

SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY MAY 5, 1998



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Maverick veteran Craig Hedley shadows Spartan's Dan Bowman during Jr. B lacrosse action Sunday at Tonelli Arena. Milton won the afternoon tilt and remain unbeaten on the year.

Milton is on a hot streak

By STEVE LeBLANC
The Champion

It's just two weeks into the season and the Jr. B Mavericks already have a proven recipe for success.

The key ingredients; a balanced scoring punch (beyond captain Andrew Hartholt), effective penalty killing and decent goaltending from Kevin Eansor.

Milton mixed up all three over the weekend and came away with back-to-back wins at Tonelli Arena to improve to 3-0 in Ontario Lacrosse Association West Conference play.

"We're getting production from all three lines, which is great," said general manager Dave Decaire. "We're not doing anything fancy, just driving to the net and creating good chances."

His team's latest victory came Sunday afternoon when they dominated special-teams play and scored a

14-9 decision over the rebuilding Spartan Warriors, who lost most of their talent to the Jr. A league this spring and are a shell of the former team.

Milton managed three powerplay goals plus two more while shorthanded, both by Hartholt, who leads the team with 15 goals. He finished Sunday's tilt with four goals and three assists.

The Mavericks had little trouble outrunning Spartan as well as muscling them off the ball. They enjoyed 5-3 and 8-6 period leads on the way to their third home victory.

Eansor worked the last 35 minutes and showed strongly after Andrew Dowdell, 20, in his debut, was tossed for charging out of his cage and measuring Jeremy Bell with a thunderous hit.

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Wheels fall off in opening game

By STEVE LeBLANC
The Champion

The Merchants' first taste of national competition was tough to swallow.

Serving up their poison pill was Royal Bank Cup host Nanaimo, BC who fired five powerplay goals on the way to a 6-2 drubbing of the All-Ontario tier 2 Jr. A hockey champs.

With nearly 2,000 fans behind them Saturday night at Frank Crane Arena, the hometown Clippers exploited Milton's flawed penalty killing efforts early and often.

They were patient with their set-up and almost always in position to snag the loose puck in front of Ryan Penney, who got the hook midway through the second after goal number five.

Working the balance of their tournament opener was Daniel Jacques, who stopped 11 of 12 shots.

"It wasn't really his (Penney's) fault. He made the initial save but Nanaimo just seemed to get all the rebounds," said Nick Slawson, Milton's director of hockey operations.

"I don't know if it was jet lag or what, but we didn't skate very well and that's probably the biggest part of our game.

"When you take that away we're in trouble."

Nanaimo used their superior size to full advantage and worked the trap well over the final two frames, restricting their guests to just 11 shots.

And what the blueline unit couldn't stop crafty cager Jason Tapp did in expert fashion.

The Clippers jumped out to a 3-1 lead after the opening frame on goals by Corey Lafreniere, Bryce Cockburn and Rob Voltera.

They scored three again in the second. Veteran winger Mike Donovan, 19, salted things away with the last two while Robin Sachan notched the other.

Serious stuff

Drawing three assists was captain Cameron Sedgwick.

"They're a good, solid club that takes its hockey very seriously. Out here (in the west) teams are on the ice every single day while coaching and managing are fulltime jobs," Slawson explained.

"That's not an excuse for losing, but it shows you how different Tier 2 hockey is across Canada."

Milton's goals were registered by Kevin Crowe and Kevin O'Flaherty in the first and second period respectively. Ron Baker, Darren (Mini) Haydar and T.J. Lee

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.....
NICK SLAWSON

draw the assists. Nanaimo went five for nine on the powerplay and outshot Milton 37-28. There were no fights or major penalties and just two 10-minute misconducts assessed — both to host team players.

Slawson said the Merchants were in good spirits during a team breakfast Sunday and would be ready to put the loss behind them once round-robin play resumed last (Monday) night against South Surrey, BC who're favoured to win it all.

Results were not available at press time.

Said Slawson, "We just didn't have our wheels for game one. The BC newspapers are calling us the underdog but that's a position we feel comfortable with."

Four teams advance

The Merchants take on Eastern Canadian champs Brockville, Ontario tonight and finish the round-robin tomorrow against Weyburn, Saskatchewan.

Four of the five teams will advance to the semifinal round Saturday, with the winners set to battle for the Royal Bank Cup the following night.

TSN will air the championship game at 11 p.m.

Royal Bank Cup notes: One night after defeating the Merchants, Nanaimo all but guaranteed themselves a semifinal berth with a 4-3 overtime win over Brockville. Meanwhile, South Surrey dumped Weyburn 6-2 in Sunday's other tilt.


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