



# SPORTS

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THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY MARCH 16, 1999



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

## Territorial dispute

Milton's Lee Frittenburg (right) fights for possession against an Arthur opponent during second entry major peewee action Saturday at Memorial Arena. The Winterhawks clobbered their guests 10-1. See minor hockey roundup for more details.

## Blues have Milton backed in a corner

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

*The Champion*

The Merchants must now take a page from last year's success story if they hope to deliver a sequel.

In 1998 Marty Williamson's troops overcame a 2-0 second round deficit against Oakville.

Heading into action tonight at Memorial Arena, the Merchants finds themselves in a similar predicament after dropping games one and two of the conference finals to the Bramalea Blues.

The way things are going, it'll take something every bit as inspiring as the unforgettable double overtime winner by captain Kevin O'Flaherty — the original shamrock supplier — to get them out from under.

Still, Milton hasn't pushed the panic button just yet.

"The one thing going for us is that this happened last year and we battled past it," said sophomore defenceman John Nadalin, whose team lost 5-3 and 5-2 this past weekend. "(We) veterans know we can do it again. The key is getting that through to the first-year guys and making sure they stay relaxed and focused."

### Offence absent

The big story so far, besides pointless game-ending brawls, was the Merchants' non-existent offence.

The defending champs have yet to score at even strength while their third-period dominance — the trump card in round two against Georgetown — has taken an ill-timed hiatus.

Despite a 37-14 shots on goal advantage during game two Sunday at Victoria Park Arena, Milton couldn't jam the front of the Blues' net and made things rather easy for opposing cager Nathan Marsters.

A mid-evening lapse and lack of effort in the corners had a hand in their demise as well.

Four powerplay goals, including a pair at 5-on-3, plus a systematically risk-free defensive effort, gave Bramalea the win and an early stranglehold in the best-of-seven clash.

Goals by Anthony Aquino and Scott Neil put them ahead within the first four minutes of play. Providing an insurmountable cushion in the second period were Anthony Dynack and Chris Sebastian — who stood out with a hat trick two nights earlier in the series kickoff.

Delivering Bramalea's final tally was captain Kyle Amyotte, who spearheaded a superb penalty killing campaign in the third when his guests had four chances with the man-advantage but capitalized



just once.

The Merchants' marksmen were Rob Meanchoff and Geoff Schomogyi. O'Flaherty assisted on each.

Jeremy Wenzel was chased from the net after surrendering three goals on seven shots. The last of these was a blueline floater that should have been a routine save. Replacement Daniel Jacques was challenged an equal number of times and was beaten with powerplay goals four minutes apart.

Friday at Memorial, Milton sleepwalked through much of game one — falling victim to the Blues' effective yet boring style of play, which subdued hometown fans and players alike.

The sides traded powerplay goals until Bramalea's Alex Ward broke an evening long stalemate at 3:22 of the third. Jacques was beaten on his bottom shelf rebound after an initial toe block on Neil, who finished the game with four assists.

The go-ahead goal and a powerplay opportunity for the Merchants two minutes later were both met with stunning silence from the near capacity crowd.

Sebastian's empty net insurance marker with seven seconds remaining ignited a donnybrook — the first of two, with more likely on the way.

Scoring leader Ed McGrane tallied twice in the series opener and Nathan Gillies chipped in a single. Defenceman David Csumrik — whose temper earned him an early ejection Sunday — picked up a pair of assists.

Shots on net in game one favoured the

• see **TOUGH** on page 18

## Skater injured, season over

The Canada Winter Games were extremely painful for Milton's Elizabeth Wild — in more ways than one.

Not only did the 16-year-old speed skater fail to capture any medals but she barely escape competition with all her limbs intact.

She was about to pass an opponent during the 500-metre finals when another skater ahead of them slipped and caused a chain-reaction pileup.

As a result she caught a skate along her left tricep, which cut both the muscle and branch artery.

Wild was airlifted to a hospital in Cornerbrook,

Newfoundland and later transferred to one in St. John's where she underwent emergency surgery to repair to damage.

"The operation was a success but my season's over now and it's really disappointing," she said, after returning home. "I was feeling great about the (Canada Winter) Games and still had provincials and nationals to think about. In one shot it was all over for me."

Wild was a North American age class champion in 1997 and held Ontario's fastest time in the 500m last year.

## Race around Hamilton bay

There's still plenty of time to sign up for the annual Around the Bay road race, which is scheduled for Sunday, March 28 in Hamilton.

Around the Bay is one of the oldest running events in North America, with a 105-year history. Race memorabilia dating back to the turn of the century will

be on display.

This year's race is expected to draw upwards of 3,000 participants.

Registration for the event — which features both 5km and 30km runs — can be done through Oakville's Running Company by calling 815-1952.



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