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Minor bants win again

Milton's AA minor bantams kept their perfect Tri County playoff record intact by the narrowest of margins Saturday — trimming the Stoney Creek Bruins 4-3.

The Machine Shop Winterhawks' fourth straight win was fueled by a two-goal effort from Daniel Kearns, plus singles by Michael Hannah and Cole Madansky.

Contributing a couple of assists each were Mack Fillman and Ryan Lecky.

The 'Hawks were in Ancaster last night and return home tomorrow to battle Guelph at 2:15 p.m.

Parcels is the best minor hockey coach I've known



Out in left field

with MURRAY TOWNSEND

I caught Arnie Parcels on his cell phone Sunday night just as he was going into the ACC to watch the Maple Leafs play Nashville.

I had missed most of the previous night's game — the last, as it turned out — for the midget AA hockey team, which he coaches. I was at another game out of town and didn't get back in time during the snowstorm and freezing rain. I wanted some information and comments about the game.

When we were just about finished, I asked him about next year. "I'm retiring after this year, I'm done," he replied.

I didn't want to hear that, although I had an idea beforehand, which was why I asked. Still, the answer came as a surprise. If it's hockey season, Arnie Parcels is coaching. That's the way it's been for the last 17 years.

Most of those years were spent in the Milton minor hockey system, with a couple of seasons with the Jr. A Georgetown Raiders. In Milton, he won two OMHA championships and was in the finals two other years.

Hard-pressed to come up with a highlight when put on the spot, Parcels said: "It was just a great experience. I've been associated with a lot of fine young men and met a lot of great people."

I can come up with one highlight — at least it was for me. The best playoff series I ever saw, excluding the 1972 Russia-Canada series, was years ago when the midget AA team went up against Port Elgin. Every game was edge-of-your-seat excitement, right to the final game.

But, I know he was also involved with the Georgetown team that came back from a 3-0 deficit to win a playoff series, and that had to have been pretty special.

A couple of people have told me that Parcels didn't play hockey when he was growing up. I don't know for sure if that's true, because I've never had occasion to ask, but whenever somebody says something about a coach not measuring up because they didn't play themselves, I tell them what a pile of bunk that is. I bet I've said this more than a dozen times: "The best minor hockey coach I've ever known never played the game."

Yes, I'd say that Parcels is the best minor hockey coach I've known. Just by watching his teams over the years, the way they've played and been prepared, listening to what he has to say about the game, and the class with which he exudes representing himself and Milton. Not to mention the success he has had, and how much his teams always seem to improve over the season and into the playoffs.

I've had a few opportunities to get back into coaching over the years, but wasn't comfortable. My plan was to ask Parcels if I could be an assistant in some capacity to a team he was coaching, which I figured would prepare me better than anything else. Last year, I actually picked up the phone and called. There was no answer and then I got busy with other things and put it on hold. There was always next year.

Now, there is no next year. That's too bad for me, but more importantly, that's too bad for Milton minor hockey.

I've been around a lot of minor hockey, and I've never seen a team that didn't have complaints by the parents about the coach. One team I know even tried to oust a coach after they lost in overtime in the OMHA AAA championship game because they weren't winning every game the following season. But, I never heard a bad word about Parcels. Whenever I asked anybody, they would reply the same: "He's a great coach."

Not even a "good" coach or "okay" coach, but a "great" coach.

Parcels wants to spend more time with his family and more time at his cottage. That also means Tammie Parcels, a tireless member of the Milton Minor Hockey Association executive for years, is bowing out.

That's a shame, on both accounts. But, you can't argue with somebody who wants to be with his family more. It's been a lot of years and a lot of time spent with other families.

I think coaching is in your blood, especially his, and I don't think he'll stay away from it for good. At least I hope not.

I'll speak for myself when I say that I appreciate somebody like him who has given that much for that long to the community.

And I'll venture to speak for everybody else that's been involved with Arnie Parcels in Milton hockey when I say: "Thanks."

Under-19 Magic girls advance to League Cup quarterfinals

Soccer squad hopes to shine in Vaughan

What a difference a year makes. The Under-19 Magic girls won just one measly game last season — their first on the indoor soccer scene.

But over the past three months, Milton has effectively distanced themselves from last year's basement-dwelling status and is now set to compete in the Ontario League Cup quarterfinals tomorrow in Vaughan.

The Sargent Farm Magic's advancement to quarterfinal play was stamped with Saturday's 2-1 performance in Toronto, where their efforts were highlighted by a 2-1 opening-round victory over defending provincial champion Pickering.

Ainsley Kent doubled as both the star and hero — capping a two-goal outing with a second-half header deposit that would stand up

as the winner. She also struck in the early going on a nifty set-up by Holly Goddard. Erinn Greenfield beat a check and delivered a spirited run down the sidelines before feeding it in front for the initial tally.

Amy DiPalma made a number of key saves to preserve the lead — receiving ample defensive help along the way from Krista Lenardon, Erica Ercolani and Erin Grevstad.

