



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Photo by GEORGE BESHIRI

Merchant goaltender Joel Cameron stops a shot while defenceman Chris Rook contends with Brampton's Brandon Dawe during game six Sunday. Milton won the contest 5-1.

Merchants force game seven with gutsy effort

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The Merchants are bruised and battered — but not broken yet.

Delivering their strongest statement of the playoffs in Brampton Sunday, Milton's walking wounded staved off elimination by trouncing the defending league champion Capitals 5-1.

The convincing win pushed West Conference finals play to a seventh and deciding game, slated for tonight at Memorial Arena. Game time is 8 p.m.

"It was a gutsy effort by everyone out there," said head coach Glenn Walsh Sunday. "I don't know if it was because their backs were to the wall or not, but a lot of individuals really picked up their game."

Backstopped by ever-steady Joel Cameron, Milton held its own physically throughout game six and broke out of its offensive rut

in the final frame — scoring four goals, including two with the man-advantage.

Ace Capital Danny Gould not only lost his form down the stretch but his composure as well, which earned him an early exit from the thoroughly entertaining affair.

The Merchants also turned in their finest first-period performance of the series Sunday. Holding Brampton's shot count under the double-digit range — something they fell far short of doing in five previous encounters — the visitors served notice that they weren't quite ready to pack it in.

"Weathering the early storm, that'll be the key on Tuesday as well. Brampton's such a strong team, but if we can hold them through the first 10 or 12 minutes, we're in it," remarked Walsh.

Flavio Faggioni, one of several players who lifted their game this past weekend, made the winning deposit about four minutes into the third — catching Gould out of position and potting one into an open net while his team had the extra attacker.

Insurance goals were posted by James Coleman, Rick Ferroni and Vince Guiducci. Meanwhile, Andy Rozak — persevering through the lumps of an attention-rich post-season run — jumped all over a breakout blunder just seconds into the middle stanza and notched goal number one.

His playoff point total — which includes 13 tallies — now stands at an even 30.

Led by banged up captain John Nadalin, Milton's defensive unit limited second-chance opportunities and managed a perfect 6-for-6 penalty killing campaign.

Two nights earlier on home ice, the regular season champs were plenty feisty but enjoyed little firepower. As a result, they were nipped 3-1. Cameron's 39-save showcase kept things tight while his teammates rebounded from a shaky start and nearly upstaged the overly aggressive Capitals, who got away with some second-half muggings on Rozak and fellow Merchant Kevin Arruda.

• see MILTON on page 22

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