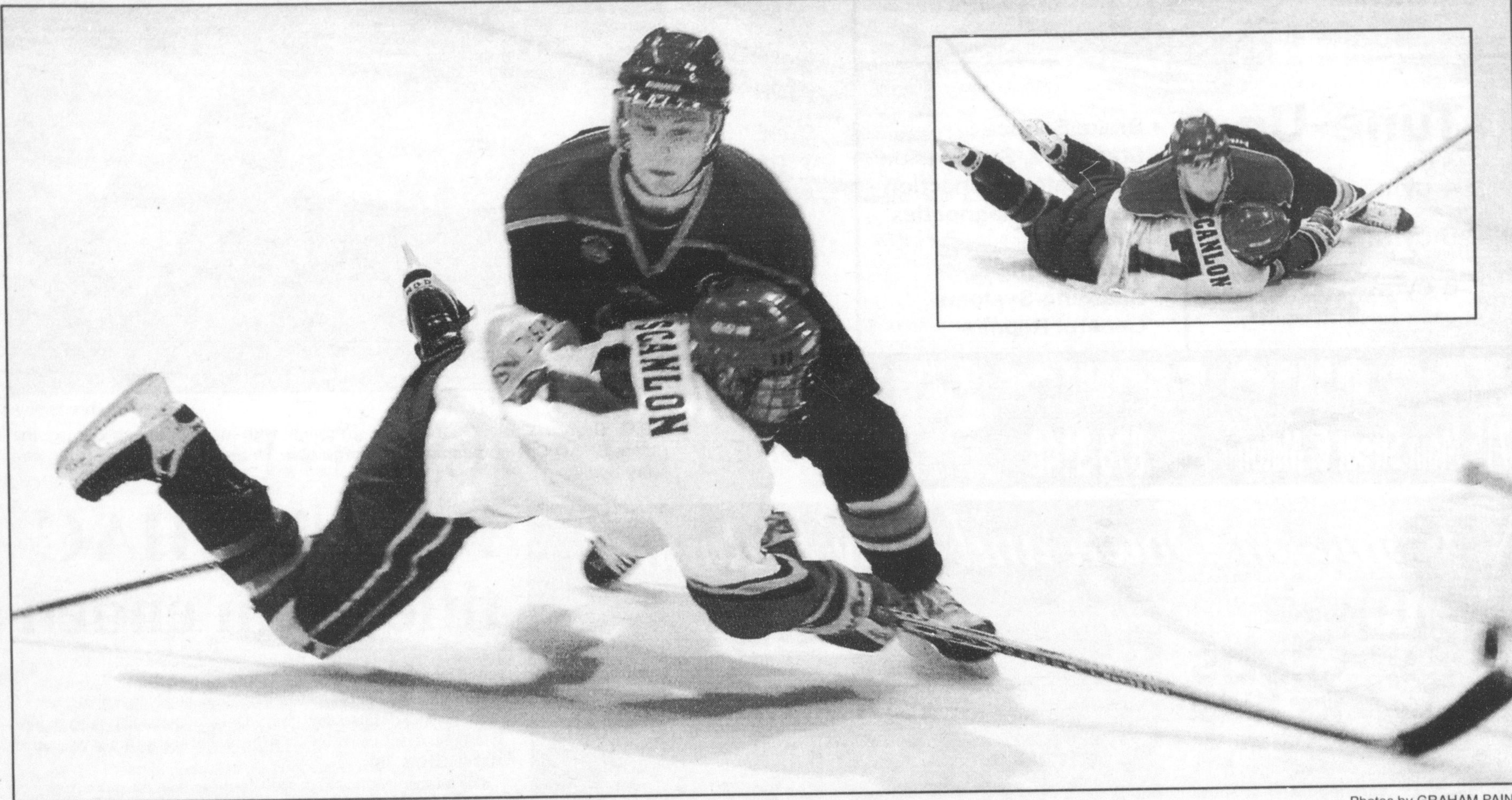




SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY FEBRUARY 27, 2001



Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

Merchants captain John Nadalin takes Mississauga's Bernie Scanlon out of the play during game two at Iceland Arena Sunday. Milton staged a late rally and win the game in

overtime to take a 2-0 lead in the Western Conference semifinal series. Game three will take place tonight in Milton at 8 p.m.

Merchants take 2-0 series lead on Mississauga

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The Merchants have already secured one title this season.

Now it looks like they'll have an opportunity to contend for another.

This after a second straight winning weekend that placed the regular season champs within striking distance of a trip to the Western Conference finals — and a chance to add to their hardware haul.

Backstopped in fine form by Joel Cameron, Milton kicked off second round play with a couple of low scoring victories over Mississauga.

Glenn Walsh's charges capped the weekend in dramatic fashion — rallying to eclipse the Chargers 3-2 in overtime at Iceland Arena Sunday.

Defenceman Vince Guiducci provided the heroics less than a minute into sudden death when his innocent-looking blueline floater bounced off hometown netminder Trevor

Battaglia's left pad and trickled over the goal line.

The extra session deposit punctuated an exiting comeback by the visitors, who dented the twine twice in the last nine-and-a-half minutes of the third period.

Dan DeLong initiated the reversal of fortunes by burying Dan Bognar's doorstep leftovers.

Then Andy Rozak, Milton's most prolific playoff performer since Darren (Mini) Haydar, scored in similar style with just over a minute left in regulation.

The Merchants' late uprising injected excitement into what was for the most part a rather dull evening clash — at least until the hosts potted goal number two midway through the final frame and rearguard Rick Janco then slugged it out with Mississauga's Marc Davison in an attempt to shake up his teammates.

