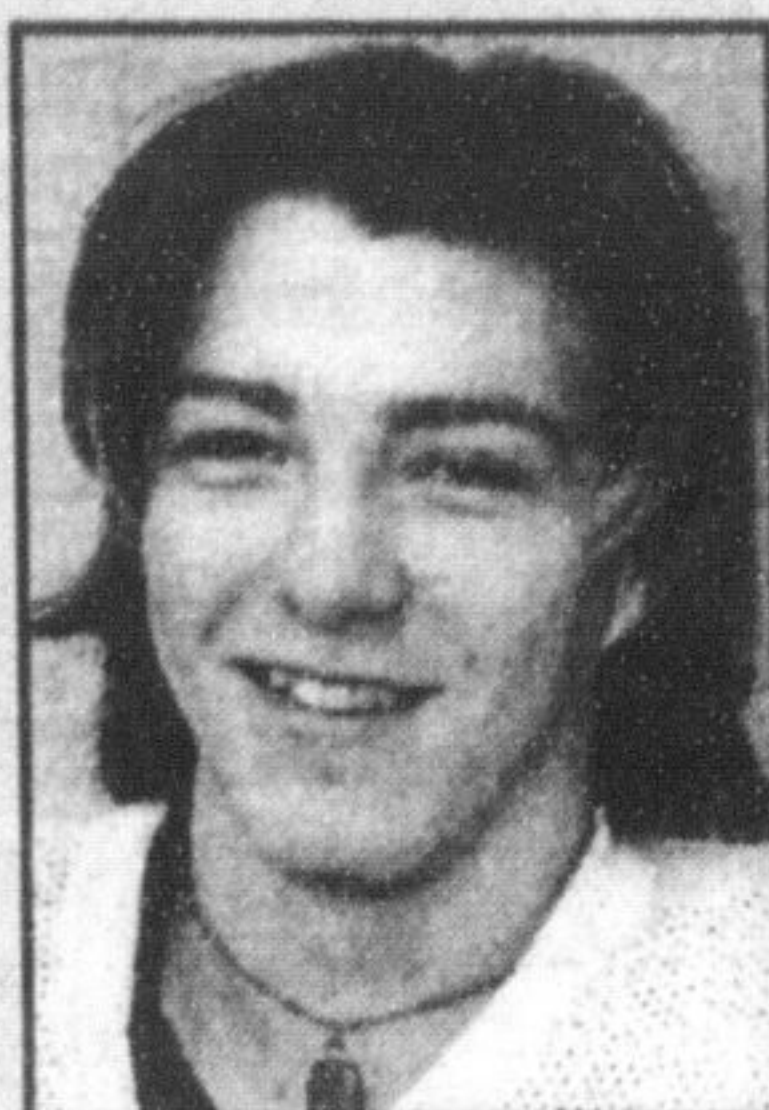


Sturgeon back, Ferroni picked up at deadline

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

He's back. Former Milton Merchant Adam Sturgeon's return had been rumoured for months, and finally came to fruition at the trade deadline Wednesday.

Complete with longer locks and more muscle, the 16-year-old defenceman is back competing after nearly a full season off — due to some undisclosed problems with the Sudbury Wolves. The OHL club granted the defenceman's release last week but still retain his rights at the major-junior level.



Adam Sturgeon

"It's great to be back in uniform," said the young rearguard, who up until last week was keeping in shape through father Peter's Pro Bound program. "However, I was expecting to step in and have a bit better return."

Shaky start

His comment followed a rather tough weekend, during which he made a few costly giveaways and finished at a -3. Nevertheless, Sturgeon's second coming has some promising implications for a blueline unit that's quite steady overall, but a little light in two areas — it's ability to rush the puck and clear the front of the net.

In regards to the former, the returning defenceman's skills have never been in question.

But now at an fairly imposing 6'2" and 185 pounds., Sturgeon may be ready to exhibit as much prowess within close quarters as he has in open-ice situations.

"I'd like to think I can add some toughness to the team," he said.

Merchant GM Nick Slawson believes so too, and feels that the baby-face blueliner is set to assume a much bigger workload than he did over the previous two seasons.

"I envision him being one of our go-to defenceman and helping take some of the load off John (Nadalin). He just needs a few games to get his timing and stamina back up."

Cougar sniper picked up

Meanwhile, Milton bolstered its forward ranks as well Wednesday night with the acquisition of Burlington's Rick Ferroni.

The 18-year-old — picked up during the Cougar's year-end fire sale — has been averaging more than a point a game this season and brings with him three years of junior experience, including three rounds of post-season play.

Equally intriguing is his versatility.

Whether Ferroni will assume the role of an all-purpose utility man is still open for debate, but he seems capable of doing so — having played centre, wing and defenceman at the Tier 2 level.

