

Don't expect to see new goaltender in warm-up

Battaglia tries to avoid another injury with his off-ice prep work

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

All goalies have their little quirks and eccentricities when it comes to preparing for competition.

But Trevor Battaglia's unusual pre-game routine has more to do with trying to avoid another painful ordeal than simply paying homage to superstition.

During last year's season opener with the Mississauga Chargers, Battaglia took a nasty slapshot from one of his teammates in warm-up that fractured a bone in his right forearm. Since then, he's decided not to tempt fate again.

"I don't (warm-up on the ice)," said the 5'9", 173 lbs. netminder. "I'm out there for a few minutes (for the skate) and then I've got my on-pre-game routine."

Rest assured, the Merchants' new starter isn't just sitting around in the dressing room in the final few minutes before game time. According to assistant coach Dan Sales, Battaglia has a strict warm-up regiment and is "extremely focused and determined."

The 19-year-old — injured twice last season

— joins the defending West Conference champs after almost defeating them in round two of last year's playoffs.

Taking Milton to overtime on two occasions and giving up just 17 goals in five games, he was the clear standout in a series that — without his crafty cage work — could have been rather lopsided.

Merchants' skipper Glenn Walsh was no doubt impressed with Battaglia's second round efforts, but has been even more so since the veteran goalie joined Milton.

"In some ways he's even better than I'd ini-

tially thought," said Walsh. "There's no doubt Joel (Cameron) was great in last year's playoffs, but throughout the season he was quite inconsistent. Trevor should give us more consistency."

Battaglia was certainly up to par during home-opening play against Burlington Friday. He turned back 26 shots — including half-a-dozen with lightning quick pad saves — and came within three minutes of a shutout.

Spoiling that with a short-range scramble shot was Cougar Bob Raymond.

Said Battaglia, "I think I did alright tonight (Friday). There was a little added pressure with

all the hype (of opening night) but once I got that first save in I was okay."

Meanwhile, Sean Samuel — a 16-year-old coming over from the North York Canadians' bantam squad — will play back-up this year. With five games this week, including last night's road trip to Buffalo, Milton's young cager shouldn't have to wait long to see his share of action.

Samuel won a very tight battle for the second-string job and showed strongly throughout exhibition play — especially against the Georgetown Raiders.

Chargers want compensation for Battaglia

Trevor Battaglia may be in for a rather interesting home-coming when he heads into Mississauga's Iceland Arena tomorrow evening.

The 19-year-old goaltender was given permission to find another team to play for at the end of last season and earlier this summer hooked up with the Milton Merchants.

However, Chargers president Lloyd Stockley is claiming that while he gave Battaglia the right to make his own deal, Mississauga is still entitled to compensation

for its former starting netminder.

And since the Chargers haven't signed the release section of his playing card, the question of Battaglia's Jr. A rights appears headed for arbitration.

Ontario Hockey Association president Brent Ladds said if the two teams could not reach an agree-



Trevor Battaglia

ment — which was still the case at press time yesterday — the matter would be sent to binding arbitration. He added that it would be dealt with quickly.

At issue is compensation for Battaglia and not — it appears — whether or not he'll return to Mississauga.

At practice Sunday, Merchants general manager Nick Slawson questioned why Mississauga didn't address the matter earlier, stating that a story in Friday's Mississauga News was the first he'd heard about it.

Milton Lacrosse Association Annual General Meeting

is being held on Tuesday, October 2nd, 2001 at 7:30pm in the Milton Legion Hall (upstairs) for the purposes of Electing 2002 Board of Directors and amendments to the M.L.A. Constitution and By-Laws.



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Gallo Blue Chip writes another success story at Mohawk Saturday

Gallo Blue Chip, already the richest pacer in harness racing history, added another chapter to his glorious resume when he romped to victory in the 59th edition of the Canadian Pacing Derby Saturday night at Campbellville's Mohawk Racetrack.

The oldest harness stakes race in the country featured a record \$850,000 purse.

Drive by Daniel Dube for owner Martin Scharf of Lawrence, New York — the 'Great Gallo' as he's come to be known — won for the 36th time in 53 career starts and now has earnings of \$3,662,861.

Last week, he surpassed the legendary Nihilator's 16-year-old record as the sport's richest all-time pacer.

Scharf, who couldn't be in attendance for obvious reasons after the tragic happenings on Tuesday in his home state, sent word through trainer Mark Ford that his prized pacer would be donating much of his new-found wealth.

"On a somber note, Martin Scharf couldn't be here tonight, but a large part of this purse will go to the benevolent fund for the



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people of New York," said Ford. "This is a once-in-a-lifetime horse and we feel so fortunate to have him."

In typical Gallo fashion, he was on top relatively early and surrendered to no challengers thereafter.

The hulking four-year-old gelding paced the mile in a sizzling 1:49.4 to defeat Armbro Proposal and Royalflush Hanover by four-and-a-half lengths. With the third-place effort, Royalflush Hanover surpassed the \$2 million mark in career earnings.

On a racetrack that must feel like his home away from home, Gallo Blue Chip is now unbeaten in six career starts at Mohawk. Sent off as the overwhelming 1-2 favourite, he returned \$3 for the victory.

Lack of players means no juvenile hockey team

Milton's return to the juvenile hockey scene was certainly short-lived.

Last season, a local team was iced for the first time in a decade but a mass player exodus has left coach John Arnold without enough bodies to continue this year.

"Ten guys have gone off to school while another five have been lost to overage," he explained. "And there's not a lot of guys coming up from

midget. It's unfortunate."

With a few exceptions, last year's juveniles iced a full compliment and were for the most part quite competitive in their first year back. They ended up taking the zone championship and made it to the semifinals of the Silver Stick Tournament.

Arnold wouldn't speculate as to whether or not the team would resurface next year.