Milton was whitewashed 1-0 by Unionville in its second game, but rebounded to topple Etobicoke 2-0 and book passage to the next round.

Ashley Rainey and Jenna Adleman dented the twine in the crucial victory, while great pressure by Val Fazio and Kelsey Orpen allowed for the second marker.

DiPalma and Emma Goddard split the goaltending duties in the latter win, with topnotch support offered by Ashley Grant.

"The team played extremely well throughout the tournament and showed tremendous discipline in the first game against Pickering," said head coach Louie DiPalma.

The local ladies have also thrived in regular-season play and now sit third with a record of 5-3-3. Among their more memorable moments were a 1-1 stalemate with league-leading Scarborough United and 1-0 decision over Richmond Hill.

Greenfield and Orpen did the scoring in those key encounters.

The Magic will look to continue their success tomorrow during the League Cup quarterfinals. Their competition will include Thunder Bay, Newmarket and London Forest.

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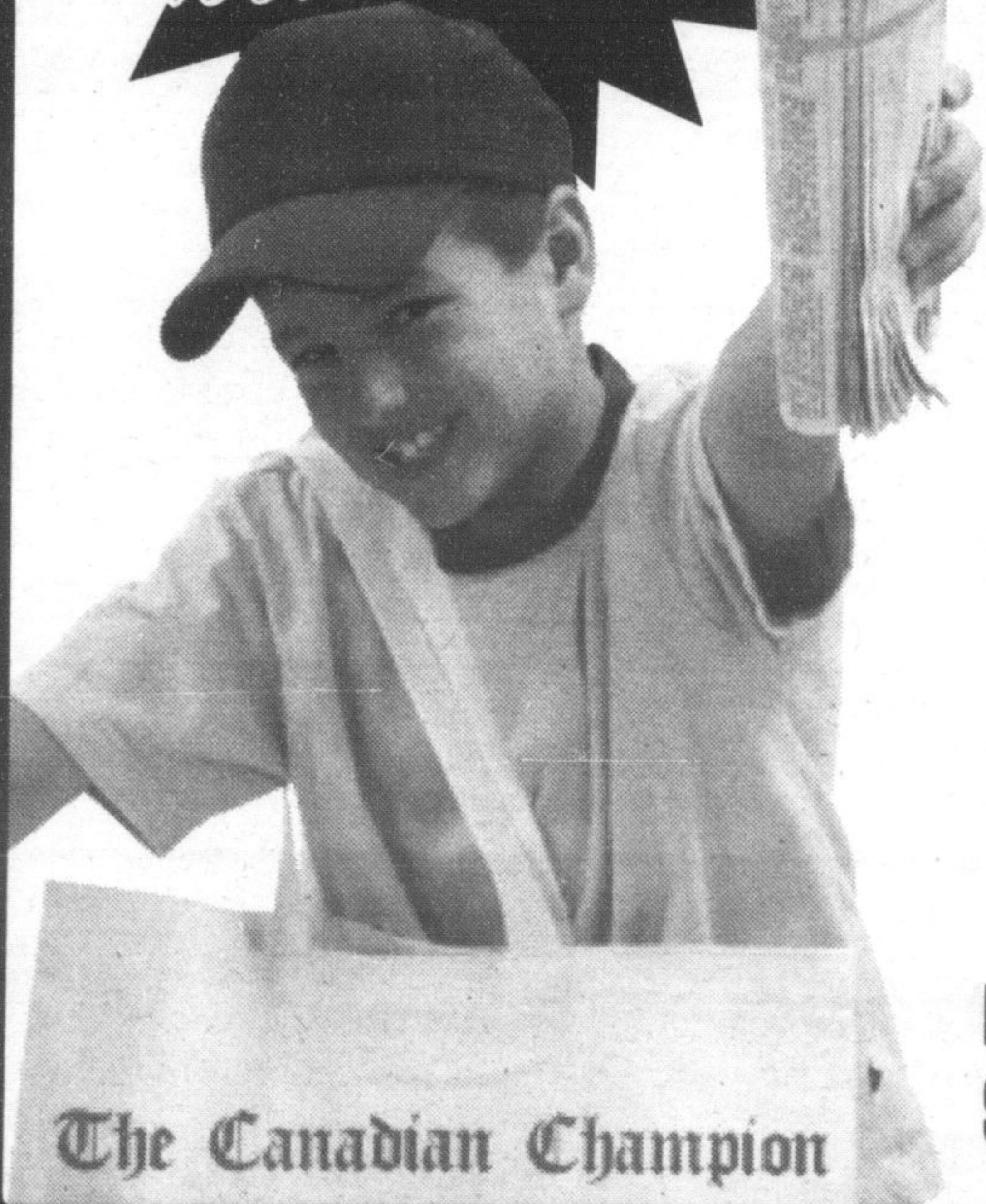
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