

Hull roast postponed until April 30

An unavailability of top-notch roasters has forced the popular annual Optimist Club roast to be postponed.

Roast organizer Chris Heathy had lined up Dennis Hull, formerly with Chicago Black Hawks, as the "guest of honor" for the night but commit-

ments by many of his former teammates for this Friday, the scheduled date for the roast, forced the roast to be re-scheduled until April 30.

All tickets sold for the roast will be honored at the later date. Refunds will be issued prior to April 4.

The roast has always been a fun-

cial and humorous success with last year's roast of former NHL coach Don Cherry drawing a full house to the Optimist Centre.

Heath decided to try to line up a head table of roasters consisting purely of ex-NHLers and their availability at this time of year is

difficult to obtain. The later date should enable more former players to attend.

The former Black Hawk was the surprise hit of the Don Cherry roast. His dry wit and cutting sarcasm reduced the usually unflappable Cherry to a prune.

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THIRD SECTION

Just one survivor in OMHA

All hopes for a title rest with Optimists minor peewees

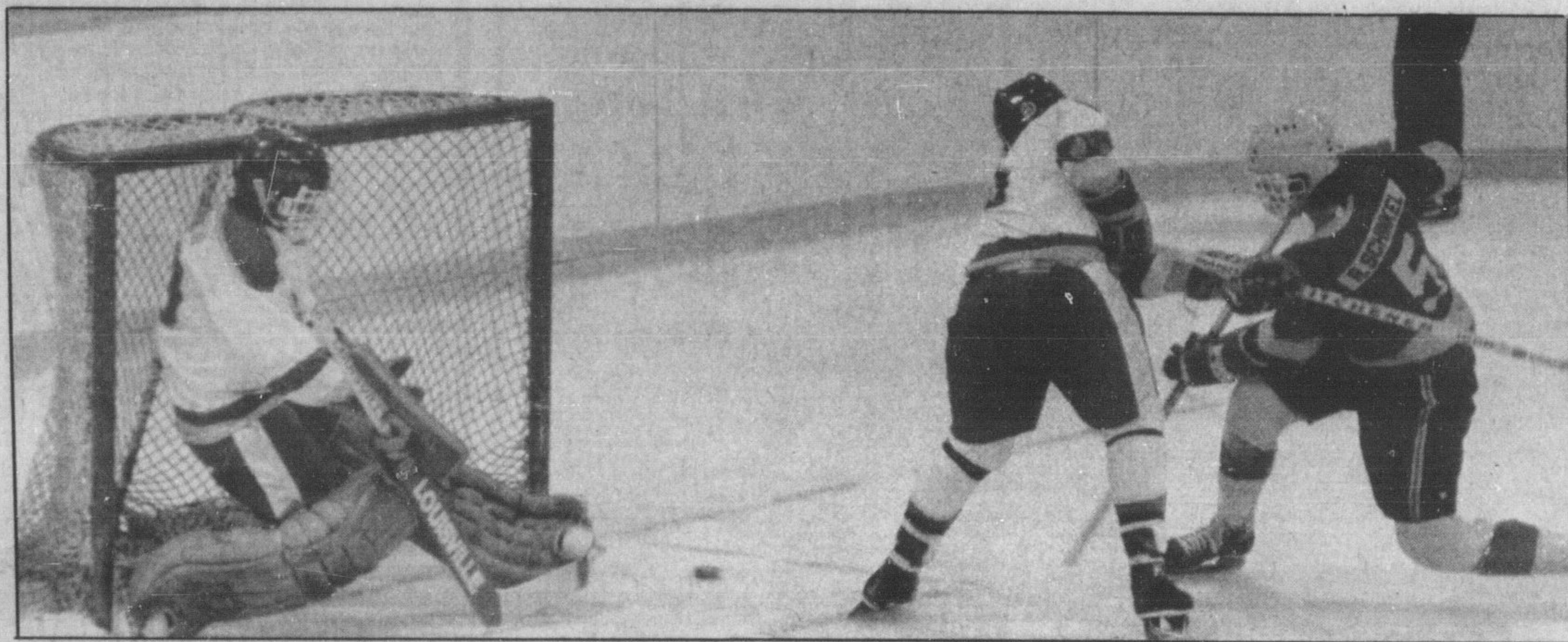
Hopes for a Milton OMHA crown have been reduced to Optimists minor peewees as three rep hockey teams were eliminated in quarter-final action in a span of four days.