Cameron made two dozen saves on the night and for the sixth consecutive game held the opposition under the three-goal mark.

Beating him were Graham Lindsay and Jeff



the series opener 4-2.

A strong start and fair amount of discipline factored into the win — as did three-point performances by Rozak and rookie sensation Kevin Arruda.

Rozak buried goals one and three, on a break-away fake and upstairs backhand, and set-up Arruda's powerplay tally late in the first.

A shorthanded goal by Bognar — sent in on a big lead pass from Chris Rook — highlighted the opening tilt, as did the spirited play of checking winger James Coleman.

On the down side Friday, Milton did ease up considerably in the third and were out chanced by Mississauga 12-3.

Loucks.

Fellow Charger Chris Curran assisted on both efforts.

Despite a third-period breakdown at Memorial Arena Friday, Milton won

Chris Yipp tallied twice down the stretch for the visitors to make things interesting.

Battaglia got the hook after second-period play after giving up four goals on 16 shots. Meanwhile, Cameron turned aside 23 shots and was especially effective when challenged downstairs.

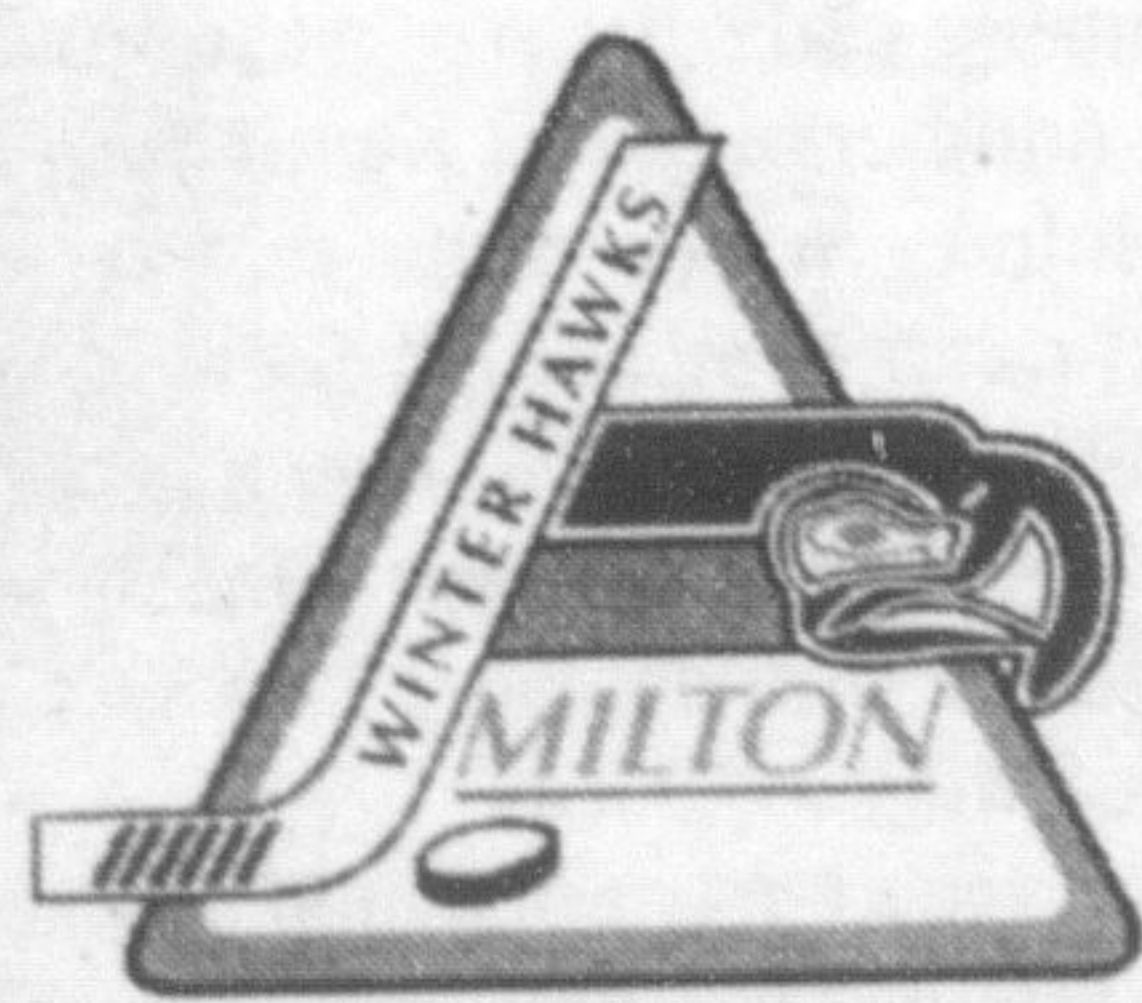
Milton has so far been the more disciplined of the two teams and has done a good job of neutralizing big guns Mike Oliveira and Blair Jarrett.

Game three of the series will go tonight in Milton. Game time is 8 p.m. Mississauga will host game four at Iceland Thursday at 7:30 p.m.

Merchant notes: Joel Cameron went four-and-a-half periods without giving up a goal between the opening frame of round one's game seven and the third period of round two's opener ... Andy Rozak leads West Conference playoff scoring with nine goals and 20 points. Kevin Arruda sits second on the team with four goals and 14 points.

Milton Minor Hockey Association Coaches Required 2001/2002 Season

The Milton Minor Hockey Association is now accepting applications for Coaches for the 2001-2002 season. Applications are available at Thompson Arena, or by contacting Tammie Parcels (905) 876-0839.



Milton Minor
Hockey Association