



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Milton wins first contest

By STEVE LeBLANC
The Champion

Milton's AA midgets have struck the first blow in what promises to be a highly entertaining and competitive round two provincial showdown.

They forechecked well and dominated the neutral zone all night en route to a 4-2 decision over Caledon in the best-of-five series opener Monday at Memorial Arena.

Following the victory bench boss Glynn Hancott admitted to initial concerns about his team coming out flat, after a first-round cakewalk against St. Catharines and then a week layoff.

"I thought they might not have any legs, but that certainly wasn't the case," he said. "We skated well and our transition game was there too. Overall, I was quite pleased with the effort."

Providing the heroics was blueline anchor Bryan Gent, who deposited the game winner by way of a long-range bullet through traffic 25 seconds into the third period, and then iced the game with an empty-netter just as the final horn began to sound.

Earlier on he executed terrific trap defence, with help from an attentive Kris Beal.

Trevor Saliba backstopped the Spectrum Airways Winterhawks to their fourth straight OMHA win, turning back two dozen shots and looking superb when challenged downstairs.

His goaltending counterpart — Chris Kovachik — delivered the biggest shock of the evening when out of nowhere he and the visitors' backup cager began whaling on each other at the end of the second.

It turned out that they had been yapping back and forth all evening, just not in an overly apparent manner.

A tight checking affair afforded neither side much room to manoeuvre. Only about a handful of open-ice breaks were created — and all on special-teams situations.

Caledon's goals came four minutes apart in the middle stanza, which gave them a brief upper hand before Kevin Heffron

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Born to fly

Jonathan Volpe, seen here last summer flying off a ramp at the skateboard park beside Memorial Arena, placed first at a skateboarding competition last weekend in Burlington.

Tune-up games see Milton slam league doormats

By STEVE LeBLANC
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The Merchants flexed their scoring muscles earlier this week and humbled a couple of the division doormats.

Caledon and Vaughan — neither of whom are playoff bound — each felt the sting of the defending provincial champions' firepower, which is starting to heat up at precisely the right time.

Back-to-back blowouts pushed the West Conference front-runners' regular season record to 42-4-3. They're now unbeaten in their last 13 outings, have officially clinched top spot in the division and matched last season's win total — with two more games remaining this weekend.

Tuesday night, which marked the return of veteran forward Ryan Eby, the local club managed a 10-2 annihilation of Caledon.

The one-sided affair came without the services of captain Kevin O'Flaherty, Chris Bahen and Mike Wheelihan who were all enjoying respites before the postseason begins.

