



# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY MARCH 24, 1998

## School in for Sting, Merchants the tutors

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*Special to The Champion*

The Sting have no past glory to live up to and pose no present threat. Subsequently, they have no immediate future — beyond this coming weekend that is.

Just a third-year entry to the Provincial Jr. A League, with no playoff success before this season, Trenton will have to be content with their East Conference championship.

Because they've got just two chances of stealing the league crown from Milton, slim and none.

And slim just caught the last bus out of town.

Unless all their wheels fall off within the next few days, the Merchants are looking at another successful title defence.

They set themselves up for the repeat with 6-3 and 9-3 victories Friday and Sunday respectively.

With the exception of a sluggish start in game one, Milton has dominated their eastern neighbors with what assistant coach Rick Osborne called "textbook forechecking."

His forward lines will be looking to take the Sting to school again tomorrow night in Trenton and put a 3-0 stranglehold on the series.

"They (Trenton) didn't win the East with smoke and mirrors so we're going to have to come out hard again," said Osborne. "The key is that we're playing really well right now."

Heading into game two at Memorial Sunday, Sting captain Cory Ignas said he "wasn't that impressed" with Milton, stating that his team simply needed a strong 60-minute effort to even things up.

Whether the Merchants got wind of this or not they changed his tune in an awful hurry, unloading with four goals and a 16-5 shot advantage in the opening frame.

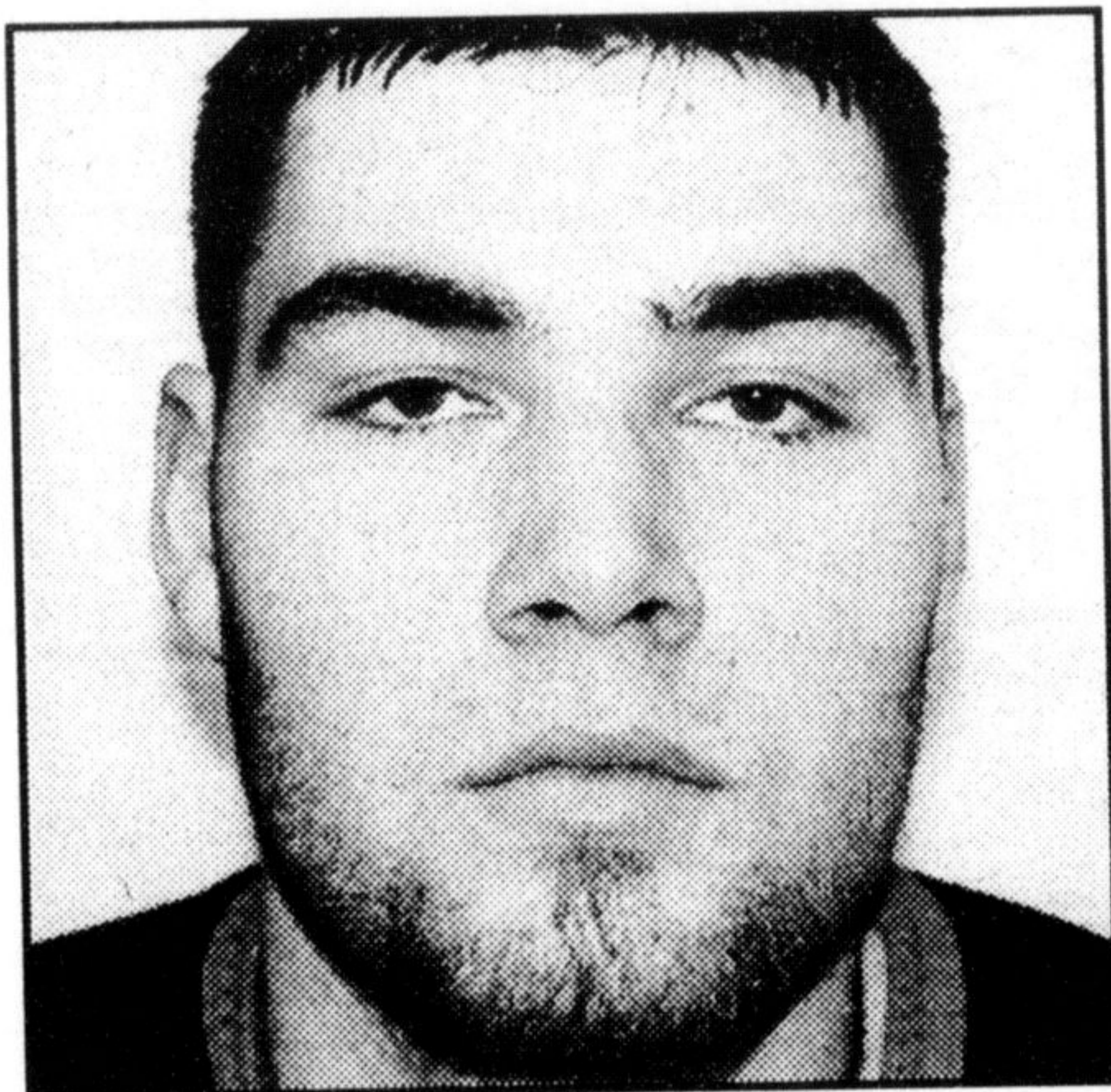
Trenton's biggest opportunity came by way of a penalty shot, after T.J. Lee hauled down Noel Burkitt on a breakaway.

