



# SPORTS

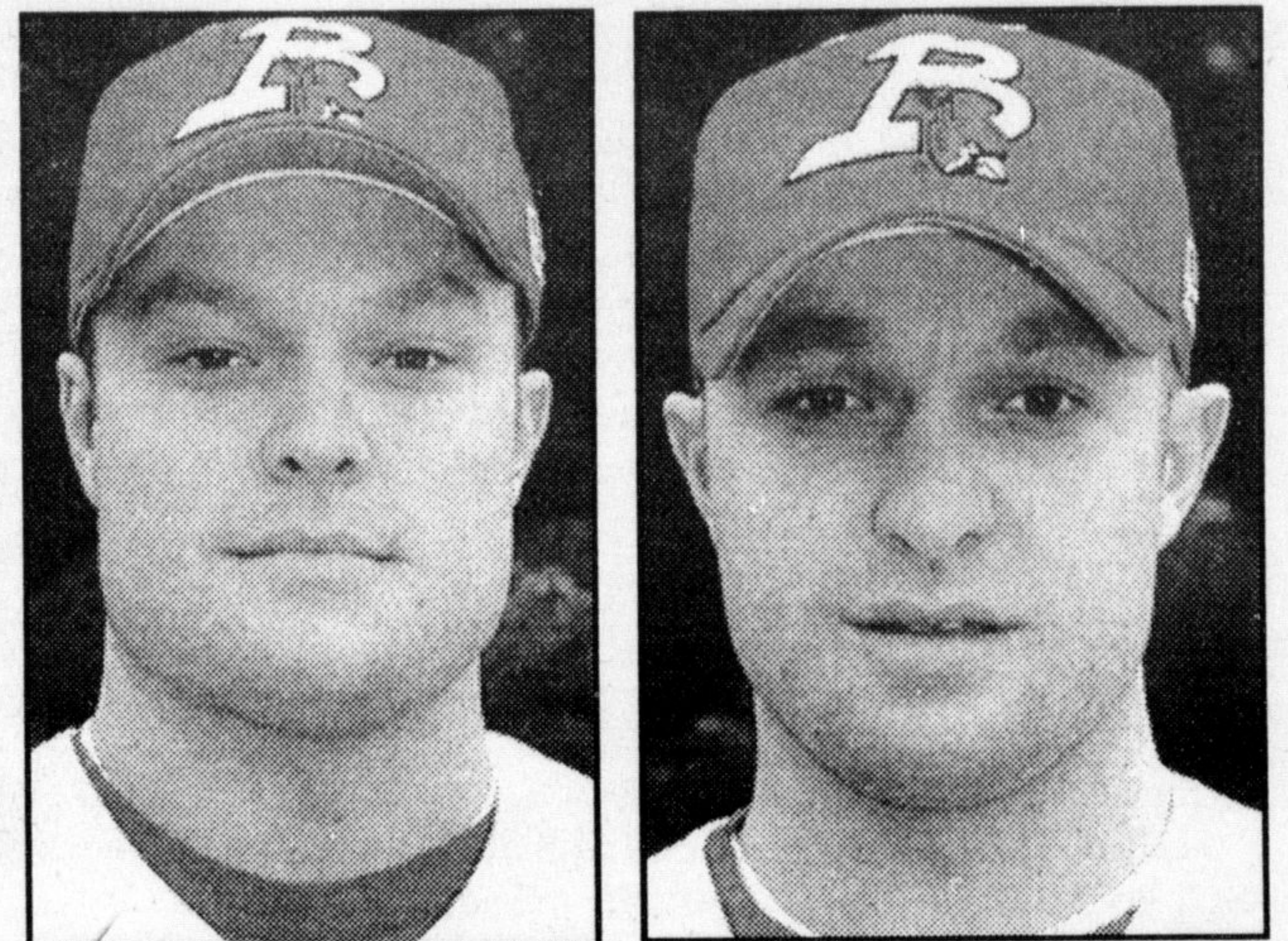
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TUESDAY APRIL 13, 1999



An unidentified Merchants player blows by a couple of Bramalea opponents during game four at Memorial Arena Sunday. Milton won 6-2 to knot the series at two wins each.



Jeremy Ridley

Shayne Ridley

## Ridley bros key as Ball State pounds dingers

Milton's Jeremy Ridley was right in the thick of things when Ball State University launched three consecutive home runs Wednesday against Purdue.

