

Call Steve LeBlanc with your sports story at 878-2341

Walczak a vet of pressure hockey

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Arena demons were buried by Walczak, the only Merchant to previously win an All-Ontario championship and play in the Royal Bank Cup.

He did so with the Metro League Caledon Canadiens in 1995.

"I hadn't scored all series but this was definitely worth waiting for," added Walczak, of his tally that came with 58 seconds remaining in the first overtime period.

He stressed that winning up north took a lot of hard work and discipline as well. Milton's 48-25 shots on goal advantage served as proof.

Emotional edge

Rookie defenceman John Nadalin didn't discount the emotional factor either, stating that their game four triple overtime victory may well have been the final boost they needed to win at Chelmsford Arena.

Another piece of the puzzle lay with third-string goalie Ryan Penney of Bowmanville — who was surprisingly sharp in his first

game in almost two months.

Said director of hockey operations Nick Slawson, "We had to do something to turn the tide up north. Giving Ryan the start (over Jeremy Wenzel and Daniel Jacques) wasn't easy, but he'd been working hard in practice and we knew he was ready."

Penney nervous

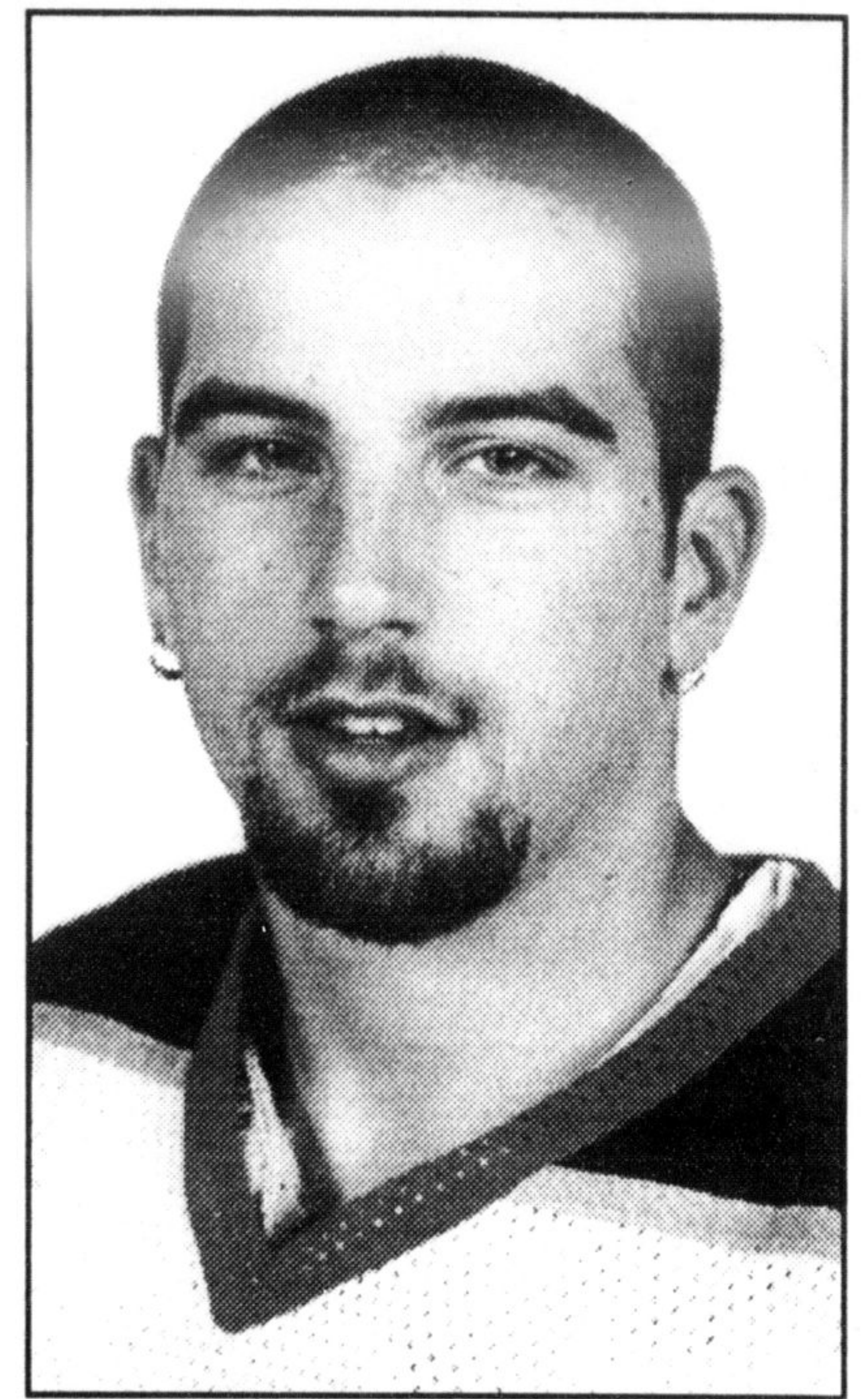
Penney, who sported a 2.9 goals-against average with the mediocre Eagles this season, said he was definitely nervous heading into such an important game.

