacking, to take control of the series, Friday under a full moon at Milton.

Dunnville coach Vic Porter, who joined the team in the stretch run, was uncharacteristically quiet after the game Sunday in explaining his team's success.

"I think what we had were more players who wanted to win," said Porter. "I don't want to take anything away from Milton. They put up a strong battle."

"But I think the difference with this team during the year was that we generated some attitude on this team. The players wanted to win."

Aeros' coach John Hall was reflective on his team's success in the playoffs. Most had picked Aeros to go out in four straight games to Rockton.

"All I can say is that we tried hard," said Hall. "We came 10 games farther than anybody thought we could go. From a bunch of guys who didn't know one another at the start of the year, I think we did quite well."

The final game was probably the best and most exciting of the series which lacked the drama of the Rockton-Milton series until the sixth game.

Aeros fell behind 3-1 by the midway point of the first period before lifting goalie Mark Fisher in favor of Bob Budden. Budden played the year with Dorchester before being signed as an emergency replacement for Pat Devlin who was injured (see other story).

Aeros seemed to turn things around with Budden in goal and scored three minutes after the change in goalies to close to within one.

In the second period, Aeros struck for two goals while Dunnville was held off the scoresheet by an excellent performance from Budden. Aeros were outshot 16-6 in the period.

Dunnville tied the score three minutes into the third period when captain Dave Robertson scored a power-play goal from a scramble.

Doug bounced back to regain the lead. Doug Hespil hit Doug Fry with a perfect pass. Fry's shot along the ice beat Rob Stewart cleanly. Fry sailed over the goalie

and Stewart lay on the ice injured for some time. However, he finished the game.

The goal seemed to spark Dunnville. In a one-minute span after Fry's goal, Mudcats had counted twice to take the lead and added an insurance goal with three minutes remaining to sew up the game.

The contest itself was played at a fast pace and featured very loose officiating. Many calls, which would have been assessed under different circumstances, went by the boards.

Dunnville outshot Aeros 19-10 in the final period. Had the team received outstanding goalkeeping as it had throughout the playoffs, Aeros probably would have won. But

Sunday, the squad received goalkeeping on a par with the other teams and lost. Mudcats outshot Milton 50-28 in the game.

Aeros were without the services of Pat Devlin, injured and Bruce Ellison and Ed Huizingh who were both working. Milton's goals were scored by Bob Baker with two, Tom Butt, Denis Longpre and Fry.

The key to the series was the third game, last Tuesday at Memorial Arena. Aeros had to fight back to gain a 2-2 tie at the end of regulation time and then fell apart in overtime. A victory would have given Aeros a 3-0 lock on the series.

Although Dunnville finished with just 10

wins in the 32-game schedule, the squad lost most of its top players from last year's winning team until they returned late in the regular season. Mudcats, inspired with something to prove after its poor start, put out an excellent effort in the playoffs and are a force to be reckoned with for the OHA championships.

## Goalies headache for Aeros

In an ironic twist of fate, Milton Aeros' goalkeeping, which had carried the club a fair distance in the playoffs, caused the club a major headache preparing for Sunday's game.

The pair of Mark Fisher and Pat Devlin had supplied Aeros with the best one-two punch, perhaps in Intermediate B hockey.

However, things began to run amok when Devlin suffered a sprained shoulder during the warm-up for the fourth game of the series Thursday. Devlin played, a remarkable achievement considering the pain, if for no other reason than Fisher wasn't available for the game and Devlin had to go it alone.

Friday night at Memorial Arena, Aeros dressed Fisher. A trip to the doctor's office had left Devlin with a sling around his arm and he was gone for the series.

Aeros' management began searching for another goalkeeper. According to the OHA, the team could find any goalie within the OHA from a team at the same level or below which had completed its season.

First off, Aeros asked Rockton Real McCoy's manager Don Robertson for the services of Rick Katchanoski. Both were in attendance Friday as Aeros went down to defeat 9-1.

Aeros' manager Carl Hymers and Robertson were locked in a long conversation in the dressing room after the game. However, with Rockton's protest still hanging in the balance, Robertson said he would have to consult with his executive on the matter.

Time was a major factor. Aeros needed to be present at the OHA office by Saturday at noon with the player named and a release from his team.