Optis secured the berth in the semi-final round by beating Stratford in a fifth game Saturday at Memorial Arena while major midget Comets, major bantam Wheelers and minor bantam Blades put up sterling efforts in exciting series but find themselves on the sidelines with the four other teams

which were eliminated earlier.

Certainly hockey fans got more than their fill of competitive hockey games as all four series featured closely matched teams with breaks deciding which teams would advance.

All results of all series are contained on this page. Optimists begin semi-final action Saturday at 4 p.m. at Oak Ridge and return to Memorial Arena Sunday at 2 p.m.



Comet goalie Kevin Hughes kicks out this shot while defenceman Rick Brown ties up Rick Schinkel in front of the goal. Comets dropped the final two games of the best-of-five series to end a successful major-midget season. Fort Erie clinched the win with a 7-3 win Sunday at Fort Erie.

Fort Erie cures fever

Establishing a strong physical presence from the start of the game, Fort Erie needed a couple of goals early in the third period before recording a 7-3 win over Milton Canadian Tire major midget Comets Sunday to take the OMHA quarter-final series to the five-game limit.

The score wasn't indicative of the play as Comets and Fort Erie were evenly matched throughout the series. Exciting finishes were commonplace to the three middle games in the series.

Comets had taken a 2-1 series lead with a 4-3 win Thursday at Fort Erie but the series was tied when Fort Erie pulled off a 4-3 win of their own at Memorial Arena Friday.

The scene shifted back to Fort Erie Sunday for the deciding game. Fort Erie jumped out quickly to a 3-1 lead but Comets tied the score at 3-3 early in the second period.

A power-play goal midway through the period coupled with two quick goals before the third period was five minutes old secured the win.

If the series had a turning point, it occurred in the third period of the fourth game.

Nursing a 3-2 lead, Fort Erie began a cheer on the bench which continued for the duration of the period. Despite playing in a foreign arena, Fort Erie appeared the more enthusiastic team and won it to stave off elimination and force the fifth game back in more familiar territory.

In the fifth game, Milton played with just one goalkeeper, Kevin Hughes. Just prior to departure from Milton Sunday, the other goalie, Norm Knoflach, quit the team because of a lack of recent playing time.

Although Hughes was scheduled to start the fifth game, Fort Erie seized on the opportunity of a one-goalie opposition and ran at Hughes when the score was close.

To their credit, Fort Erie left Hughes alone when they had the lead but throughout the second period, it was apparent Hughes was a marked man.

At one point, the game was held up for 10 minutes after Hughes had been rapped several times during a scramble. However, Hughes became more determined and held on with a good effort.

The final game also featured one of the most unusually officiated games of the lot. The penalties in number were close with Fort Erie taking 14 minors to Milton's 13. However, one referee called almost all penalties against Milton with the other referee calling the bulk of the Fort Erie penalties.

Comets started the final game quickly scoring the first goal 10 seconds into the game. Mike McIlwraith notched the goal with Rob Bourbonnais drawing an assist.

However, just 27 seconds later a Milton penalty produced the Fort Erie equalizer. Fort Erie scored another power-play tally five minutes into the contest and made it 3-1 midway through the period.

Comets closed the gap to 3-2 with a minute to go in the period when Haskett notched a power-play goal from a rebound. Rick Serafini assisted.

Bob Landry scored the equalizer for Milton with a fine shorthanded effort. It was a patented Landry one-on-one and he left the defender and the goalie in their tracks.

Landry played the final game with a broken finger he picked up in the fourth game from a slash. Despite playing in pain and hampered in his shot-making, Landry didn't let the injured finger bother his play.

The physical style of the game continued in the second period with both teams taking runs at each other.

The penalties proved costly for Milton when Fort Erie scored what later proved to be the winning goal from a power play midway through the frame.

The penalties continued and Comet Rob McCullough picked up four minutes in penalties with just five minutes left in the period. However, Comets' penalty-killing efforts held Fort Erie off the board.

Comets had a chance of their own to score on the power play when Fort Erie picked up a minor in the final minute of the period and then another just as the period ended.

Despite enjoying a two man advantage, Comets couldn't get much of an offence going and this more than anything else spurred Fort Erie.

Insurance goals at the 12:03 and 11:01 marks put

Fort Erie ahead 6-3 with an empty-net goal late in the game sealing the win.

