

It's the best rebuilding year ever for Milton

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

So much for a rebuilding year. By all logic the Jr. A Merchants were supposed to take a step back this season — but if they did it sure doesn't show.

Currently riding an 11-game winning streak, thanks to two more victories this past weekend, Milton has all but secured another first place finish in the West Conference.

In fact by the time this article is read they will almost assuredly have clinched top spot, since before last night's meeting with the lowly Vaughan Vipers they needed just one more win to do so.

Final week looms

Heading into the final week of the regular season, Marty Williamson's team sits on the verge of registering their best record in club history — with the highest win percentage and fewest number of losses.

That's an astonishing feat when you consider the mass exodus of over-age and university bound players this past summer, including franchise scorer Darren 'Mini' Haydar.

Milton's toughest challenge over the weekend came against the Brampton Capitals Friday, in which they persevered through a rather lethargic and penalty-filled clash to triumph 5-2.

Backstopping the victors was Jeremy Wenzel, who turned back 27 shots to remain unbeaten on the season. Said the veteran cager, "That was the big test, hopefully I won't do anything to blow it now."

After having a goal called back on him midway through the night, Geoff Schomogyi deposited the game winner on a bottom shelf wrister at 4:26 of the third.

Ed McGrane and Kevin O'Flaherty sealed the deal with insurance markers while Mark Beisel and Ryan Carrigan also dented the twine.

Booming checks

The Merchants unloaded with three unanswered goals in the final frame and received a robust performance from newcomer Rob Meanchoff, who since joining the club has been throwing fierce body checks like they're going out of style.

Scoring for the Capitals were Brandon Barbowski and Matt McRae.

The following night Milton doubled the Caledon Canadiens 8-4, again with Wenzel earning the decision after replacing a shaky Daniel Jacques in the third period.

Lapse costly

A mid-evening lapse saw them squander a 5-1 cushion and head into the final frame up by just a single marker. However, their bread-and-butter third period dominance paved the way to victory — number 40 on the season.

Leading offensively was McGrane, who more and more is looking like the guy who paced Hamilton to back-to-back series upsets in last year's playoffs. The 20-year-

old centre tallied twice and added two assists to reach 100 points.

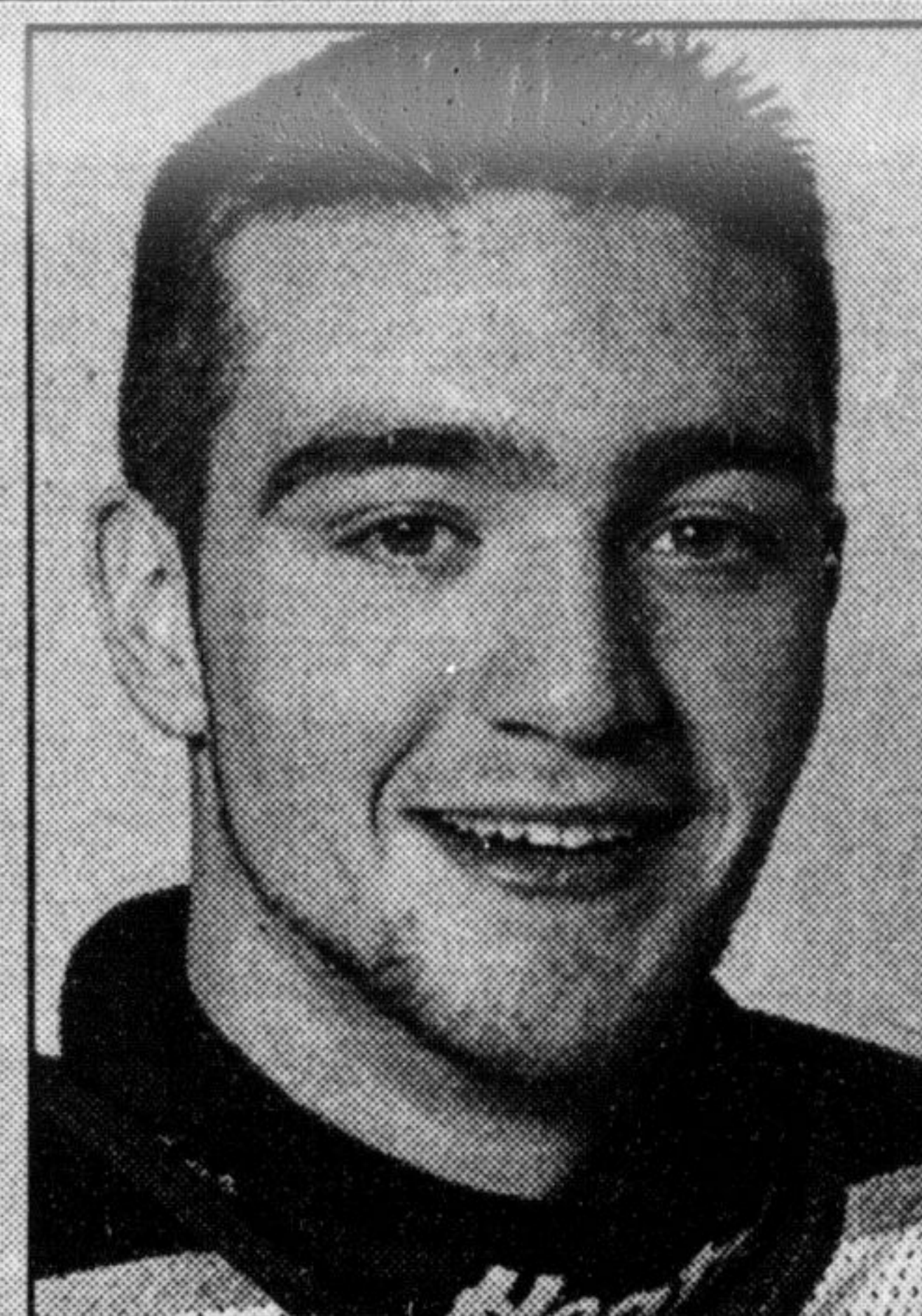
Rounding things out with singles were Carrigan, O'Flaherty, Schomogyi, Dave Csumrik, Jamie Dubrick and Nathan Gillies.

