



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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*Sports
ice skating*

Cinelli shakes off short slump; Milton rebounds to thump Vipers

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

David Cinelli's concentration level was back up to snuff, as were those of his teammates, in the Merchants' 9-2 drubbing of the Vaughan Vipers Monday.

Forty-eight hours after a sub-par showing in Georgetown, Milton's goalie rebounded with a sharp 25-save performance.

"David was back on track and our guys played pretty well," said skipper Marty Williamson.

"I put (Jamie) Fitzgibbon in again and he did a good job. I'm trying to give the rookies more ice time these days (over this less demanding stretch)."

The win pushed the Merchant's season record to 20-3, which put them in a tie with Brampton for top spot in the West Conference.

Best in the west

Their 7.4 goals a game and mere 2.7 against rank among the best averages in the entire Provincial Jr. A Hockey League.

Leading the way with two goals and two assists Monday was team scoring leader Darren Haydar, who's now jumped ahead of Collingwood veteran David Deeves to lead the overall scoring race.

He has 63 points (29 goals, 34 assists) in 23 games.

Kevin O'Flaherty also tallied twice while Ron Baker and Steve French posted one goal and two assists a piece.



David Cinelli

Fitzgibbon, Troy Walczak and captain Jeff Haydar dented the twine as well.

The Merchants didn't escape Vaughan unscathed however, as they lost Shane Sullivan to a two-game suspension.

Milton's assistant captain was penalized as the third-man in after Viper Chris Kelly jumped Matt Bannan from behind.

Mario Cortes and David Peca were Vaughan's marksmen. Both scored in the second period.

Merchants notes: Sullivan's absence shouldn't hurt Milton too much tonight (Friday) when they host vastly inferior Elliot Lake of the Northern League ... Rookies Chad Blundy and Jeff Seeds drew assists in Monday's win. Both have recorded points in their last three appearances.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

St. Thomas Aquinas Raiders converge on Mustang goalie Blair McTrach Monday at Memorial Arena, as defenceman Steve Turner (6) muscles his way into the action. Milton District High won the season opener 5-1.

Mighty midgets power Mustangs

Milton District High Hockey
Milton District High's hockey team will have an unbelievably easy time improving on last year's 1-16-1 record.

After all, they've already equaled their 1996-97 win total with a season opening triumph over St. Thomas Aquinas Monday.

But simple improvement won't be enough for Luc Redditt, who's got his sights set on complete dominance.

"We're definitely capable of at least winning Haltons (the regional title)," the first-line left winger said, following a one-goal,

St. Thomas Aquinas
three-assist effort against St. Thomas Aquinas.

His optimism stems from a Mustang lineup that includes eight players from last season's AA midget crew — the team that blew away all comers en route to the Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) title.

A number of these overage midgets, including Redditt, Dan McDuffe and Steve Turner, no doubt have the tools to play lower-echelon Jr. A hockey and could have competed with Georgetown or

Vaughan this season. They instead opted to pool their talents and take a run at another championship.

"When we saw how many players from the midget team went to Milton District we decided to stick together," Redditt recalled.

The decision has already met with a measure of success.

In addition to beating St. Thomas Aquinas 5-1, MD gave a good accounting in a 4-3 exhibition loss to Notre Dame — who made it to the provincial high school championships last spring.

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