

# Bertoli's elbow injury halts hot streak and nixes call up to AHL

*Miltonian hurt for second time since April*

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

Scott Bertoli sure has lousy timing when it comes to injuries.

Not that there's ever a good occasion to land in sick. But twice in the past eight months now, Milton's ECHL veteran has found himself hurt at particularly unfavourable periods — both crucial points in his semi pro career.

First a torn knee ligament cut his playoff run short in early April. With Bertoli and a handful of other key regulars unavailable for the second round, the Trenton Titans were easy pickings for Atlantic City — losing in three straight.

Most recently, a hyper extended elbow — sustained late last month — put the brakes on an early-season tear for the gifted left winger, who prior to the injury sat top five in league scoring with 13 points in nine games.

As if this wasn't bad enough, the ailment came less than two weeks before a potential call up to the AHL's Milwaukee Admirals.

Admirals.

Hoping to fill a bit of the gap left by promoted forwards Cameron Mann and Vern Fiddler, Admirals skipper Peter Horachek — who coached Bertoli in Trenton last season — actually Friday called about the possibility of enlisting his former star, not realizing he was sidelined.

## Bertoli disappointed

"I knew if Peter had the opportunity, he would call me up. It's just unfortunate the call came now," said Bertoli, who's expected to be out for another four to six weeks. It's disappointing, but at least there'll still be plenty of hockey left when I come back.

"Missing the playoffs last year was tougher. That's what you play for all season and to have that taken away was a bigger blow."

This marks the second missed opportunity to join Horachek and fellow Miltonian Darren (Mini) Haydar in Milwaukee this season.

Bertoli had initially been invited to the

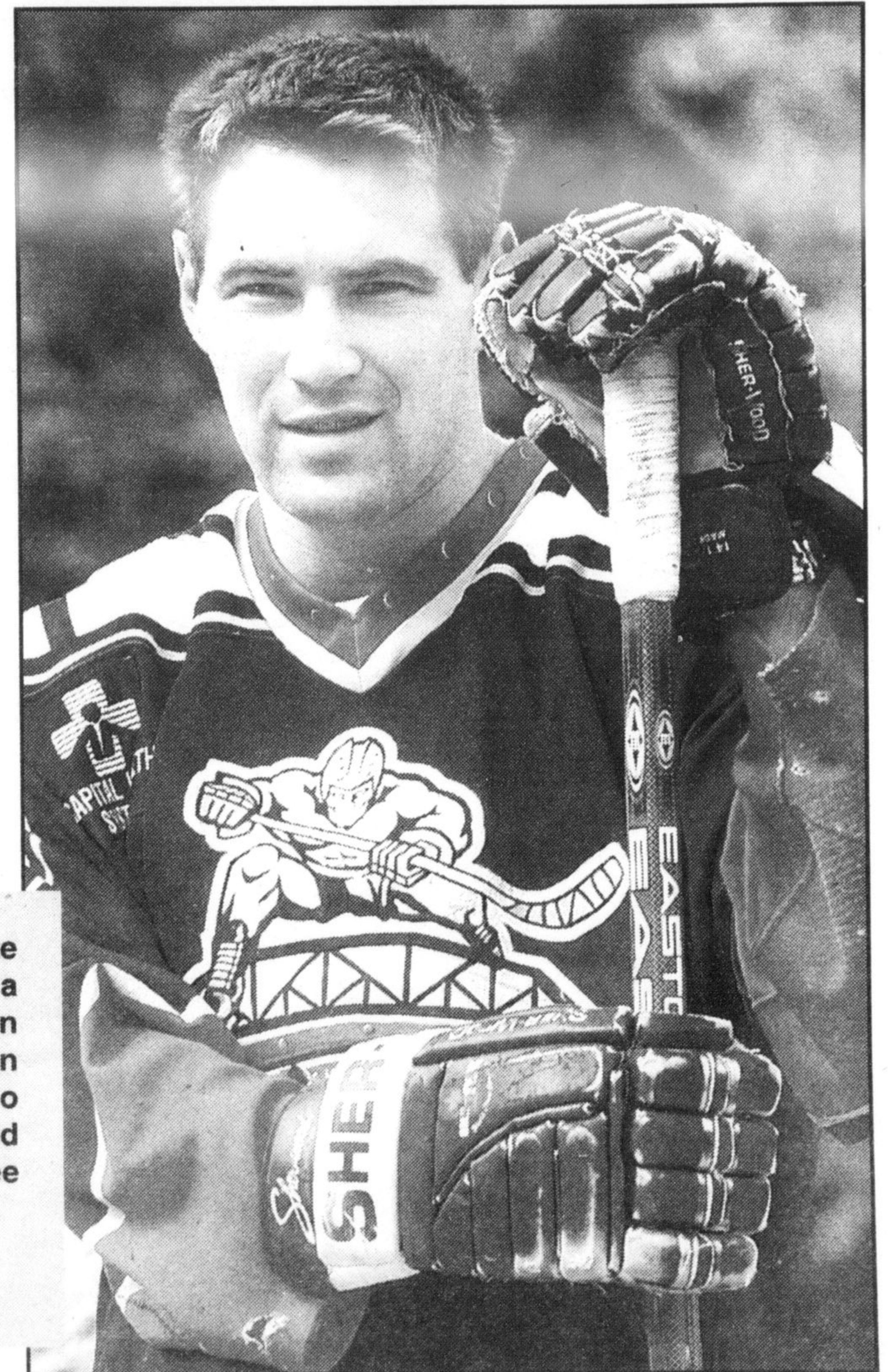
Admirals' training camp in September, but due to the high number of Nashville forwards sent down to the AHL, that tryout window quickly closed up.