Milton cager Daniel Jacques had only to stand his ground as the East Conference scoring leader shot right at his chest.

Jacques came up big on a few top shelf blasts Sunday but by and large wasn't sufficiently tested.

At the other end of the rink the Merchants fired 48 shots at Dwayne Bateman and back-up Jared Ruston, who got the call after goal number six — far too late as it would turn out.

Leading the charge up front were Steve Clarke, Chad Blundy and Jasen Hopiavuori, whose top notch forechecking



**Jasen Hopiavuori**

resulted in a pair of first period goals.

Darren Haydar also tallied twice, dumping in a Matt Bannan rebound and handcuffing Ruston with a wide-angle rocket for Milton's best looking goal, while Ron Baker stood out with a goal and two assists.

Also scoring were Bannan, Jeff Hutchins, John Nadalin and Shane Sullivan — his first of the postseason.

Milton scored four powerplay goals while Trenton went 1-for-3 with the man-advantage.

Returning from a week long layoff due to a bruised right hand, Hutchins reunited with linemates Baker and Rich Williams Friday and helped stage a big game one comeback.

The trio figured in three goals down the stretch, following a period-and-a-half offensive drought.

Milton's fortunes took a sharp turn once they started firing high on Bateman.

Steve French buried the eventual game winner at 11:07 of the third. Darren Haydar lit the lamp twice in this one as well while Troy Walczak potted the other.

Bannan, Nadalin and fellow defender Mark McPhail took turns muscling Burkitt off the puck.

Jacques stopped 18 of 21 shots Friday. Nathan Gillies and Sting counterpart Karl Hehn slugged it out in the final few minutes of play, in the only fight so far in the series.

**Merchant notes:** Ron Baker has officially laid last year's lacklustre playoff run to rest. In 16 games he's amassed 25 points, eight more than he did throughout the entire '96/97 post-season ... The Merchants have now won nine straight playoff games ... Super fans Gary Sim (878-6029) and Brian Ames (878-5060) are organizing a bus trip to Trenton Saturday, if game five is necessary. Those interested must book a seat by tomorrow evening. Cost is \$20.