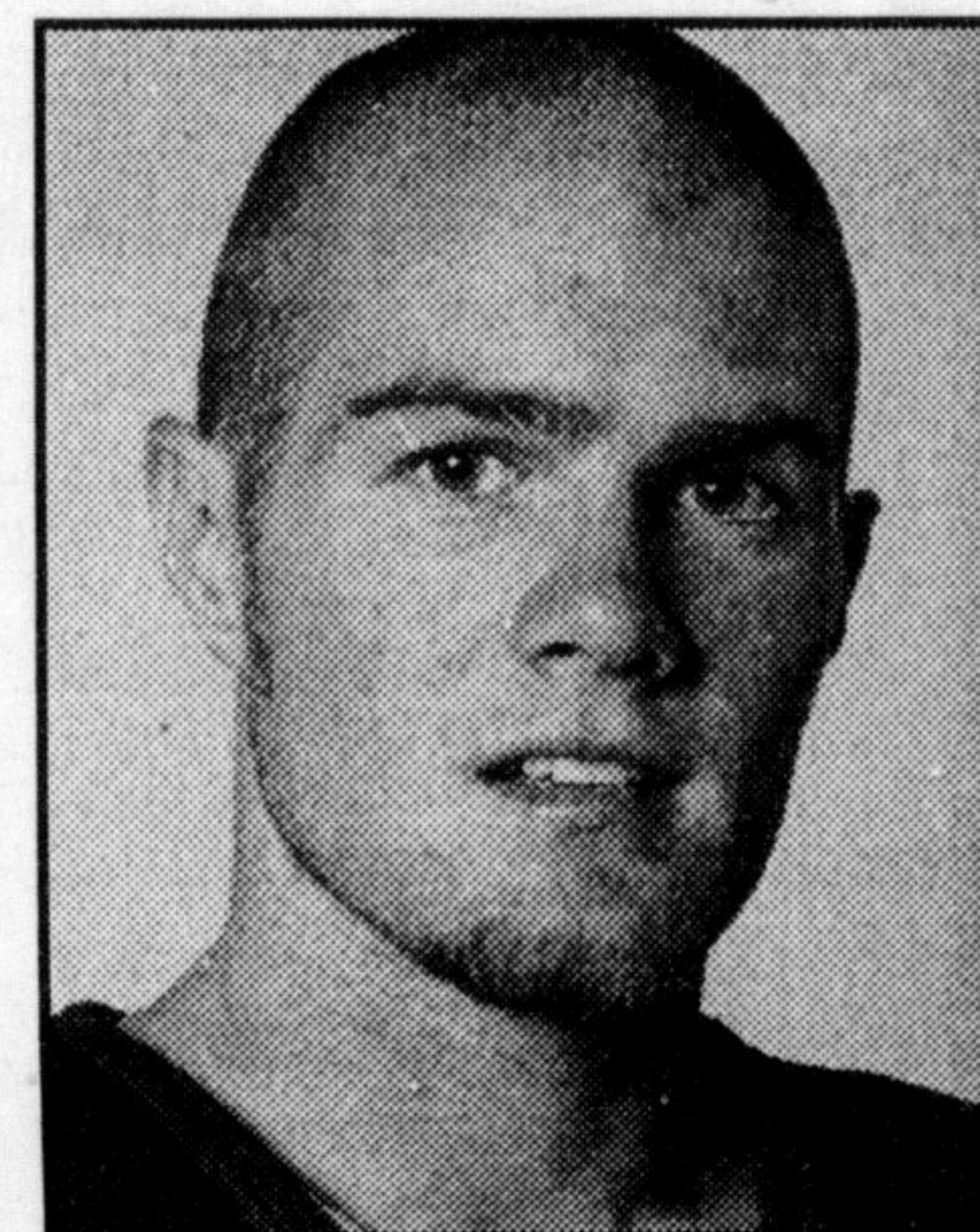
Milton staked themselves to 4-0 and 7-0 period leads on the way to victory and out-chanced the visitors 55-28.

The biggest slice of the scoring pie went to Nathan Gillies, who unloaded with a hat trick and two assists. Rob Meanchoff tallied twice and added an assist while Geoff Schomogyi collected three helpers, which complimented his second-period tally.

Also denting the twine were Eby, Matt Bannan, Mark Beisel and Ed McGrane.

Daniel Jacques was solid in the cage and lowered his goals-against average to 2.48. He was beaten both times by D.J. Marchese, who scored four minutes apart in the final frame.

The Merchants carried lowly Vaughan for much of Monday night before amassing eight third-period goals for an eventual 13-3 drubbing.



Nathan Gillies

McGrane — who leads team scoring with 110 points — set a single-game assist record with six while picking up a pair of goals. Ryan Robichaud also tallied twice and was just one point back in the set-up department.

Capitalizing on all their passes was linemate Schomogyi, who scored three times.

Singles went to Bannan, Beisel, Gillies, O'Flaherty, Ryan Carrigan and Ryan Stewart.

This lethargic contest featured just three minor infractions and only one fight — between baby face blueliner Adam Sturgeon and Vaughan's Jonathan Ceci.

Between the pipes for the victors was Jeremy Wenzel, who's on the verge of going the season without tasting defeat.

Merchant notes: Milton remains undefeated on the road this season with just one away game left tomorrow evening against Georgetown, who before last night were on a six-game winning streak

Drury looking ready for the title tilt

E.C. Drury's wrestlers tuned up for the Halton/GHAC finals with strong showings at a couple of tournaments last week.

At Lourdes in Guelph, the Spartans led the medal parade as nine of 11 grapplers secured top-three finishes.

Striking gold were Blair Beaulieu, Brad Madden and Chad Merritt while silver was

captured by Sean Burham, Adam Scott and Andy Wadson. Rounding things out with a bronze was Justin Billingham.

Saturday in Georgetown, a dozen local wrestlers placed top four in the open division.

Kevin Heffron won his sixth straight title while Madden, Nick Barkley and Jeremy

Chuchmach took silver and Matt Devries came away with bronze.

EC tied their hosts for the rookie championship. Gold medalists were Wes McDougall and Jason Zinc. Silver went to Josh Caswell, Paul Cracknell, Jordan Lumb and Tyler Saliba.

Brian Felstern claimed bronze.



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