

'AA' major atoms battle back after game one loss

Goaltending and gritty play help turn the tide against Flamborough

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

Taylor Prestidge bounced back so quickly that one might almost think he's made of rubber.

After giving up three first-period goals at home versus Flamborough Saturday, Milton's AA major atom puckstopper has slammed the door on the opposition — giving up just one more marker in two-and-two-third games to help turn the tide on opening round play.

His crafty cage work has allowed the Wallace Pontiac Buick Winterhawks to rebound from Saturday's 3-1 setback and engineer a pair of low-scoring victories in best-of-five OMHA action against the gutsy Sabres.

"Taylor's been steady for us all season and was very solid the last two games," said head coach Gary Abraham.

The local tender highlighted his playoff performance with Tuesday's 3-0 whitewash at Memorial Arena. He turned back a number of quality scoring chances while his teammates nursed a one-goal lead and was particularly effective when they strayed a bit from their traditionally disciplined style of play.

Brian Hunter continued to flourish on defense — as he has on most nights since dropping back from the wing — while leading offensively in the game three shutout win with two goals was Scott Stover.

Ryan Cochrane sealed the deal with a last-minute empty netter.

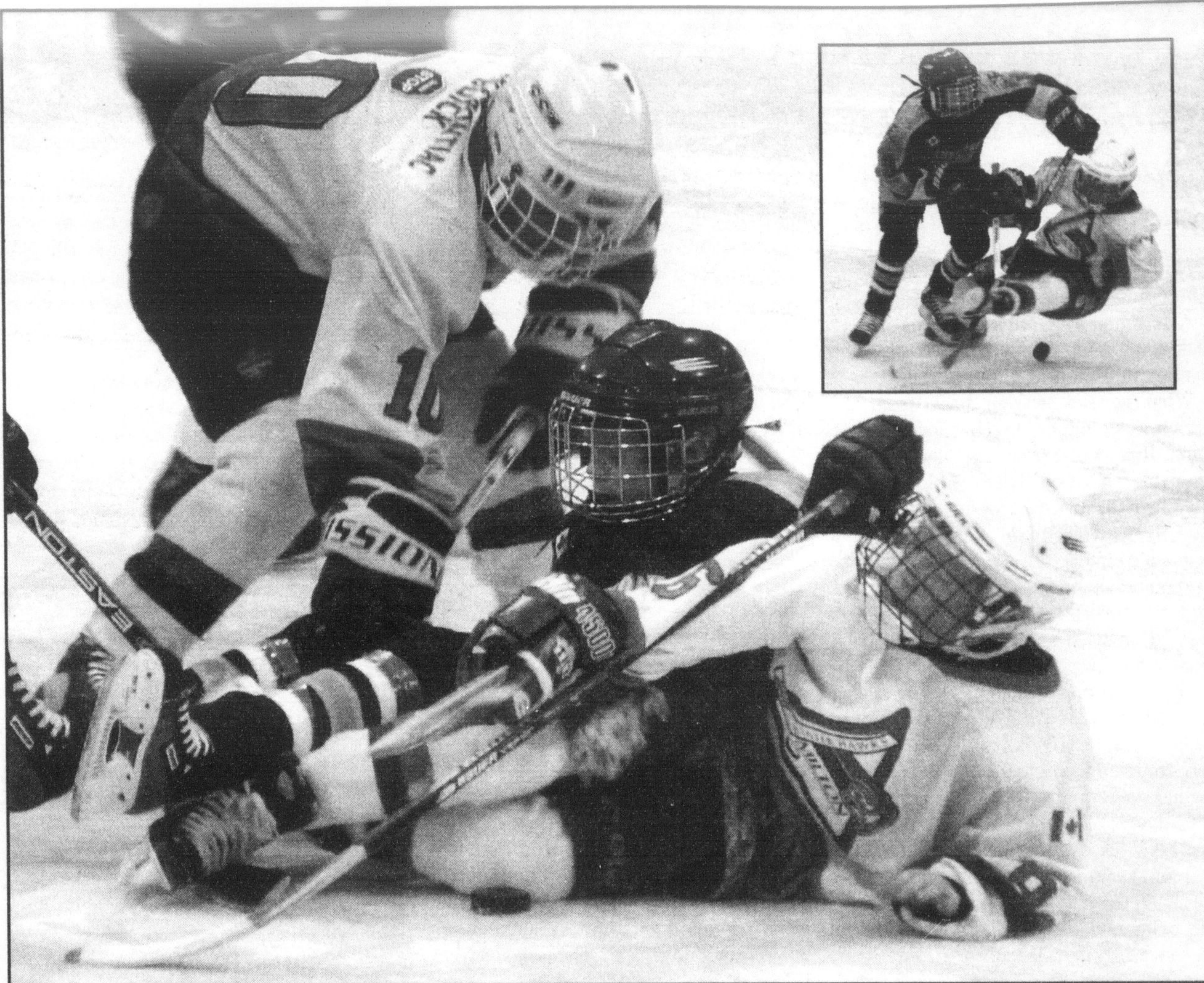
Said Abraham, "Flamborough beat us twice in the regular season, so even though they finished where they did (eighth place), we knew it was going to be a tough series. But other than that one bad period, we've pretty much played our game and come out on top."

One night earlier in Carlisle, Milton delivered equal parts discipline and determination to topple the Sabres 4-1.

Stover tallied twice in this one as well to share the spotlight with Prestidge.

Contributing singles were Kris DelNin and Mark Thompson.

The Winterhawks had a chance to clinch the series last night in Carlisle. Results were not available at press time. If necessary, game five will be played tomorrow at 3:15 p.m. at Memorial Arena.



Flamborough's Ryan Carroll gets sandwiched between Milton Winterhawks Tyler Lafontaine and Mark Thomson after a collision (inset) between Carroll and Thomson during 'AA' major atom playoff action at Memorial Arena Saturday. Milton lost the game but rallied to win the next two, including Tuesday's 3-0 whitewash.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE



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'A' minor atoms earn split in first two playoff games

Goals have certainly come at a premium thus far in 'A' minor atom playoff action. Miltonian Joel Herder and his netminding counterpart from Caledon have been

beaten just a handful of times between them during games one and two of the OMHA's opening round.

The Nadalin Electric Winterhawk stopper surrendered only a pair of markers in the second installment at Memorial Arena Wednesday night, but that was enough for visitors to eke out a 2-1 victory and knot the best-of-five series.

Herder was especially effective when challenged down low and robbed opposing snipers on a couple of breakaways — one each in periods two and three — to keep his team within striking distance.

The game winner was sunk midway through the third period on a well-executed wraparound.

Meanwhile, Ethan O'Connor made the lone deposit for the hosts — going coast-to-coast before going bottom-shelf on a nifty forehand fake.

Assisting on the play was Austin Van Rossem.

Both teams had to do a fair amount of penalty killing through a rather chippy second half. Milton had a late two-man advantage but just couldn't bury the biscuit against their defensively-sturdy guests.

Herder was flawless through the series opener to whitewash Caledon 2-0 Monday. Van Rossem and Andrew Ouelette were the marksmen in the shutout win.

Caledon hosted game three last night while the series continues tomorrow at 2 p.m. at Memorial Arena.

The local minor atoms have been making steady progress since a tough first half of the season in which they were held winless.

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