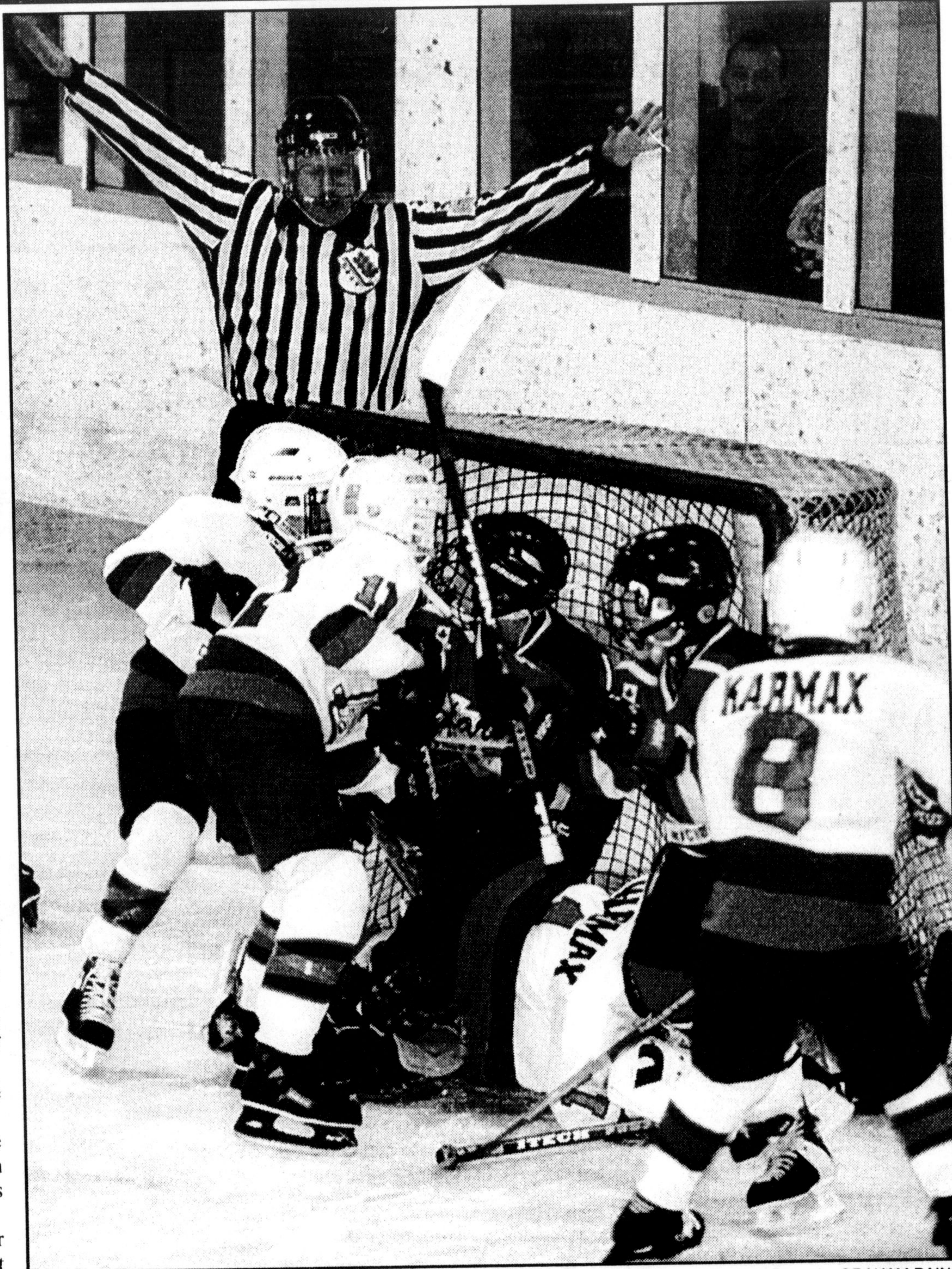


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

The single A major novice Winterhawks face an onslaught from Richmond Hill Saturday afternoon, during game one of their OMHA zone finals. Milton lost 7-0.

## Hill sniper is tough to stop

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*Special to The Champion*

Grant Gooding's strategy should be real simple tomorrow night — double team, heck triple team, Sean D'Orazio.

The nine-year-old Richmond Hill sniper was a one-man wrecking crew at Memorial Arena Saturday afternoon.

Scoring four goals — two while shorthanded — and adding an assist, D'Orazio almost single-handedly delivered his visiting Stars a 7-0 whitewash over

Milton's single A major novices in the opening bout of their OMHA zone championship showdown.

