



# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## 'A' midgets clinch OMHA championship

*Johnston and Winterhawks rebound with game-five win to punctuate series*

By **STEVE LeBLANC***The Champion*

**M**ilton's A midgets still have one remaining championship to contend for at this weekend's Optimist Tournament.

By that time, the euphoria of Sunday's OMHA title win may just have begun to subside. Then again, it may not.

Just 28 hours after a potentially demoralizing 5-0 loss that left the door open for a series turnaround, the Action Utility Trailers Winterhawks rediscovered their fundamentally-sound ways and edged the Tecumseh Eagles 2-1 — thus clinching the OMHA crown by an overall seven-points-to-three margin.

"This is unbelievable, I couldn't imagine anything better," said elated captain Kyle Strong, as his teammates rejoiced in victory.

The series-clinching triumph — in front of a sizable crowd at Memorial Arena — was no doubt sweet for all involved, but especially so for Tim Johnston.

The ace goaltender got yanked the previous afternoon — for the first time all season — and there was some question as to whether he'd be back between the pipes for game five.

"Honestly, we did debate it (changing goalies)," admitted head coach Chris Brennan, who after coming up short in OMHA finals with AAA teams in Guelph and Waterloo now finally has a title. "Aaron (Clarke) stood on his head when he came in (for game four), but we felt we owed it back to Tim. He'd gotten us this far in the series."

### Johnston comes through

At the risk of stating the obvious, Johnston justified his coach's faith with a gem of a performance to finally ground the Eagles. He turned aside nearly three dozen shots overall and made seven straight saves after surrendering a top right corner deposit that cut his team's lead in half midway through the third period.

Said Johnston, "I really wanted to redeem myself tonight and show I could come back under pressure. I feel so good for the whole team, we worked so hard all year."

With reliable gunners Chris Whiting and Harley Mouscos still serving suspensions resulting from game three brawling Friday, Milton's ill-timed offensive drought threatened to spill over into a fifth straight period at Memorial Sunday — with neither team having scored heading into the dying moments of the opening frame.

But Dan Lynch would connect on a straight-away snapshot with a mere three seconds to go before intermission, while game-winning marksman Phil Foley dumped in a goal-mouth scramble with the exact same time remaining before the end of the second.

"Those two late goals really killed them (Tecumseh) and gave us the momentum," said Lynch.

Added Brennan, "Having averaged seven goals a game this season, we knew it was going to happen (end to scoring drought). Dan's goal was huge, it gave us the boost we were looking for."

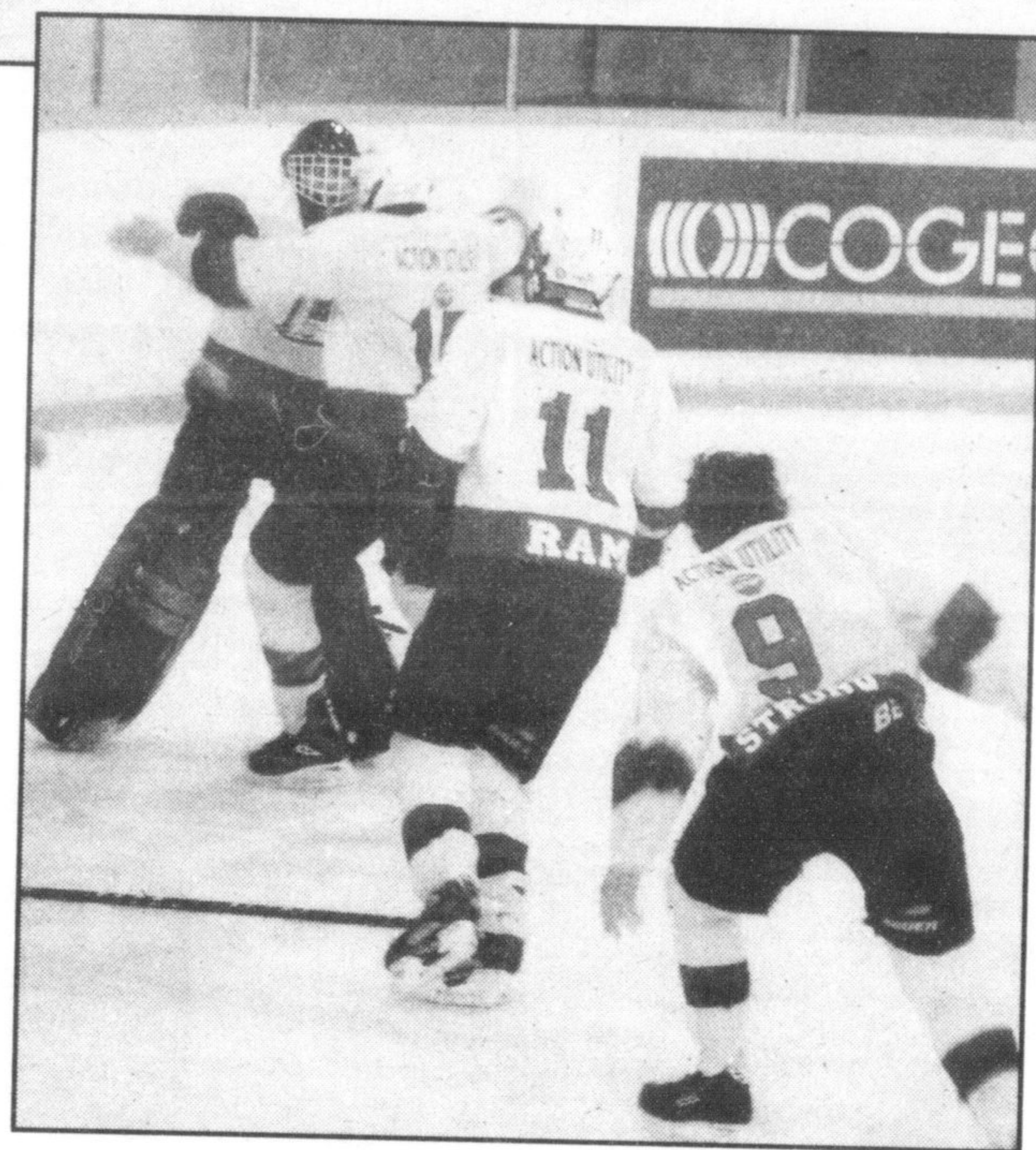
Meanwhile, Milton penalty killers factored heavily into Sunday's win as well — denying the visitors on four powerplay opportunities, including a cross-checking major assessed to Derek Blanchard.

