



# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY OCTOBER 22, 2002



## Totally awesome!

Milton driver Mario Baillargeon embraces local trainer Ben Wallace after guiding longshot Totally Western (below) to an upset victory in the Two-Year-Old Colt Pace at Saturday's \$6.6 million Breeders Crown at Woodbine Racetrack. It was the first Breeders Crown win for both driver and trainer. Fellow Milton driver Chris Christoforou was also a winner — taking the Three-Year-Old Filly Pace with Allamerican Nadia. For full results on all eight races at the 'Super Bowl' of harness racing, see page 20.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

## Merchants engineer consecutive shutouts

By STEVE LeBLANC  
*The Champion*

Thanksgiving 2002 came just a little too early for puck-stopping Merchant Cody Spicer.

Because Milton's 20-year-old goaltender couldn't have been more grateful to his teammates than he was during this past weekend's homecoming at Memorial Arena.

Revitalized by an unbeaten campaign at the Compuware Fall Classic Tournament, Milton defenders placed a virtual hammerlock on the competition through the final two periods of both Friday night's tilt with Streetsville and Sunday afternoon's clash with plummeting Oakville.

And what few shots got through, the local cager turned aside on the way to identical 6-0 shutout victories.

"I had maybe one or two quality shots past the first in each game. The defense was impeccable," said Spicer, who can't recall ever having delivered back-to-back goose eggs — even as a pre-teen tender. "We really came together in Michigan. This is just a carry over of that."

Coach Mario Cicchillo echoed those comments, adding that the holiday tournament provided an ideal opportunity for a team with so many new faces to really start gelling.

His Merchants — who're now essentially down to two players from last year's squad, with veteran blueliners Shawn Mole and Justin Nattress on the trading block — allowed their collective opposition just three dozen shots over the weekend, with the bulk of that coming in the opening frames.

Spicer was tested on just seven occasions past the first intermission Friday and nine times through the second and third Sunday — not once facing a rebound in any of those four periods.

An 11-save effort in Sunday's opening frame — highlighted by a dynamite glove save on a close-range backhand — represented his only hectic stretch of the weekend.

Offensively, Milton had no shortage of opportunities in either outing. This without the aid of still injured play-maker Craig Macdonald.

The Merchants enjoyed 54-15 and 35-20 shots on goal differentials Friday and Sunday respectively.

Rob Ricci tallied twice against Streetsville and made the winning deposit before the game was a minute old. Singles were chipped in by Lee Swallow, Jon

Ornelis and Rich Meloche — who two days later capped a three-point afternoon with his team-leading 12th and 13th goals of the year.

Arthur Sawa had a pair of assists.

Wes Clark and James Duhamel had a goal and an assist against the Blades — who continued an October tailspin and were thoroughly undisciplined after Vic Oreskovich redirected a cross-ice feed from Meloche upstairs with just eight seconds remaining in the first.

Pat Lee delivered a nifty fake for the other marker, while Swallow offered a strong forechecking effort and drew two helpers — as did Ricci and Andrew Bonello.

The 9-3-1 Merchants will look to make it three in a row at home Friday when they take on top-seated Hamilton.



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE  
Vic Oreskovich and Rich Meloche celebrate their first-period goal in Milton's 6-0 win over Oakville Sunday.



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**MILTON VS BRAMALEA**  
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