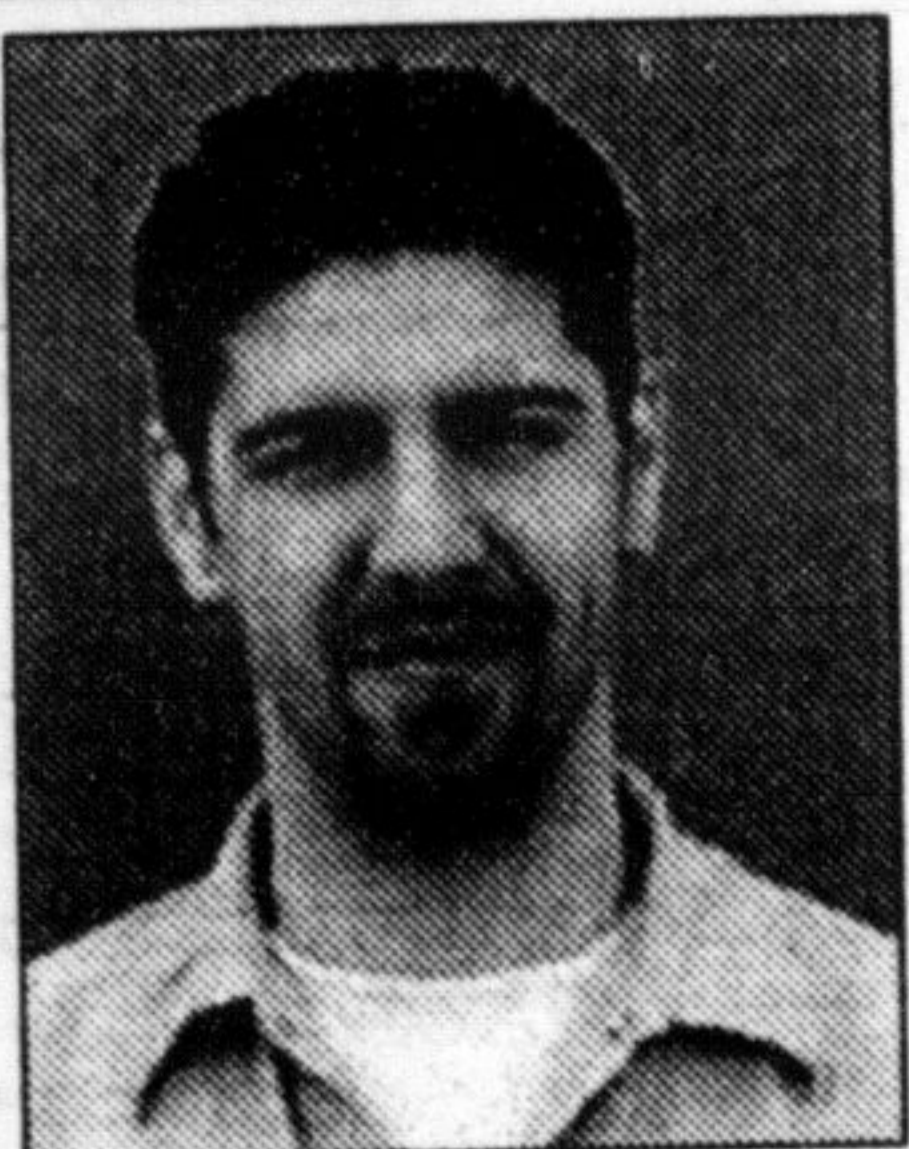
"I think he (D'Orazio) was off for only two shifts in the third period," said head coach Gooding of his team's chief nemesis.

Stopping lightning quick D'Orazio and the rest of his speedy teammates would have been a daunting task under the best of circumstances, but with spark-plugs Blake Frittenburg and Craig Howse away on holidays it proved to be impossible.

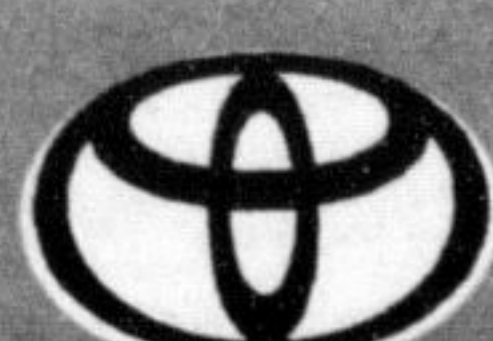
• see **SHADOW** on page 20

## EMPLOYEE OF THE MONTH

**DENNIS BRITES** is one of Georgetown Toyota's Technicians. After successfully completing his student co-op placement with Mr. Wood, he was hired parttime for lube, oil & filter, then offered an apprenticeship. He enjoys working in Georgetown and doesn't even mind the drive in from Mississauga each day. He has great admiration for all his fellow workers, but especially his co-workers in the services area, saying they work great together as a team. Dennis interests are hockey and "souping up" his own car. Dennis would like to thank Mr. Wood for giving him a chance - a job twice. In return he gives him 110% in hardwork!



**DENNIS BRITES**



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