



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION



TUESDAY NOVEMBER 3, 1998



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Merchant Chad Blundy (right) looks for a pass while being shadowed by Rob Woolfenden of Mississauga Sunday at Iceland. Milton won the contest 7-1.

Looking good in tune-up race

With eliminations for the \$3.5 million U.S. Breeders Crown at Colonial Downs only a week away, Artiscape, one of the horses expected to make a splash in Virginia, took full advantage of his final tune-up in a \$23,000 conditional event Saturday evening at Mohawk.

The three year-old son of Artsplace, projected as a favourite for the \$440,000 U.S. Colt Pace, was a confident winner for local driver Steve Condren in 1:53.2.

Artiscape floated away from the gate on the outside before taking the lead at the quarter and never relinquishing command.

He came to the wire one-and-a-quarter lengths up on Ryancoke, with Take Down The Flag a closing third.

"He was handy. That's a nice easy race into him and that was the plan," said Condren. "I really didn't want to be on the front end but there wasn't any early speed so I thought that was the best

way to get in an easy trip."

Artiscape, a Breeders Crown champion at two, has now won 11 of 16 races this season for owners Brittany Farms and Brian Monieson of Illinois.

His career earnings are a handsome \$1,248,461.

"He's a lot like his dad," added Condren of the slick-gaited colt. "He's very easy on himself. He turns the button on when he has to."

In the \$36,000 Free For All pace, Robitaille lowered his lifetime mark for the second time in five days.

Driven by Trevor Ritchie for new trainer Cal Campbell, the five-year-old Denali gelding stopped the teletimer in 1:51.2 to defeat runner-up Galyn Mack.

The win was the 10th in 25 starts for Robitaille, who boosted his season bankroll to \$283,758.

Beisel is back as Milton deals

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

There was plenty of news out of Merchant land this past weekend, although hardly any of it concerned their latest Ontario Jr. A contests.

Milton's lead story revolved around a four-way trade — the first in recent memory for the defending provincial champs. It reunites local sports fans with a familiar face.

Headed back to town is 19-year-old left winger Mark Beisel, an ex-Brampton Capital who played junior lacrosse here two years ago.

The Merchants' other half of the musical chairs deal sent character veteran Mo Alvarez to the Vaughan Vipers. The Central Conference Thornhill Rattlers completed the redistribution picture, though at press time there was no word on who they acquired or gave up.

The player exchange was finalized Sunday night.

In Beisel, Milton gets a gritty 6'1", 190-pounder with a fierce slapshot. He's also quite dominant in the corners.

"Mark gives us a few new things," said skipper Marty Williamson. "Alvarez was a character guy in the dressing room but we had a lot of that already. We needed something different."

Thrown together with Mike Wheelihan and Jeff Seeds for his Merchant debut Sunday at Iceland Arena, Beisel jumped out of the gate and scored twice in the opening frame.

While neither came by way of an upstairs blast, he doesn't plan on keeping that part of his arsenal bottled up for long.

"You'll see a couple of top-shelfers pretty soon," assured Beisel. "I had a couple of great linemates tonight who really helped me out. They helped make my debut a smooth and successful one."

On the mend

Milton's blueline is back to near full strength thanks to the speedy recovery of veteran John Nadalin.

The second-year rearguard's convalescence from a broken ankle bone is at least a couple weeks ahead of schedule. He returned Sunday and picked up an assist on his first shift back.

This gives the West Conference frontrunners a little extra depth from an upcoming stretch that features two games each against top contenders Brampton and Bramalea.

Fellow defencemen Adam Sturgeon and Chris Bahen took time out last week to nurse minor injuries but both should be back by the time these big tests begin.

Weekend sweep

The Merchants closed the books on the opening third of their season with back-to-back 7-1 cakewalks over lifeless Mississauga.

At 15-1-1 Milton is in good position to equal or even improve on last year's 42-8-1 record — the best in team history.

Daniel Jacques and Jeremy Wenzel split the netminding duties, each lowering their goals-against average without much trouble.

Round one saw rookie winger Chris Rowan stand out with impressive set-ups for Carter Trevisani and Craig Irvine — up from the affiliate Erin Jr. C Shamrocks for just the second time this year.

Nathan Gillies matched an individual season high three assists while Alvarez, Matt Bannan, Dave Csumrik, Ryan Robichaud and Geoff Schomogyi completed the scoring.

Captain and leading scorer Kevin O'Flaherty exploded with

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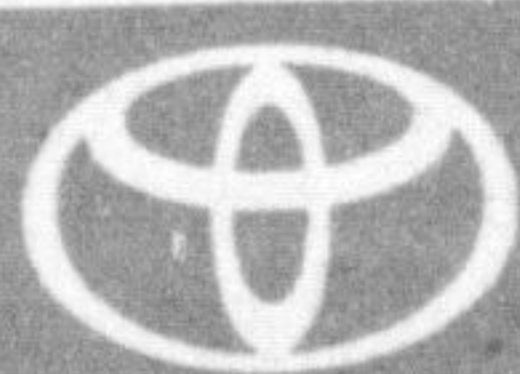


LETTER OF THE MONTH

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Sincerely Mrs. Islay G. Mullally



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