



SPORTS

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FRIDAY, MARCH 2, 1999

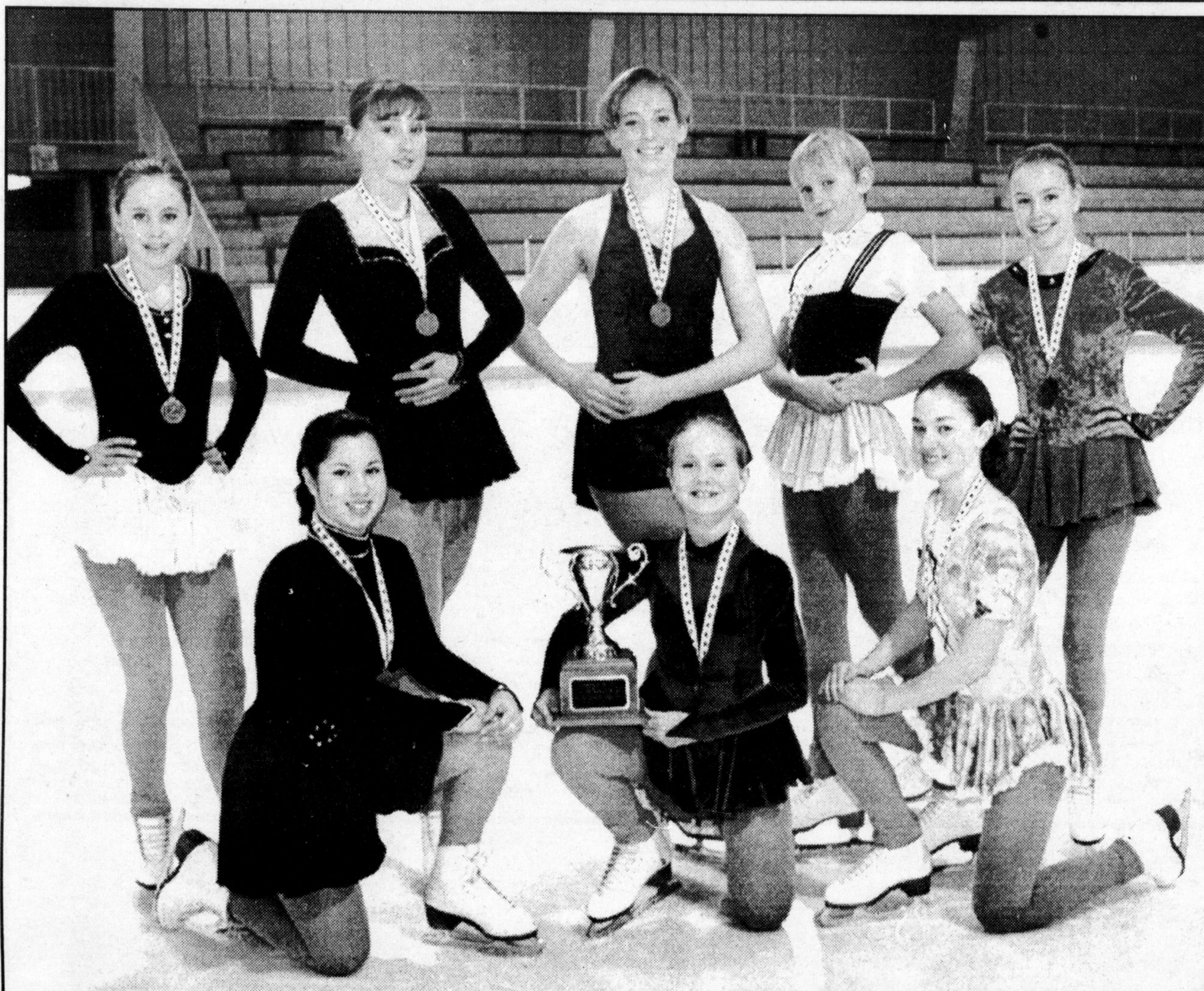


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Fire on ice

The Milton Skating Club recently qualified eight for the Central Ontario Section Interclub Competition, slated for March 7 and 8. Among those advancing to the event are (front row, from left) Sabrina Moran-Grant, Kailin Brown, Janine Nash and (back row) Tiffany Richmond, Megan Ames, Karyn Cseff, Kim Ames and Alana Petrie.

