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Close but no cigar for Winterhawks

Milton's tykes got close enough to see the promised land, but couldn't quite complete the journey to it.

The Lions Club Winterhawks were simply masterful when trailing in their Tri County championship series against the Georgetown Raiders.

But once things were all knotted up, the local boys' remarkable run came to an end in game six — though

not without one last rock solid showing at Georgetown's Gordon Alcott Arena Thursday evening.

Enjoying tremendous fan support and momentum from finally beating their regional rivals three nights earlier — a feat that came on the heels of three consecutive ties — the visitors kept pace through the opening half and managed to erase a two-goal deficit.

But the glass slipper would eventually fall off on Milton's Cinderella stretch, as they gave up three unanswered goals at crunch time and were edged 6-4.

This gave Georgetown a 7-5 win in the six-point series.

The winning tally, which put the brakes on the Winterhawks' eight-game unbeaten streak, came with just over four minutes left to go in the third.

"Considering how we were manhandled by Georgetown at the start of the year, beating them —

even once — and pushing them to six games was a great accomplishment," said skipper Pat Haggart, whose team was the only one to defeat the Raiders in league play this season.

"The improvement these guys made was just incredible."

Spencer Abraham guarded the net in fine style once again while leading offensively with a pair of goals was Scott Dermott.

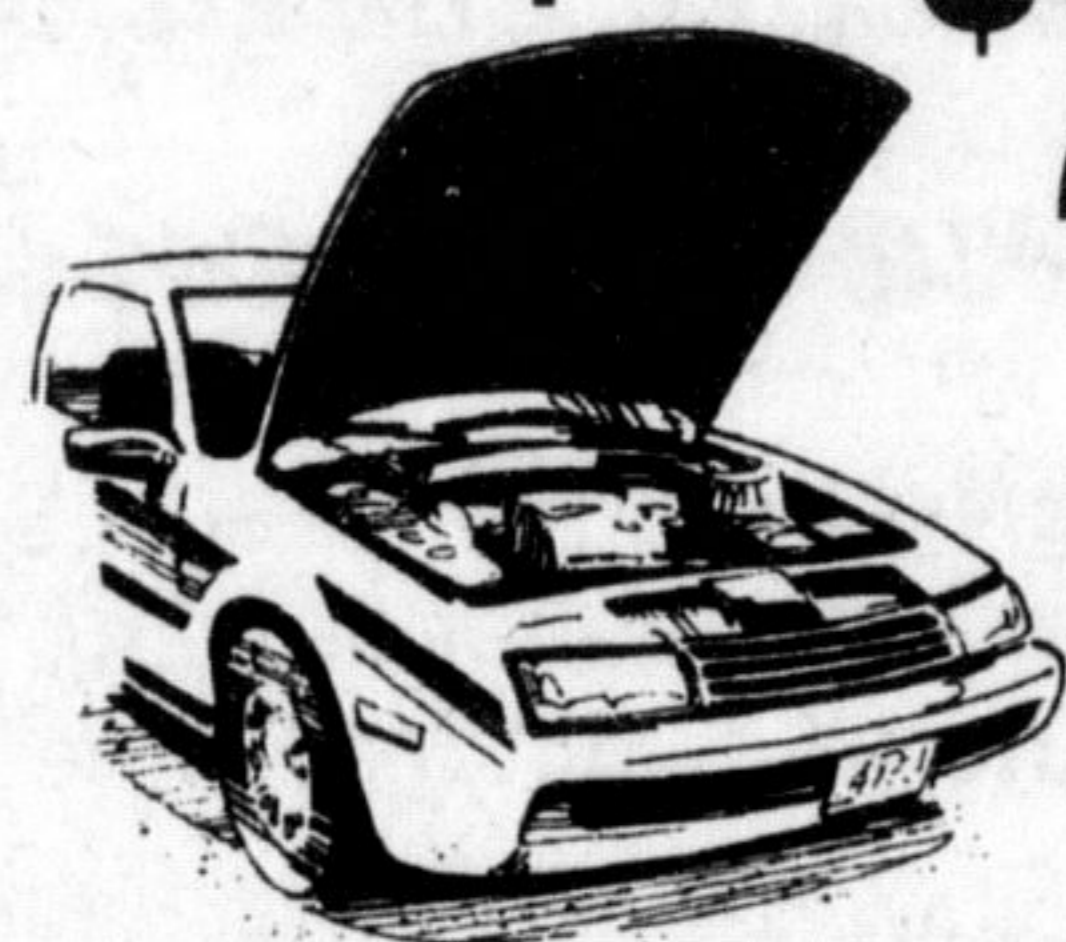
Also scoring were Brandon Haggart and Michael Sgarbossa — who potted a hat-trick in Milton's 3-1 victory in game five last Monday. Gavin Lecky drew two assists while single helpers were chipped in by Sgarbossa, Daniel Babin, Jeffrey Clarke, Lauren Kelly and Richard Monk. Making up the rest of team were Dustin Christo, Jake Cochrane, Brandon Denham, George Kopas, Eleanor Pineau Levman, Ricardo Raduka and MacKenzie Zuest.

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KEVIN BLACKLOCK

No shame for ladies hockey team

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

The local ladies hockey team simply wanted to make things respectable — so to that end, mission accomplished.

With depleted ranks and significantly-superior competition from undefeated St. Catharines, Milton had no illusions of pulling off an upset in the league finals.

However, they did hope to stave off humiliation and deliver a reasonably credible conclusion to their strong playoff performance.

For the most part, they did both — losing only 6-1 and 5-0 to St. Catharines in their best-of-three championship series.

Though whitewashed during game two at Memorial Arena Wednesday, Milton could have been humbled a lot more.

In fact with a handful of team members out — including two of the top performers — some figured that a double-digit margin of defeat wasn't out of the question.

But Tania Burton's crafty cage work and a fairly gutsy effort from the rest of the lineup combined to keep the local ladies from looking like complete pushovers.

"They (St. Catharines) were the league powerhouse all year. We were just happy to be there (league finals)," admitted veteran forward Aimee Kilbourn, before game two.

Burton turned aside 26 shots while her netminding counterpart was challenged a mere 10 times. Recording half of those shots was Karen Brown — who notched the lone tally in the series opener.

Offering a decent defensive game was Anita Mastracci. She showed a lot of grit in the corners and blocked at least two shots in each period.

Milton finished second in the league playdowns last month, an impressive feat after taking sixth spot in the regular season with a record of 9-9-4.

Friday Milton begins the provincial championships at Brampton's Fletcher Arena.

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