Merchant notes: Ed McGrane was named the Source for Sports Player of the Month in January for amassing nine goals and 22 total points ... Chris Rowan and Ryan Stewart each had an assist in the recent Future Stars Game ... Ryan Eby is now through with his 10-game suspension ... Milton hosts Caledon tonight and Hamilton Friday. Both games start at 8 p.m.

"That was the big test. Hopefully I won't do anything to blow it now."

— JEREMY WENZEL

AFTER HE BEAT BRAMPTON TO REMAIN UNDEFEATED



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Saturday	Feb. 20/99	10:00 am - 4:00 pm	Tonelli Arena
Sunday	Feb. 21/99	11:00 am - 3:00 pm	Tonelli Arena

Single Registration Fee: \$85.00

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Registration will be cut off as of **February 21, 1999!**

Anyone registering after this date will be put on a waiting list, and the registration fee will be \$110.00.

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MILTON MINOR HOCKEY SCHEDULE

HOUSE LEAGUE DIVISION

Pre-Novice Feb. 20

7:00 am - 8:00 am	Red Timbits vs Black Timbits	Tonelli Arena
8:00 am - 9:00 am	Red Lobster 1 vs Bruce Hood Travel	Tonelli Arena
9:00 am - 10:00 am	Red Lobster 2 vs Little Firemen	Tonelli Arena
10:00 am - 11:00 am	White Timbits vs Green Timbits	Tonelli Arena

Atom Feb. 20

3:00 pm - 4:15 pm	Rebekah Lodge vs Clarke's Golf	Tonelli Arena
4:20 pm - 5:35 pm	McCuig Insurance vs Absolute Transport	Tonelli Arena
5:40 pm - 6:55 pm	Becton Dickinson vs Ross Dickson Financial	Tonelli Arena

Pee Wee Feb. 20

7:00 am - 8:20 am	Brian's auto vs Absolute Transport	Thompson Memorial
8:30 am - 9:50 am	Michael's Optical vs Docs and Dents	Thompson Memorial
10:00 am - 11:20 am	Prudential Vendex Realty vs Key Centre	Thompson Memorial

Minor-Novice Feb. 21

3:30 pm - 4:30 pm	Hunt Plymouth vs Remax	Tonelli Arena
4:30 pm - 5:30 pm	Shoppers Drug Mart vs Loblaw's	Tonelli Arena

Major-Novice Feb. 21

5:30 pm - 6:30 pm	Austin Noble vs Gorrud	Tonelli Arena
6:30 pm - 7:30 pm	Canadian Tire vs Gold Connection	Tonelli Arena

Bantam Feb. 21

6:00 pm - 7:20 pm	Wimpy's Diner GD Controls	Thompson Memorial
7:20 pm - 8:40 pm	Marmac Trailer Services vs. Milton Dodge Jeep	Thompson Memorial
8:40 pm - 10:00 pm	Knuckles vs. Charlie Fitzwhiskey's	Thompson Memorial

Senior Feb. 22

7:30 pm - 8:30 pm	Goodlife Fitness vs Culligan	Tonelli Arena
8:40 pm - 9:40 pm	Gus Mowbray Heating vs. Kentucky Fried Chicken	Tonelli Arena
9:50 pm - 10:50 pm	Ross Dixon Financial vs. Avanti Auto	Tonelli Arena

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