Robertson said he wouldn't stand in the way of Katchanoski playing with Aeros and would start the ball rolling Saturday morning. He said his team planned to ask Aeros for the use of either Fisher or Devlin as an emergency replacement had Rockton won the semi-final series.

However, Katchanoski nipped that idea in the bud. He said his first instinct was to play with Aeros because he just wants to play hockey. But he reconsidered.

"I felt the timing was improper considering the protest Rockton was having

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**The chase:** Aeros' Bob Baker chases Mudcat defenceman Bill Nagel in the fifth game of their series Friday. A full moon worked to Dunnville's advantage as Aeros bombed out by a 9-1 margin and lost the series Sunday in Dunnville.

## OHA turns aside protests on Lesuk

Despite being dealt a setback by the Ontario Hockey Association, Rockton Real McCoy's have indicated they will carry through with their protest over the ineligibility of Milton Aero forward Lorne Lesuk.

Last week, Rockton and Dunnville Mudcats sent letters of protest to the OHA arguing that Lesuk had been signed to a player's card incorrectly and could not be considered a local player.

Rockton manager Ron Robertson prepared a four-page, typed protest to the OHA but was refused a hearing when he was informed the OHA would not hear any cases concerning player eligibility past Feb. 13. The OHA reasoned that playoffs would be affected if players were being protested or even if they needed to be suspended.

When Aeros began the series with Dunnville, Mudcats also protested Lesuk but received the same answer from the OHA.

The OHA said the playoff picture cannot be altered past this stage. All reports concerning a possibility of replaying a game in any series are incorrect.

However, Rockton can appeal the OHA decision, not to hear the protest by appealing to the OHA board on April 3. Robertson, who attended Aeros' last home game Friday, indicated the matter was up to his board of directors. He said, "If it was up to me, I'd see this thing through."

"Last year, Rockton was dealt a big blow by suspensions of ineligible players right before the playoffs. We lost our president for five years and our manager for two years. If we're playing this thing straight, then it's only fair that all the teams be as clean as we are."

Aeros' manager of player operations, Carl Hymers refuted Robertson's claim of Lesuk being ineligible.

"We went to the OHA right at the start of the season and explained the whole situation of Lorne Lesuk to them," said Hymers. "We told them where he played before and where he was living now. Then we asked what we should classify him as,

an import or a local player and they said that he's not an import."

The matter may lie there if Rockton decides not to pursue it. However, with the memories of last year still fresh in their minds, it is expected Rockton's executive will elect to carry it on through the appeal.

## Raiders loud, quiet Sound

Georgetown Raiders captured the Georgian Bay Intermediate A League hockey championship with a comfortable 10-3 victory over Owen Sound Saturday night at Georgetown.

The victory enabled Raiders to take the best-of-seven finals four games to one. Owen Sound had closed the gap to 2-1 with a 6-2 win last Tuesday in Georgetown before Raiders put it together Friday night for a 5-4 victory in Owen Sound.

The key to the quick exit by Owen Sound may have been a collapse in the fourth game. Owen Sound carried a 4-1 lead into the third period before collapsing and allowing Raiders four unanswered goals to earn the win.

Bill Hamilton scored the winner with just 38 seconds remaining in the game off a pass from Ray Tonelli.

Raiders now travel to Timmins to play the home side in a best-of-three next weekend. The teams play Friday, Saturday and Sunday, if necessary, in the semi-final round.

The survivor goes up against Thunder Bay in a best-of-five the following weekend. Games are slated to begin the following Thursday and run over the next four days if necessary, for the OHA championship.

Players from Milton with Raiders are goalie Peter McDuffe and forwards Ron Twiss and Tonelli.

# Composite rep midget team in the works

**A** VERY strong, powerful major midget hockey team may be coming to Milton. And it may very well be Milton's own team.

Although nothing has been finalized, several executive members of Milton Minor Hockey are looking into the possibility of building a combination major and minor midget team for next year with the aim of making the squad the showcase of Milton.

The concept goes against everything the association has stated in the past: i.e. that all players within the rep hockey system will play within their own age group.

However, the loss of several players to the team at Milton District High School, to the Jr. B Flyers and to nowhere in particular has set the organization thinking of ways to keep its players for the full duration of their minor hockey careers.

