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FRIDAY NOVEMBER 9, 2001

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Skimming the surface

Kristen McIlroy surfaces for air while competing in the 12 to 18-year-old women's 100-metre backstroke during Sunday's Milton Marlin Fall Invitational Swim Meet at the Milton Leisure Centre. For meet results, see page 27.

Merchants spanked by steel-town rivals

Team suffers disastrous trip to Hamilton

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The Merchants choked down another bitter pill of reality in Hamilton Monday.

Hammered 9-2, Milton suffered another painful reminder of just how far they still have to go before legitimately challenging the West Conference front-runners.

"It was very disappointing," said head coach Dave Gagner. "Man-to-man we just weren't able to contain them. We've got to work on some things in order to start minimizing their chances."

The Merchants were particularly ineffective at shutting down their hosts' top line — which exploited Sean Samuel for five goals.

The rookie puck stopper turned back 13 of 15 first-period shots before the flood-gates were busted wide open.

Offensively, Milton generated plenty of scoring chances but exhibited little finish and were held under the three-goal mark for the seventh time this season.

Jason Harshaw and Justin Nattress scored late powerplay goals, while assisting on both efforts was Rick Janco.

Single helpers went to Michel Bond and Jacob Vanderbreggen — who picked up his second point since joining his hometown club late last month.

Progress touch and go

While Milton has shown signs of improvement since its whole-sale coaching changes, setbacks like the one in Hamilton Monday haven't exactly been rare — something that concerns Gagner.

"We need to start getting a consistent effort out of everyone. Then we can work on tactical mistakes."

Anything resembling a satisfactory effort should be enough for the local juniors to maintain their playoff spot over the next two weeks — during which they do battle with the division's bottom three teams.

Before that they'll play host to ex-assistant coach Mike Kalapaca and the Georgetown Raiders tonight.



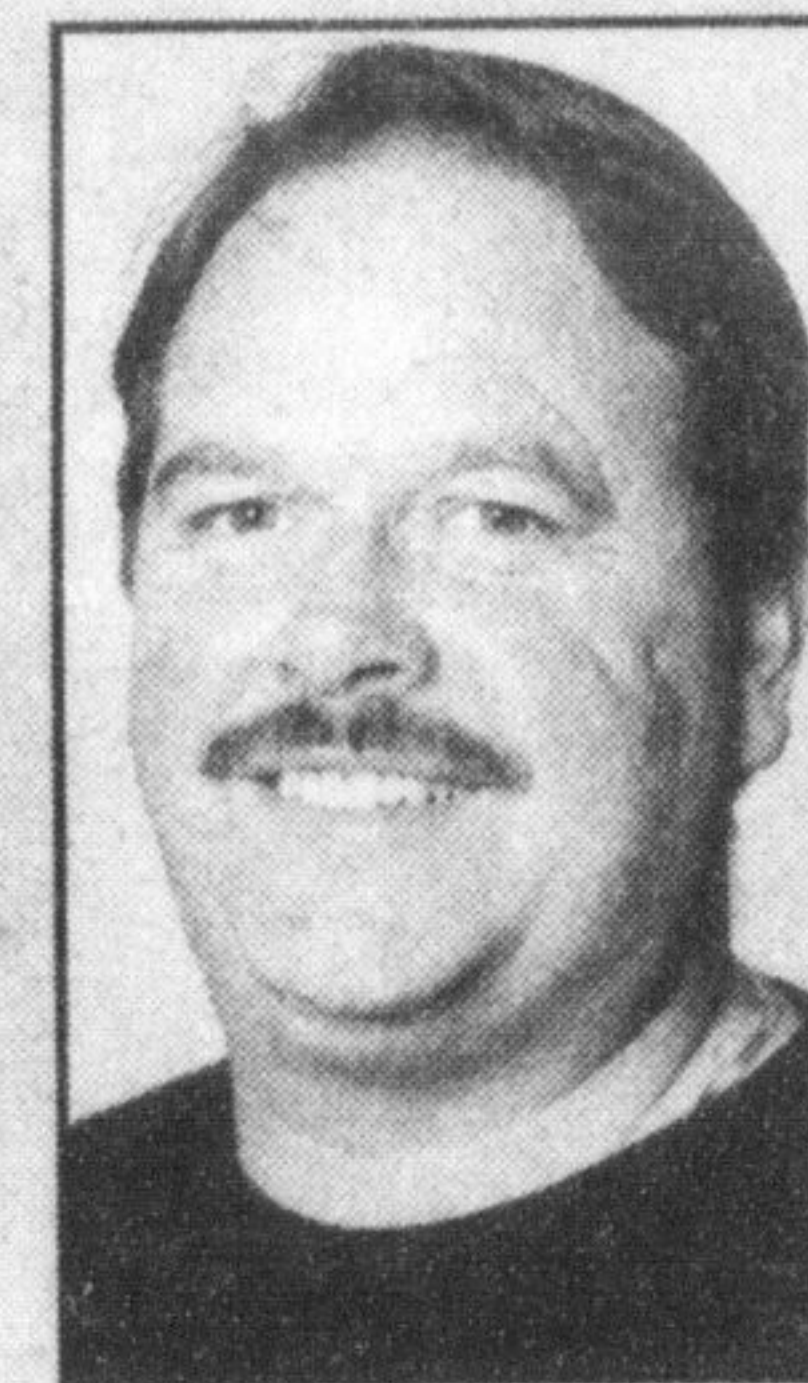
Kalapaca joins Raiders

Miltonian Mike Kalapaca will be back behind the bench at Memorial Arena tonight — only this time around it'll be with the visitors.

Less than a month after being axed by the Merchants — alongside skipper Glenn Walsh and fellow assistant Dan Sales — Kalapaca has been hired as the new head coach of the neighbouring Georgetown Raiders.

The West Conference mainstay, who spent several years behind the Streetsville bench before joining the Merchants for their division title run last year, will take over for interim coach Charlie Hanman — who held the reigns following John French's release.

Milton, Georgetown and Streetsville all fired their coaches within a two-week period in October.



Mike Kalapaca

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