His butterflies hardly showed however. The OHL graduate came up with some game-saving stops in the second period, including one on a Matt Falcioni breakthrough.

"The guys played excellent in front of me, I rarely saw a second shot," said Penney.

Serge Dube was the only Sabrecat to beat him late in the second on a powerplay shot.

Matt Bannan capitalized on an early Merchant powerplay to give his team an initial lead. Drawing the assist was Darren (Mini) Haydar.



Troy Walczak

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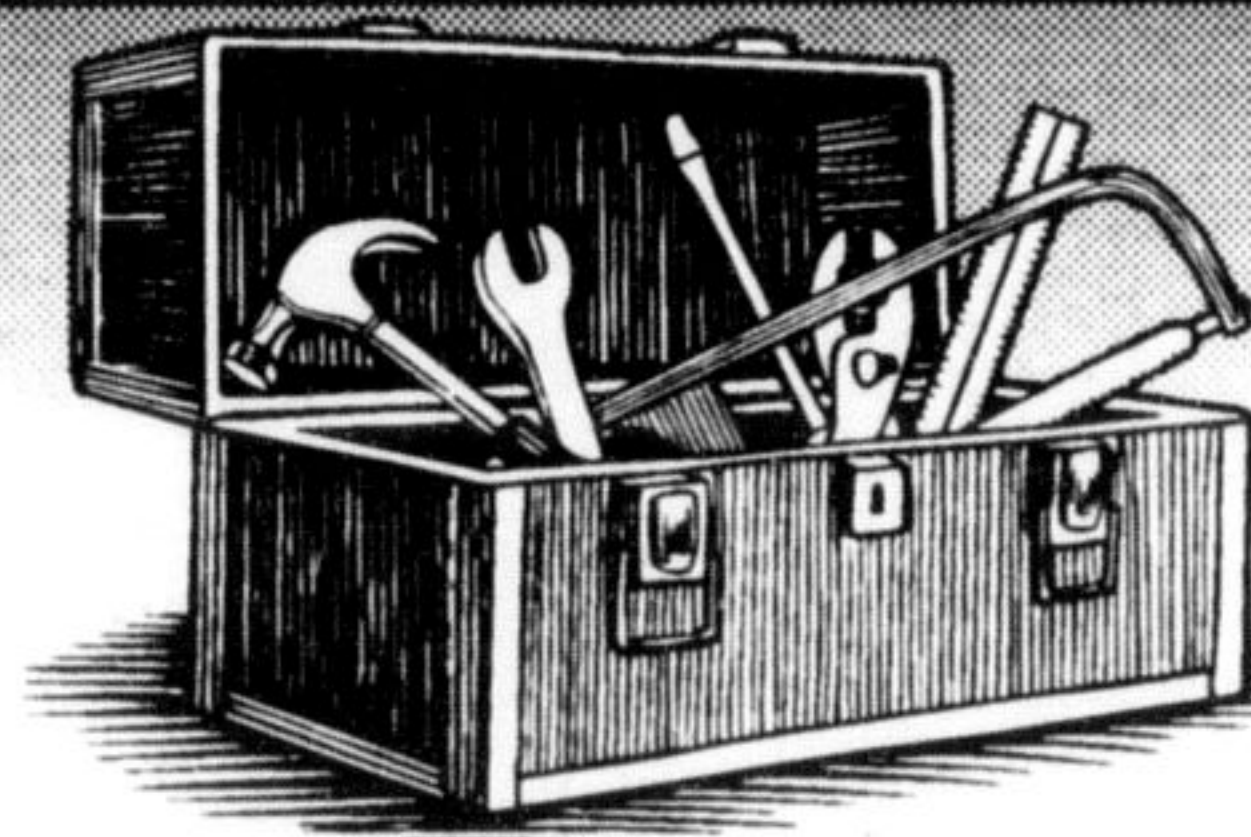
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