Beyond that, the champs simply returned to the dependably



Milton's 'A' midgets celebrate their OMHA championship win after disposing of Tecumseh 2-1 in front of a sizable hometown crowd at Memorial Arena Sunday night.

Photos by **STEVE LeBLANC**



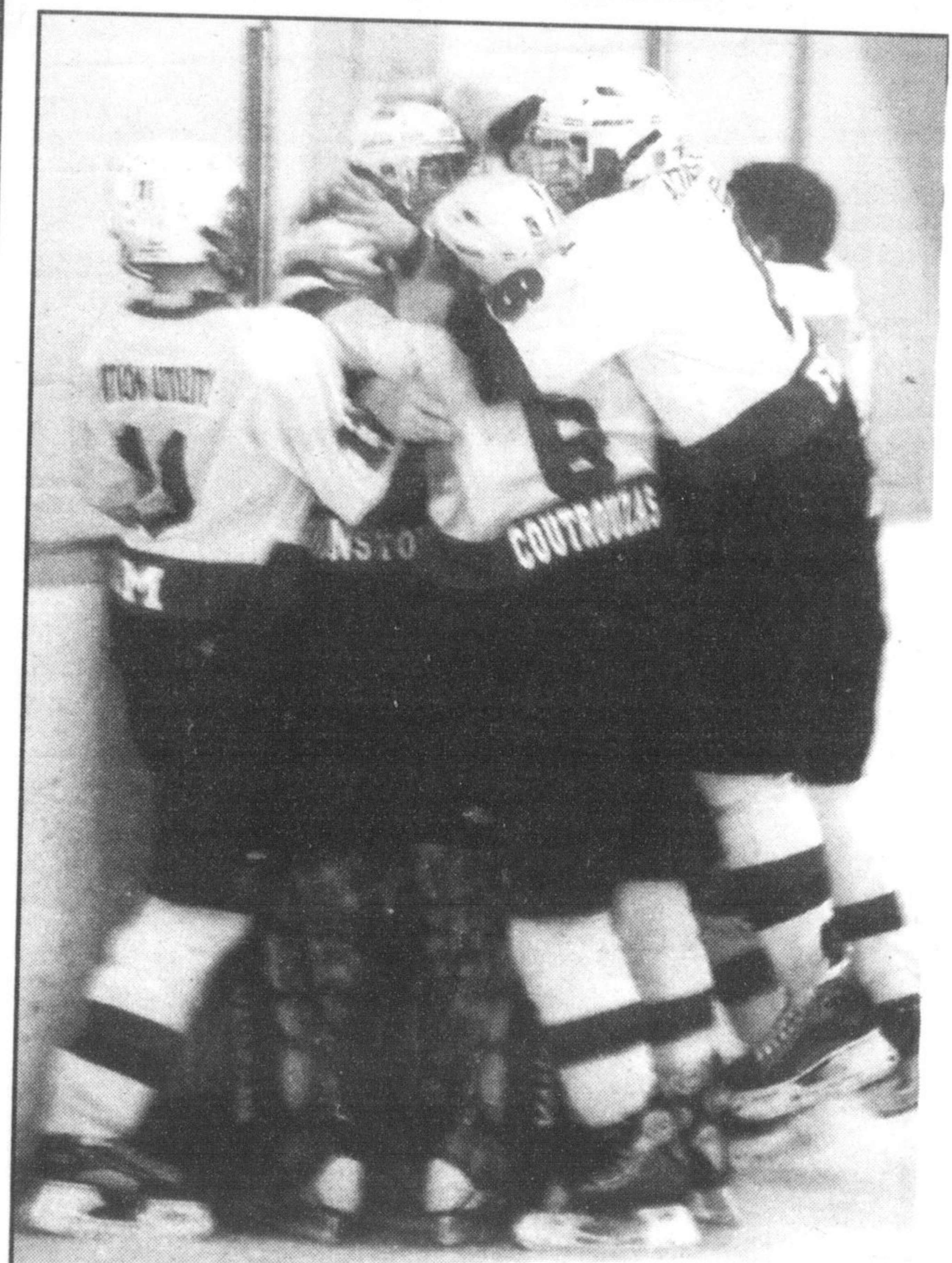
sharp play that made them an OMHA threat pretty much the entire season.

"We just stuck to the game plan — forechecked well and went to the net hard — and Tim played unbelievable for us," said Strong.

Drawing assists in the deciding victory were Blanchard, Ian Kornack and Jon Ram.

Making up the rest of the championship team are Tim Anderson, Jesse Cabral, Nic Cashmore, Adam Clerici, Nole Coutrouzas, Ken Hume, John Murphy, Greg Pepper and Brett Taylor. Rounding out the coaching staff are Dave Patterson, Dan Lynch, Scott Anders and Daryl Strong.

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