Raiders are back in the picture

The much anticipated Milton Merchants-Georgetown Raiders playoff clash is finally here.

Starting tonight at Memorial Arena the postseason Battle of north Halton returns after a lengthy hiatus. And for the first time in recent memory, it actually promises to be competitive.

The onetime hapless Raiders are in the midst of a Cinderella season that culminated with a 3-1 first round series victory over Burlington.

Georgetown has lost just once in their last 13 outings. They're currently sporting a high confidence level and spirited fan base, combined with an incredibly productive first

line. It includes former Merchant Jeff Seeds, who's been on fire since being traded away. These factors could draw out the best-of-seven series.

However, logic still dictates that the Merchants are the heavy favourite. Their goaltending and supporting cast stand head-and-shoulders above that of the Raiders, who fall short in a brawn comparison as well.

Still, Milton bench boss Marty Williamson isn't about to crack open the champagne just yet.

"It's going to be tough, they're (Georgetown) on a heckuva high right now," he said.

Milton Merchants vs. Georgetown Raiders

Game 1: Tues. Mar. 2	at Milton	8:00 p.m.
Game 2: Thurs. Mar. 4	at G'town	8:00 p.m.
Game 3: Fri. Mar. 5	at Milton	8:00 p.m.
Game 4: Sat. Mar. 6	at G'town	7:30 p.m.
Game 5: Tues. Mar. 9	at Milton	8:00 p.m.
Game 6: Thurs. Mar. 11	at G'town	8:00 p.m.
Game 7: Friday. Mar. 12	at Milton	8:00 p.m.

* if necessary
(Season Series: Milton 5-1)

Merchants scoring

PLAYER	GP	G	A	PTS
Ed McGrane	49	47	68	115
Geoff Schomogyi	50	43	62	105
Kevin O'Flaherty	50	32	71	103
Nathan Gillies	45	26	49	75
Ryan Robichaud	38	20	44	64
Mike Wheelihan	48	25	28	53

Merchants dominate, sweep the Kilty Bees

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

The Merchants' century-ending playoff run was sparked by an historic prologue.

Milton took the opening round with unparalleled dominance, giving up a grand total of one goal in a towering three-game sweep of the Hamilton Kilty Bees.

Never before has the local franchise so thoroughly disposed of a postseason opponent. Steeltown's sweethearts needed a perfectly placed slapshot by veteran Brad Gubbins in the middle of Friday's clincher — at a half-filled Memorial Arena — just to prevent an overall blanking.

"I really wasn't thinking about it (a third straight shutout). I'd already gotten more than I had expected for the whole playoffs," said goalie Jeremy Wenzel, who worked the entire round one schedule while partner Daniel Jacques battled the flu.

