



## Honoured for his efforts

Eric Ellison proudly displays his 3M Coaching Recognition Award, which he recently received on behalf of the MMHA and national amateur hockey.

## Merchants begin rebuilding with acquisition of blueliner

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

The Milton Merchants have another major rebuild ahead of them.

Coming on board to help with construction this time around is a young defenceman whom the local juniors hope can add an offensive dimension to the blueline.

Acquired from the Toronto Marlboro bantams, Sean Mole was among a handful of players identified last season as promising prospects for the defending Western Conference champions — who have a couple of big spots to fill on defence with the loss of graduating leaders John Nadalin and Chris Rook.

Whether or not the 16-year-old Oakville resident can provide much leadership is still open for debate, but according to general manager Nick Slawson there's no questioning his puck-handling ability.

"He's very poised and smart with the puck," said Milton's GM. "He could be the natural offensive defenceman we've been lacking."

The 6'1", 170 lbs. rearguard was recently drafted in the second round by the OHL's Sarnia Sting — who four rounds later picked up left winger Dan Carcillo, another youngster the Merchants are considering for their 2001/02 roster.

The North York Canadian bantam graduate stands 5'10" and weighs in at 170 lbs. From a physical stature standpoint he's not exactly intimidating, but according to Slawson the high flying forward shows shades of "a Ryan Eby type player, very feisty."

The two players were among three dozen at last weekend's rookie camp at Mississauga's Iceland Arena. About a dozen of them will be selected to compete at the Ontario Hockey Association Referee School Tournament at the University of Waterloo June 23 to 27. Milton will be looking to secure its third straight championship at the rookie showcase.

From there they'll invite about a handful of those youngsters back for the main camp in August.

With Nadalin, Rook, Andy Rozak, Dan DeLong, Andrew Francone, Joel Cameron and James Coleman all gone to overage, the Merchants have some awfully big holes to fill — especially when it comes to character and leadership.

Remarkd Slawson, "Those are definitely our two biggest needs, and it's not getting any easier finding those type of players in the league."

Milton's personnel are all due back for another season, although around the division Georgetown and Burlington have both made coaching changes.

## Top seeds fall in high school ball

It's been said time and time again that the playoffs are a whole new season.

But never has that old adage held more credence than this past week during opening round action of Halton Regional baseball — especially within the Volpe Division, where top two seeds Bishop Reding and Milton District suffered quick exits.

The Royals' lack of pitching finally caught up with them at Maplehurst Park Tuesday afternoon, when E.C. Drury — who needed a come-from-behind tie breaking victory over Iroquois Ridge just to make the playoffs — erased two separate deficits to outdistance them 10-7.

Spartan Pete Nicolaichuk's clutch hitting down the stretch finally put things away in a seesaw battle that saw the lead change hands four different times before it was all over.

The E.C. designated hitter drove in the winning run as well as another for insurance in consecutive at-bats. Jon Gleed was credited with the win for Drury.

Meanwhile, three infield errors in the seventh inning proved to be MD's undoing — as they were edged by Loyola 7-5 Tuesday at Brain Best Park.

Those miscues led to three runs against the Mustangs, who led until the fourth frame.

Jarrett Konkle was solid defensively in centre field and first base and delivered a couple of hits, as did DH John Melito. The loss was doubly disappointing since MD had beaten Loyola convincingly in regular season play.

Drury went on to semifinal crossover play in Burlington Wednesday morning and were blanked by perennial powerhouse M.M. Robinson 5-0.

The Rams have been ranked top three across the Greater Toronto Area all season long and delivered a pair of two-run homers en route to victory against the gutsy but overmatched Spartans.

All three local teams finished .500 or better during the regular season.

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