In the fourth game, Fort Erie jumped ahead 1-0 but Mike Van Wart evened the score with a nice effort with five minutes left in the opening period. Van Wart shot over the goal from outside the blue line. Scott Rouleau and McIlwraith worked the puck back in front to Van Wart who drove it home.

Haskett made it 2-1 four minutes into the second period from Landry and Terry Ellwood but three minutes later Fort Erie tied it up.

Two goals early in the third period put Fort Erie ahead 4-2 and the club put up a strong defensive shell the rest of the way.

Ellwood made it exciting with a goal three minutes from the end but Comets couldn't apply continued pressure in the Fort Erie zone.

It was the "Mark Haskett Show" in the third game as the fleet-skating leftwinger scored three times in the final two minutes to turn a 3-1 disadvantage into a 4-3 win. Haskett scored his goals at the 1:47, 1:01 and :40 second marks. McCullough scored the first goal for Comets which drew the club to within one at 2-1.

Going to the absolute limit, Milton Banvil Blades minor bantams took Fort Erie to six games in a five game series before bowing out 7-4 Sunday at Memorial Arena.

Blades saved themselves from elimination with a well engineered 5-2 win Wednesday night at Memorial Arena to square the series at two games apiece and then forced a sixth game after a 2-2 overtime draw Saturday at Fort Erie.

The victory for Fort Erie gave the border town the rubber match in their three-year rivalry. Two years ago, as minor peewees, Milton defeated Fort Erie 3-1 for the OMHA championship. Last year as major bantams, Fort Erie gained revenge by knocking out Milton in the quarter-finals in five games.

Certainly, the teams were as closely matched as the scores indicate. Each team had two "team leaders" but in the end the difference came from the Fort Erie "foot-soldiers" who came through with good goal-scoring efforts.

In the final game, Blades appeared to run away with it going ahead with a 3-0 lead after one period of play. However, the club's defensive strategy fell apart in the second period allowing Fort Erie to notch five consecutive goals in a 10-minute span for a 5-3 lead.

Milton closed to within one before the period was out but Fort Erie restored the two-goal margin 39

seconds into the third period and added an empty-net goal to seal the win.

Blades' Steve Scannell opened the scoring midway through the first period with a blast from the blue line which bounced and deflected off several legs into the goal. Darren Shaw assisted.

Less than a minute later, Shaw made it 2-0 from Sean Davidson.

When Ed Morgan scored one of the prettiest goals of the series two minutes later, it appeared Blades were on their way to the semi-finals.

Morgan's goal was shorthanded. He picked up the puck at his own blue line and skated down the ice on a two-on-one with Todd Horne. Morgan pushed the puck past the lone defender at centre ice with a nice move and was home free.

Morgan broke down the right side and deked the goalie depositing a nice backhand into the goal past Mark Howard.

Blade netminder Tom Hill was outstanding in the first period stopping more than half a dozen excellent scoring chances.

However, the roof caved in early in the second period. Milton's defenders and back-checkers allowed Fort Erie to stand in front of the goal looking for rebounds.

Except for a fine goal by Fort Erie's shifty defenceman Stan Drulia, all second-period goals were scored

from crazy scrambles. Blade coach Gary Hudson replaced Hill with Steve Heagle after the third Fort Erie goal but he went back into the goal just 43 seconds later.

During the scuffling of goalies, Fort Erie scored three goals in 56 seconds which changed the entire complexion of the game.

Davidson closed the gap to 5-4 with a nice wrist shot from just inside the blue line and the goal seemed to give Blades a lift.

However, Fort Erie scored on a rebound 39 seconds into the third period and held Milton's usually potent offence in check for the rest of the game.

Peter Taylor capped the win with an empty-net marker, his third of the game, late in the game. Drulia paced Fort Erie with two goals and two assists and together with teammate Chris Candella showed Milton fans more moves than players much older.

One of the most exciting games of the entire series was the fifth contest. Each team scored once in the first period and then scored less than a minute apart late in the third period to force overtime which was scoreless and penalty-free.

Both goalies, Hill and Howard, turned in strong efforts with Hill stopping Drulia on a breakaway which is virtually unheard of. Similarly, at the other end Howard

came up with several big stops late in overtime to force the sixth game.

Ken Hoage opened the scoring for Fort Erie with four minutes left in the first period. In the final minute of the frame, Chris Wakely, who along with Ed Morgan turned in good efforts on defence, scored the equalizer from speedsters Shaw and Horne.

Key penalty-killing efforts in the first part of the game, when Blades were two men short for two full minutes, perhaps was the key factor in the contest.

