

Merchants secure player and unbeaten weekend

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

The Merchants' fortunes gradually improved as last week wore on.

Following a humbling loss at Hamilton's Mountain Arena, Milton swung a straight player-for-player deal with the Collingwood Blues that should add two sorely lacking aspects to the local juniors' game — namely, leadership and physical presence.

Offering both — according to general manager Nick Slawson — is newly acquired Rick Carriere, who was picked up in exchange for talented, but somewhat underachieving forward Jason Harshaw.

A 20-year-old New Brunswick native, Carriere is set to begin an apprentice program in Mississauga and was in need of somewhere closer to play.

A fourth-year Jr. A player and departing captain and leading scorer of Collingwood, Milton's new forward could be the spark plug to unit an often disjointed offensive unit.

"He's a natural leader," said Slawson. "He gives us an element we were sadly needed."

Carriere made an immediate impact with his new club during battle with neighbouring Georgetown Friday. Taking a back pass in the slot from rookie linemate Dan Carcillo, he beat Raider goalie Zak Brown down low midway through the third period for the potential game winner.

Georgetown spoiled the victory party, however, inside the final minute of regulation when Ryan Robert connected on a huge rebound — the second with a rock-solid Sean Samuel out of position — to tie Milton 2-2.

The Merchants had half-a-dozen scoring chances in overtime but failed to break the stalemate.

North Halton's Jr. A clubs exchanged goals in the second period as well. Defenceman Shawn Mole lit the lamp for the home side while scoring for the visitors was T.J. Trevelyan.

Milton staved off defeat Friday — for the first time in three games — but not the injury bug. Interim captain David Ovcjak went down with a leg injury late in the first period and will likely be sidelined for the rest of November.

Closing out the week in Burlington Sunday, Milton nearly coughed up a four-goal cushion but managed to shade the Cougars 5-4 and leapfrog past Streetsville into seventh spot in the Western



Merchant Michel Bond gets ties up by Georgetown's Ryan Taube during play at Memorial Arena Friday. The two sides fought to a 2-2 tie.

Photos by **GRAHAM PAINE**



Conference.

Carcillo made the winning deposit — making good on a second-period breakaway — while delivering two-goal efforts were linemates Dan Bognar and Rich Meloche.

Merchant notes: Ex-Merchant Frank Fazio is now toiling with Burlington and picked up an assist in Sunday's game ... Milton has acquired hometown native Ryan McManus as their back-up goalie while Trevor Battaglia continues to nurse a broken collarbone. McManus also played back-up in Mississauga last year while Battaglia was on the injured list ... Battaglia and Kevin Arruda, out with a broken ankle, are expected back in early December ... Milton travels to Streetsville tonight and hosts Buffalo Friday.

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