The junior second baseman, formerly of Milton District High School, drove dinger number two over the left centrefield wall to help highlight an eight-run sixth inning.

His homer — one of six tagged this spring — was part of a school record tying half dozen that the Cardinals hit on the afternoon, en route to burying their opponents 23-7.

Jeremy's output is merely a continuation of last season but for twin brother Shayne, the team's new starting shortstop, long balls are a brand new commodity.

In fact his seven home runs this year, including five within a six-game stretch, already surpasses his combined total for 1997 and '98.

"Shayne was outstanding defensively last fall. I really think this will be the season he comes into his own," commented Cardinals' skipper Rich Maloney, in his pre-season review.

To say the least, this prediction has proved true.

With BSU's season just past the midway mark, Shayne has already improved in every category. Having played in all 23 games prior to this past weekend, he sported a .340 batting average, 33 hits, 21 runs and 30 runs batted in.

His biggest single showing came April 4 in a doubleheader against Akron, during which he crushed a three-run blast as part of a 3-for-6 day and finished with seven RBI.

Before that he clobbered a pair of two-run shots against Kent — a feat his brother accomplished one year earlier, almost to the day, against Butler.

Equally potent this season, Jeremy is batting .396 with 40 hits, 27 runs and 28 RBI. He has also started in every game and, with another year remaining at BSU, is on track to record 200-plus career hits, which has only been done by a handful of players in the school's history.

The 6'2", 190 lbs. brothers have helped get the Cardinals off to another great season in the Mid-American Conference. Prior to the weekend, the team sat at 15-8 and remained undefeated at home.

During a recent six-game winning streak they outscored the opposition a whopping 106-37.

## Feast or famine for Merchants

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

The Merchants' roller coaster ride continues.

Two nights after a pitiful performance — which could have easily sent them into a tailspin — the defending provincial Jr. A champions rebounded with their strongest statement of the play-offs to spank Bramalea 6-2 Sunday at Memorial Arena.

Milton's triumph, by an identical score as their game three loss at Victoria Park Friday, knotted the league finals at two wins apiece.

The best-of-seven rematch resumed last night in Bramalea with game six back in town tonight at 8 p.m.

Maybe it was the surprise snowstorm coming shortly before game time which prompted such a reversal of fortunes, because the Merchants certainly looked like the same team which dominated all winter long.

Finding a cure for everything that ailed them just 48 hours earlier, Milton manhandled the Blues from start to finish and regained momentum for the final stretch of the series.

"This should be the one which carries us through," claimed right winger Nathan Gillies, who tallied twice on the night. "We all pulled together and turned this thing around. Most of the one-on-one battles went in our favour and discipline was a key as well."

Reasserting themselves physically — with a newfound commitment to forechecking and corner work — proved to be the Merchants' ticket to victory.

Also, improvements by the defence were nothing short of sensational. More authoritative breakout passes and tie-ups with conviction highlighted the blueline unit's best showing in recent

weeks.

Rearguard Chris Bahen said, "We got all our bad habits out of the way on Friday. We cleared the zone well tonight and limited our giveaways. More physical play was also a big factor."

Starting for the first time in nearly two weeks, goalie Daniel Jacques made 28 saves for the win, delivering impressive glove and blocker work along the way.

Milton jumped out to a 2-0 lead in the opening frame and unlike recent clashes with Bramalea and Collingwood, they were able to put their opponents away with two more goals earlier in the second.

Ed McGrane buried a bottom shelf rebound 4:22 into period two for the game winner. The backbreaking fourth tally, which chased the Blues' Nathan Marsters from the cage, came a few minutes later on a fine effort in the slot from captain Kevin O'Flaherty.

Bramalea's goals were registered by Lawrence Longo and Scott Neil — who scored eight minutes apart in the second.

Also scoring for the winners were Mark Beisel and Jasen Hopeniuvori, who capped the hit parade with a nifty wraparound less than a minute after Gillies deposited his second of the game on the powerplay.

Assisting on both his goals was Geoff Schomogyi, who did a nice bit of skating to create quality scoring opportunities. David Csumrik also picked up a pair of helpers.

Milton was 4-for-4 on penalty killing, thanks largely to Bahen and Matt Bannan, who completely neutralized stars Mike Cammalleri and Kyle Amyotte during their first shorthanded stint to set the tone for the entire evening.

Friday the Merchants hit rock bottom with a dismal 6-2 loss

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