In the third period, Shaw scored with 4:10 to go in the game from Morgan but Hoage came back 46 seconds later to score the equalizer.

In the fourth game of the series, Blades scored three unanswered goals in the final frame to sew up the win.

Drulia opened the scoring three minutes into the game but early in the second period, Mike Del Papa tipped in a shot from Morgan. With just over a minute left in the period, Horne made it 2-1 with a goal from the side of the net but Drulia tallied with just seven seconds showing on the clock to send the two clubs into the dressing room tied at 2-2.

Scannell made it 3-2 54 seconds into the third period shooting from a sharp angle. Davidson scored twice in the final minutes to ensure the win.



Although the puck appears headed for the goal, it missed the net as Blades Darren Shaw takes the shot. Blades fought back to force a sixth game in their "best-of-five" series but Fort Erie beat the Milton club 7-4 in Milton Sunday night.

Optis pull through to move to semis

Milton's hopes for an OMHA championship now rest on the shoulders of a bunch of precocious 11 year olds.

Optimists minor peewees became the sole surviving team to move beyond the quarter-finals with a finely tuned 6-5 decision over Stratford in the fifth and deciding game of their best-of-five series Saturday afternoon at Memorial Arena.

The club now meets Oak Ridges Acres, from the London area, in the semi-final series. Action gets underway Saturday at 4 p.m. in Oak Ridge with the second game Sunday at 2 p.m. at Memorial Arena.

The victory required a lot of hard work on Optimists' part who came up in their toughest series of the OMHA playdowns. After winning the first games, Optis dropped the next contests in overtime and faced elimination twice.

The threat of elimination obviously made a big impression on the players who threw out their individual game plan and restored to a better passing game. Backed by the strong netminding of Steve Wivczaryk, Optis broke a 2-2 first-period draw for a 5-3 lead after two periods.

Adam Mead scored with six minutes remaining in the game to put Optis up 6-3 but Stratford threw a scare into Milton with two goals in the final minute and pressed until the dying seconds for the equalizer.

The key to the win, explained Milton assistant coach Dave Gordon, was the success the team enjoyed in two-on-one breaks. In the past, a two-on-one meant the trailer looked for a rebound.

But the club countered in the game and passed to the open man creating several excellent scoring chances.

Optis found themselves down by a goal before the game was a minute old when Stratford scored at 14:11.

However, midway through the first period, Paul Allen tied the score on a goal from linemates Mall McCandless and Chris Harrison.

The McCandless-Allen-Harrison line was dynamic all night and totalled four goals and 10 points in the contest.

With 3:34 left in the opening period, Danny Brown put Optis ahead 2-1 with a marker from Doug Poulton. Poulton enjoyed his second consecutive three-assist night and finished with seven assists over the five-game series.

However, Stratford evened the score with just over a minute left in the period.

It took Optis exactly 51 seconds to take the lead in the second period.

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Goalie Steve Wivczaryk celebrates as his Optimists minor peewees beat Stratford 6-5 Saturday to advance to the OMHA semi-finals.

Blades valiant comeback effort fails short in series' sixth game

Wheelers put up a battle but fall in three straight

It finally struck midnight for the Cinderella post-season of Milton Fifth Wheel major bantams as the club lost 4-0 Thursday and was eliminated in three straight games by Port Colborne from OMHA quarter-final play.

Port Colborne broke open a scoreless draw with a goal one minute into the third period and made it 2-0 five minutes later. An empty-net goal and the fourth marker in the final minute sealed the win for Port Colborne.

Wheelers played the crucial game without the services of key centreman Tim Pollen who was serving a one-game suspension for high sticking he picked up in the second game of the series.

Milton's effective checking finally crumbled early in the third period allowing Port Colborne the two markers.

The goals were scored after Milton had two

goals of their own called back. Perri Hood had scored one of the called-back goals because of a high stick while the whistle blew just prior to Chris Austin slipping the puck into the net.

Goalkeeper Shawn Carnegie played well in holding Port Colborne off the scoreboard for two periods. The third goal was scored into an empty net while the fourth was notched in the final minute.

Despite going out in three straight, Wheelers put up good efforts in each contest losing the first two games by a single goal.

Despite finishing in second place to Georgetown in Tri-County league play, Wheelers beat out Georgetown two games to one to qualify for OMHA and then pulled off the comeback of the year in beating Owen Sound seven points to five needing to win the fourth, fifth and sixth games of the series to take the series.