So far, indications are for the team to be comprised exclusively of minor and major midgets. Those of minor-midget age who don't make the squad will play for the minor midget team or midget selects while those of major-midget age may be given the option of playing juvenile hockey or with the selects.

It's known MMHA took a dim view of the signings of 15-year-olds John Turner and Paulo Zulian by Flyers. Perhaps, the building of a super team might have been enough incentive for the players to remain with minor hockey.

Ideas being thrown around include the construction of a competitive schedule with excellent tournaments and perhaps, trips to big-name tournaments in the province.



Michael Boyle

The idea is a good one. Too many young players leave the game or get burned at playing at a higher level sooner than they need. A strong midget club would give all players something to look forward to and at the same time provide a good source of hockey entertainment.

The concept is being looked into by the MMHA executive which hopes to have a definitive approach laid out in the not-too-distant future.

NOT MANY people would have guessed Milton Aeros to be still playing hockey as far as they did.

Especially me. At the beginning of the season, I didn't give the team much of a chance of accomplishing a thing past the regular season and for a long time there, it looked like I'd be right.

However, Aeros dug themselves out of a hole with a few lucky breaks and a lot of hard work to put on a late surge in the regular season capping it with the surprise seven-game victory over league-leaders Rockton Real McCoy's.

They got the players and led by their excellent goaltending tandem of Mark Fisher and Pat Devlin put on quite a show for the home folks who were deprived of some hockey entertainment when the Jr. B Flyers left the scene in February.

The fact the team went as far as it did with a rookie coach (John Hall) and a new team of players save for a handful is a credit to all involved, especially manager Carl Hymers and Hall who somehow found a way to get a winning hockey team after many had given up on the team.

The team itself was on the brink of col-

lapsing through either a lack of funds or a lack of players. The fact it went anywhere is a major achievement.

But what for next year?

The future of the team is a big question mark. Financially, the big gates for the six playoff games at Memorial Arena certainly helped offset some of the losses throughout the year when the team was averaging 58 paid attendance.

One idea might be for the team to consider a further alteration of management and players and upgrade the team to Intermediate A. Certainly, that was the prime reason Rockwell International sponsored the team two years ago.

A major sponsor would have to be found but I think the interest is here and as we found, the players can be found.

THE FLYER'S hockey season may have ended a month back but the team is still in the news.

The club will officially close out its worst season with its annual dance Friday, April 3 at Lions Hall at Memorial Arena.

All individual presentations of awards will be made at the dinner.

Owner Vern Gooding still has a few tickets left. Anyone interested in attending is asked to call Vern at 878-5236.

MILTON'S JUNIOR ladies fastball team is undergoing quite a change.

Although all players and coaches are expected back, the team lost its sponsor, Fifth Wheel, and organizer Murray Whistler.

Coaches Sue McCallum and Bob Stark will return and operate the team this year. Most players have indicated a likelihood of returning.

At the moment, players aren't the real problem for either Stark or McCallum. With Fifth Wheel pulling out, the team has tried to obtain individual sponsors and has renamed the club, Milton Selects Jr. Ladies from Fifth Wheel Regals.

The team will continue to operate in the Southern Ontario Junior Ladies' League. Regals were fourth last year in the provincial playdowns and won intermediate tournaments in Barrie and North Bay. The record is remarkable considering the team played with nine first-year players last season and will no doubt improve this campaign with a year of experience under their collective belts.

Sponsorship is the major problem facing the squad which will have to start from scratch. The estimated cost of running the team in its initial year is \$2,500 while \$1,500 is anticipated for the following year.

Interested sponsors for a fine team are asked to call Stark at 878-6837 or McCallum at 878-6107. The team is looking at perhaps 10-15 sponsors.

Meanwhile, the on-field activities of the club are expected to get going soon with indoor practices beginning one week Thursday (April 2) at Robert Baldwin School at 9 p.m. Any interested players between 16-19 years of age are asked to attend or call either Stark or McCallum.

FASTBALL PLAYERS will find themselves battling a fastball version of The Racer's Edge when the Milton Fastball League gets underway in May.

Managed by ex-Stag Johnny Penson, the team will carry a strong flavor of its entry in the Milton Industrial Hockey League. As many as 10 hockey players or managers with the hockey team are expected to