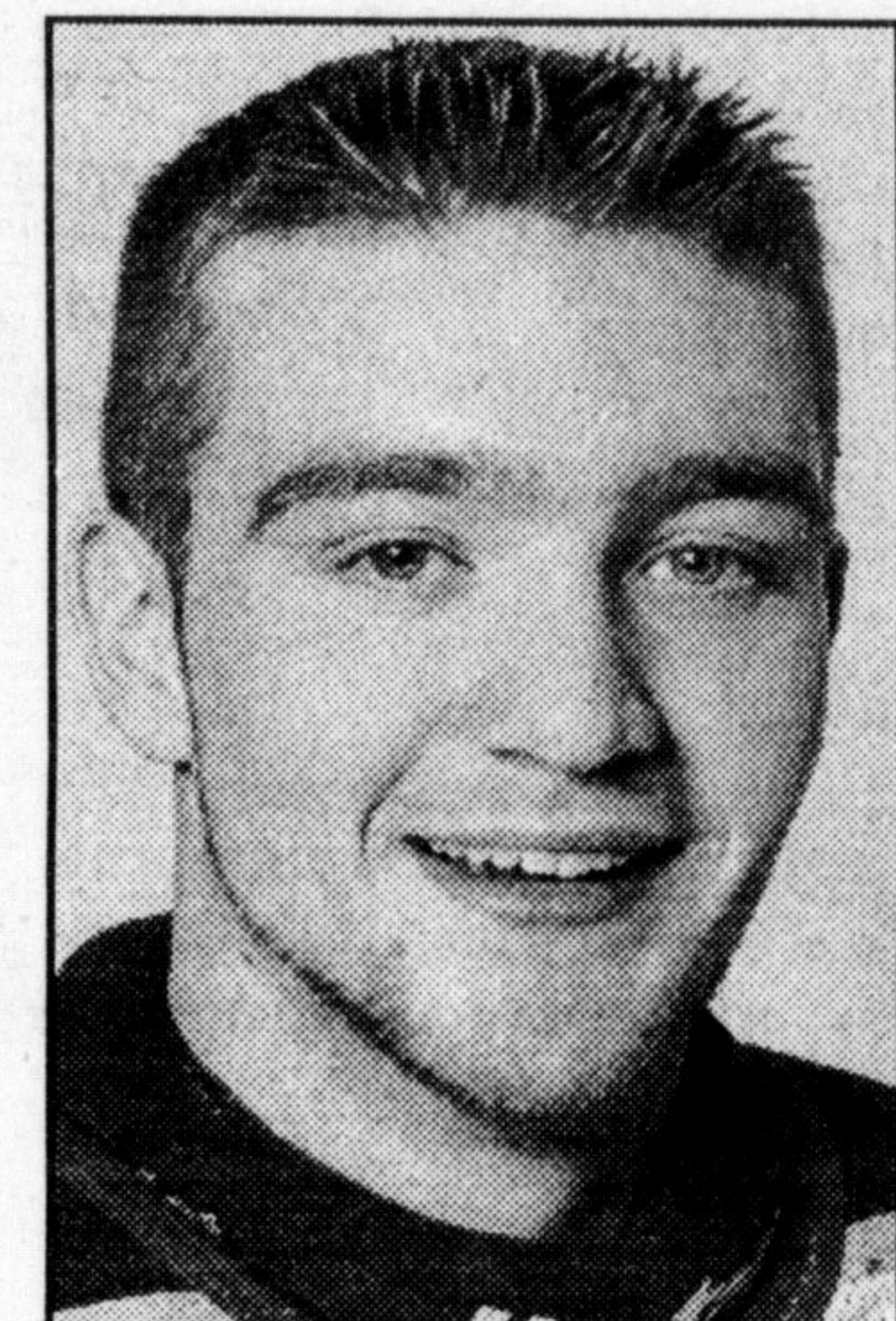
"I really surprised myself. The defence helped out a lot as well. I saw maybe two or three rebounds all series."

Similar to the preceding tilts, Hamilton was easily deflated in the 8-1 series finale and conceded defeat after falling behind in the first period.

Their lone goal was courtesy of a powerplay — with Ryan Carrigan in the box for holding — and a neutral zone turnover by the Merchants' blueline unit.

With the exception of a few defensive lapses the Merchants owned the Kilty Bees — who're now 2-11 versus Milton in playoff history.

Right winger Nathan Gillies said such an authoritative first round victory should do won-



Jeremy Wenzel

ders for the team, whom he feels are as closely knit as last season's All-Ontario championship contingent.