Nevertheless, Horachek continues to hold the former Ivy Leaguer in high regard and would not hesitate to call upon his services — should the opportunity present itself again.

Said Milwaukee's bench boss, "Scott's talented, smart and definitely warranted of an opportunity to play in the AHL. It's been a tough go for him (making the climb) so far, but he's got a lot of character and is deserving of the chance."

**Miltonian Scott Bertoli was on quite the early-season hot streak when a hyper-extended elbow landed him on injury reserve for the second time in eight months. The ailment also quashed an opportunity to get called up the AHL with the Milwaukee Admirals.**

File photo by GRAHAM PAINE



# Pay-back comes twice for revitalized juniors

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

This past weekend was one of payback for the Merchants.

With Georgetown and Oakville providing the competition, Milton exacted revenge for successive losses earlier in the month with hard-fought wins over their two regional rivals.

The wins — numbers two and three in a newly-established streak — allowed the local juniors to both take over second-place in the Western Conference and maintained that position.

The 16-5-1 Merchants have been playing from behind as of late and are starting to prove they can thrive without benefit of any early lead.

They erased four separate deficits over their last two outings — both home games — en route to consecutive victories.

The biggest of these came against neighbouring powerhouse Georgetown Friday.

Exorcising any remaining demons from last Tuesday's 7-2 drubbing at Gordon Alcott Memorial Arena, Milton overcome its guests size and stick work to triumph 6-4.

Netminder Cody Spicer weathered a few first-period storms and turned back more than three dozen saves overall in one of his more inspiring and purposeful-looking efforts of the season.

Captain Craig Macdonald sank the game winner — picking the top left corner on the backhand with 5:19 remaining — while the hosts other marksmen were James Duhamel, Pat Lee, Rich Meloche, Arthur Sawa and Tyler Shremp.

Until Meloche's empty netter in the dying seconds of play, neither team led for more than a goal in round two of the battle of north Halton — which featured a little more zip and better fan support than the

initial showdown.

The Merchants moved into second place with the win and hung onto it two days later with a 4-2 decision over the Oakville Blades, who had restricted them to one goal a week earlier.

The rematch looked to mirror that from the onset, with a rather chippy opening frame ending with the hosts trailing 1-0. But Meloche and Sawa struck from close range in the second — each knotting the score — while Meloche later posted his team-leading 23rd goal of the season with an upstairs snapshot to put the locals ahead early in the third.

Jon Ornelas's short-handed tally four minutes later — the result of a key pass by afternoon stand-out Duhamel — provided an all-important insurance marker that took the wind out of the visitors' sails.

Spicer was rock solid but not quite as heavily tested in lifting his season win count to 12.

In Brampton Thursday, Milton wrapped up a three-game road trip by outdistancing the Capitals 7-5.

Back-up cager Alex Evans recorded the victory while standing out with a hat-trick and big night in the face-off circle was Vic Oreskovich — who has quickly developed into a sturdy centerpiece for the club's top scoring unit.

Milton will look to make it four in a row and maintain second place tonight in Streetsville. Game time is 8 p.m.

**Merchant notes:** Milton's 16-5-1 record marks the team's best start since the 1998-99 season ... Defencemen Phil Sbrocchi, B.J. Gallant and Emerson Mish all find themselves on the injury list this weekend ... Milton is on the road this Friday in Burlington and returns to Memorial Arena Sunday at 3 p.m. to face Bramalea.



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