



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY JUNE 25, 2002



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Touchdown!

Milton Marauder Matt MacPhail gets hoisted up by a pair of teammates following his interception and touchdown run against Markham Saturday afternoon at Bishop Reding. Milton lost the game 37-7. For full results, see page 21.

Mavericks turn it on late to deliver high-scoring tie

By **STEVE LeBLANC***The Champion*

Few local teams in recent memory have worked harder for a single point than the Jr. B Mavericks did at John Tonelli Sports Centre Saturday night.

Fueled by hopes of post-season play and a clutch scoring surge by Derek Blanchard, Milton delivered by far its most impressive effort since returning to the league — erasing four separate late-game deficits, including one in overtime, to tie the upper-echelon Sarnia Pacers 18-18.

The marathon showdown would end in heartbreak, however, as the visitors notched the final equalizer with a measly two seconds remaining in the extra session. Blanchard sunk the potential game winner a few minutes earlier to follow up on an explosive four-goal third period — which was capped with a rebound deposit with just eight seconds left in regulation time. Overall, he collected eight points to lead the team's highest single-game scoring total of the year.

While the local juniors couldn't quite clinch their seventh season victory, the point secured for a tie pushed them within a game of Owen Sound for the fourth and final playoff spot in the OLA's Mid-West Division.

With regular season-ending tilts against lowly Wallaceburg and winless Brantford this weekend, Milton stands an excellent shot at bridging the gap — and would win the head-to-head tiebreaker, having beaten Owen Sound both times this year.

The Mavericks' late charge helped them overcome a thoroughly miserable powerplay performance for most of the night. Not only did they fail to capitalize on most man-advantage opportunities, but gave up seven short-handed goals — including three on one first-period stint with the extra attacker.

But some key saves by Josh Arnold and a strong outing by Matt Decaire, who was effective at the point, helped counter Milton's powerplay pitfalls.

Decaire and Jon Sweetland also scored in overtime, which ended with Arnold being penalized for an illegal stick and returning starter Jordan Lumb surrendering the tying tally. Overall, 10 shorthanded goals were scored in a rather chippy affair. Sweetland finished the night with three goals while captain Kyle Hagel, Rick Gallinger and Drew Petkoff each tallied twice.

Sunday afternoon's game in Onondaga was cancelled at the last minute when the referees were refused entry across the border by U.S. Immigration.

This marks the second time in a few years that this has happened, and needless to say now comes at great expense and frustration for the Mavericks. At press time yesterday, it was not known when the game would be re-scheduled.

Maverick notes: Kaegan Sherriff has been traded to Spartan for future considerations ... The Mavericks begin the last week of the regular season tomorrow night in Elora. Saturday they host Wallaceburg at 7 p.m. before closing things out Sunday afternoon in Brantford.

Jr. A club changing its name

The Merchants era is over.

Milton's Jr. A hockey club has officially dropped the Merchant moniker and is now looking to the community to help re-name both the local juniors and minor rep teams.

The move is an effort to help bridge the gap between the two organizations, and according to newly-elected MMHA President Michele Dunsford is "a win-win situation." A contest will be held over the summer, with either cash or a prize being awarded to the winner. Should a name not be found before the start of the 2002/03 season, the Merchants will simply be called the Milton Jr. A hockey club.



"There's many reasons why we're doing this, but the most important is to integrate minor hockey with the Jr. A club so that we've got one hockey unit in Milton," said co-

owner Ken Chase, who's spearheading the re-naming project. "This should help build a good identity for the kids. I think the hockey community will be stronger for it."

Submissions can be made to 420 Main St. E., suite 636, Milton, Ontario, L9T 5G3.

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