

Ugly wins still count

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

The Merchants' pre-season supremacy continues.

The Jr. A hockey club was short on style and structure this weekend, but still had enough to squeeze out a pair of wins.

This extended their undefeated streak in exhibition play — which goes back nearly three years — to 16 games.

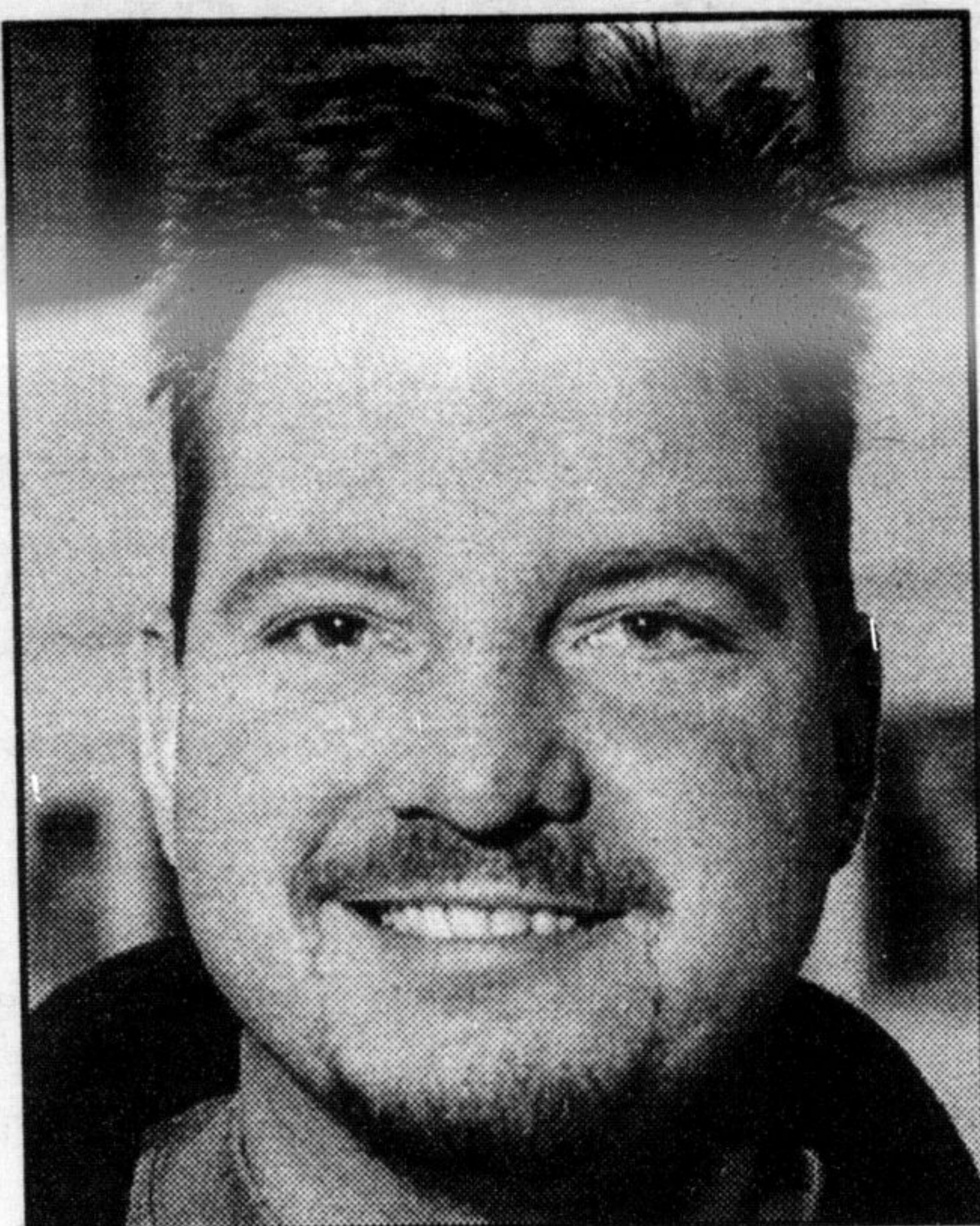
But running roughshod over the competition, which Marty Williamson's crew has repeatedly done through late August and early September, just wasn't in the cards during their latest battles.

Milton was devoid of any offensive chemistry at their own barn Friday — in front of roughly 150 fans — and needed above average goaltending and a couple of lucky breaks to trim the still struggling Hamilton Kilty Bees 4-3.

The Merchants were outshot 40-23, while their first and second goals were among the ugliest in recent memory.

Ryan Eby's shorthanded tally late in the middle frame was by far the more ridiculous of the two. Dumping the puck in to kill a penalty, his shot ricocheted off a brain-cramped defenceman's skate just inside the blueline where it took a sharp turn and managed to bypass the netminder, who was way out of position.

Milton's powerplay efforts weren't much stronger and their overall intensity



Marty Williamson

was well below par.

"Every year you think you're at a certain level and then find out you're right back at the bottom," said Williamson, referring to his team's lacklustre season kickoff. "But in all fairness, this was Hamilton's fifth game and only our first. I'd hope after five more games, the separation between us would be greater than one goal."

Splitting the netminding duties were Campbellville's Mark Rosselle and Anthony Marshall of Oakville, who helped the team's band of hopefuls to victory during the OHA Referee School Tournament in June.

Sophomore defencemen Ryan Carrigan and Adam Sturgeon each delivered a goal while the local team's other marksman was newcomer Dan DeLong.

In Collingwood Saturday, Milton eked

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Bronze medal for skier to close out great season

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

Paul Macdonald caught one last wave of success before closing the books on a remarkable season.

The Milton barefoot water-skier, who's enjoyed a handsome hardware haul this year, wrapped things up recently with a bronze medal performance in the men's open class of the Canadian Championships in Kamloops, British Columbia.

He went into the national showcase with a top five ranking, and lived up to expectations with strong showings in each of the three events.

"I was pretty excited to finally get an overall medal," said the 23-year-old, who finished fifth in the all-round scoring last year. "It was a great way to end the season."

Highlighting Macdonald's efforts was a third-place in the jump-off. He cleared 47 feet on a second attempt — shattering his mark at the Eastern Canadian Championship last month in Cambridge.

Unfortunately, adverse conditions on BC's Thompson River were a stumbling block to any more top three placings.

In the slalom event — which represents the racing portion of the competition — the local water walker made just over a dozen crossings, which was certainly respectable but only good enough to take sixth spot.

He fared slightly better during the trick event, in which his high-risk routine regularly meets with equally high marks.

This time around was no exception, as he scored a whopping 1,890 points to finished fifth on a day when nearly all the top water-skiers had their best stuff.

Macdonald wasn't far back of overall silver medalist Gordie Croteau of Quebec. Manitoba's Don Baker garnered gold.

The Milton competitor also marked this past season — his best ever in the challenging sport — with overall victories at both the eastern nationals and the U.S. Southern Series Opener in Tampa, Florida.

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