He saw play at centre and left wing this past weekend and will likely platoon between these two spots while the forward units undergo some late-season tinkering.

"He can help out in a lot of spots. It's nice to have that luxury," said Slawson.

Wednesday's additions bring the team up to 24 players — with 15 forwards and seven defencemen.



Rick Ferroni

Reding still unbeaten thanks to second-half scoring surge

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

Bishop Reding's senior boys basketball team was stuck in neutral for the entire first half at home against White Oaks Wednesday.

But an intermission pep talk and desire to remain unbeaten pushed the host cagers into high gear for the balance of the game and helped them prevail 50-30.

Heading into yesterday afternoon's clash with undefeated Loyola, BR had won all four of its league encounters and shared top spot in Halton's Volpe Division.

Wednesday's fierce finish gave the local hoopsters more than triple the offensive output that they enjoyed in the opening half — which was marred by countless turnovers and a general lack of inspired play.

Joel Castro and Rufus Williams accounted for just under half the team's scoring, each recording a dozen points. Williams ignited a third-quarter surge with back-to-back baskets and drained four of six shots from the foul line.

While Reding's outside shooting was largely ineffective, veteran Jodie St. John managed a couple from

downtown to widen the gap.

Also putting his stamp on the victory with seven points — including three straight from free throw territory — was Mark Antonelli.

Last Monday, BR flexed its proverbial scoring muscles to upstage cross-town rival Milton District 89-53. The win gave them a sweep, and a thoroughly convincing one at that, of their locally-based opposition.

Rather unproductive versus White Oaks, Ivan Bosnjak stood tall with four field goals and a total of 25 points at MD. He was highly impressive in his own end as well and neutralized the Mustangs' inside game with about a dozen defensive rebounds.

BR was ahead by double digits after the first quarter and from there simply padded their lead with a spirited team effort.

Ryan Taylor collected 16 points on the afternoon, while finishing up with 10 and nine respectively were Williams and Allen Lourenco. The Mustangs' top producer, with 15 points, was Ian Robinson.

Reding is now off for semester one examinations and will resume regular season play Monday, Feb. 5 with a big showdown at Oakville Trafalgar.

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SATURDAY JANUARY 13, 2001 TONELLI ARENA

BEGINNERS	7:00 AM KNUCKLES SPORTSHOP VS BRUCE HOOD TRAVEL	8:00 AM LITTLE FIREMEN VS HUNT PLYMOUTH CHRYSLER	
PRE-NOVICE	9:00 AM TIMBITS BLACK VS TIMBITS GREEN	10:00 AM TIMBITS RED VS TIMBITS WHITE	
PEEWEE	4:00 PM GALLINGER FORD VS ABSOLUTE TRANSPORTATION	5:15 PM SCOOTER'S SNACK SHACK VS TOWNE DENTAL GROUP	6:30 PM DIRECTV 1-888-NO-CABLE VS ROSS DIXON FINANCIAL

SATURDAY JANUARY 13, 2001 MEMORIAL ARENA

ATOM	7:00 AM VALLE FOAM IND. VS BRIAN'S AUTO SERVICE	8:15 AM MCCUAIG INSURANCE VS JOHNSON CONTROLS	9:30 AM CANADIAN TIRE VS DREAM CAR GARAGE TV	10:45 AM DONE RIGHT ROOFING VS PRESSE LAW OFFICE
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SUNDAY JANUARY 14, 2001 TONELLI ARENA

NOVICE	2:00 PM GORRUD'S AUTO VS SHOPPER'S DRUG MART	3:15 PM KNUCKLES SPORTSHOP VS HUNT PLYMOUTH CHRYSLER	4:30 PM GOODLIFE FITNESS BLACK VS GOODLIFE FITNESS RED	5:45 PM GOODLIFE FITNESS BLUE VS GOODLIFE FITNESS GREEN
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SUNDAY JANUARY 14, 2001 MEMORIAL ARENA


BANTAM	5:00 PM HIGH FIVE PHOTOGRAPHY VS BRIAN'S AUTO SERVICE	6:20 PM KEY CENTRES VS KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN	7:40 PM HOME CINEMA VIDEO VS ABSOLUTE TRANSPORTATION	8:50 PM SUNNY OASIS INTERNET VS RUSSEL METALS
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MONDAY JANUARY 14, 2001 TONELLI ARENA

SENIOR	7:35 PM MILTON CHRYSLER DODGE VS DOCS & DENTS	8:43 PM NISKAR PETRO CANADA VS GUST MOWBRAY LTD.	9:51 PM KWIK KOPY PRINTING VS AUSTEN & NOBLE INSURANCE
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