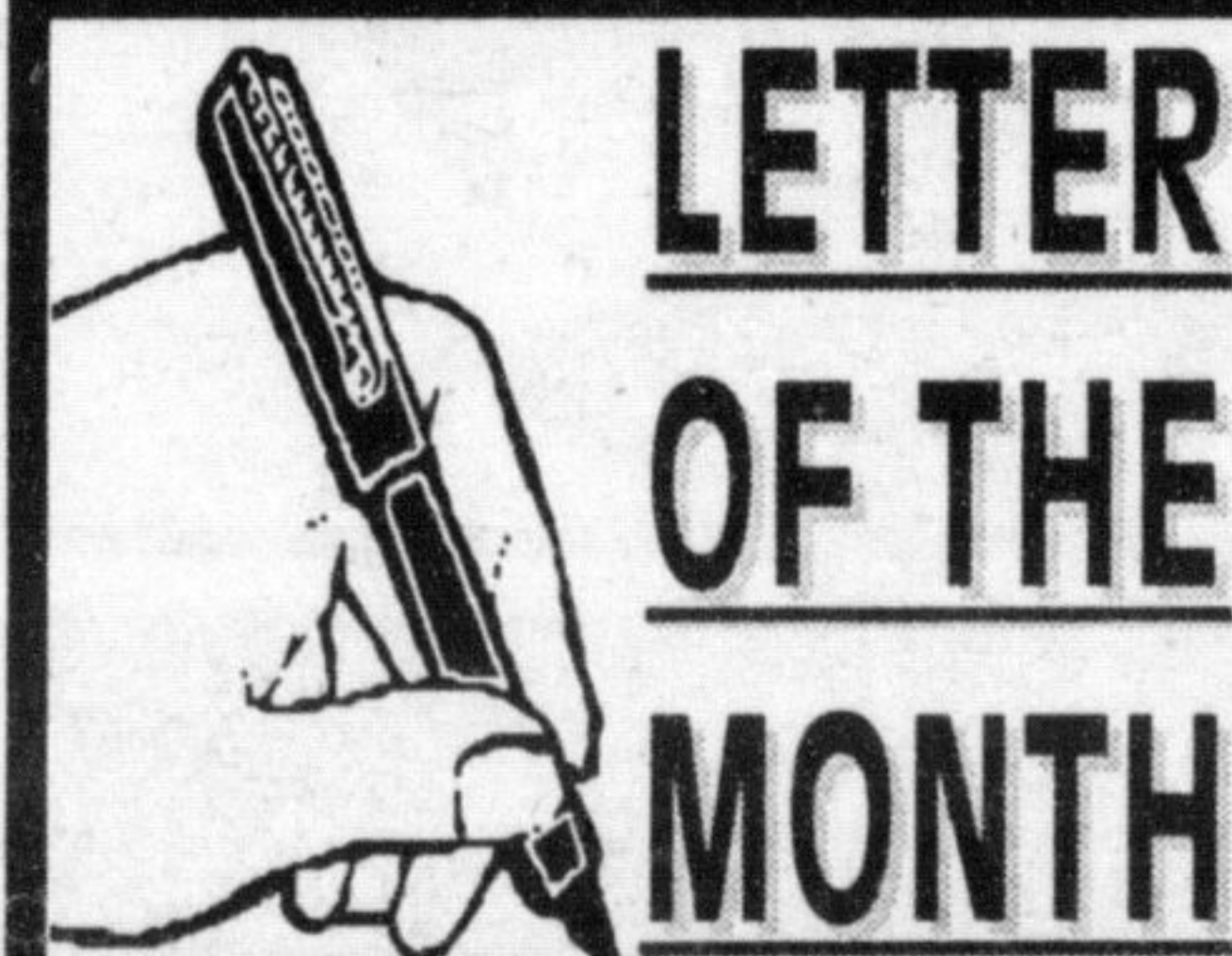
"The chemistry right now is unbelievable. I'd say we're just as interlocked as last year," the assistant captain remarked.

Friday the Merchants outshot their offensively challenged guests 48-24 and got production from every forward unit.

Geoff Schomogyi kicked off the hit parade 8:14 into the contest by sinking his third powerplay goal in as many games.

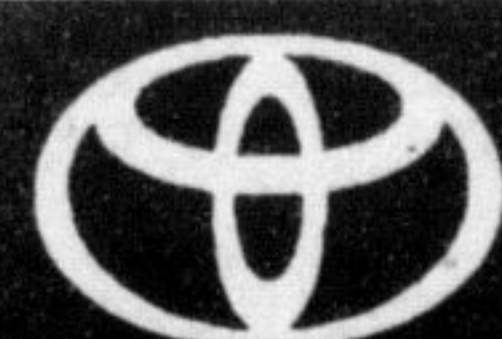
Two minutes later workhorse Chad Blundy — usually content to do the thankless tasks like blocking shots and killing penalties — tipped in Matt

• see STING on page 23



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