



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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IceHawks cap winning weekend with blowout

By **STEVE LeBLANC***The Champion*

The IceHawks decided not to tempt fate again.

After narrowly surviving a late collapse against Brampton Friday, Milton left nothing to chance in a pivotal home-ice encounter with Mississauga Sunday afternoon.

Eager to erase the sting of an overtime defeat at Port Credit Memorial Arena eight days earlier, the IceHawks overcame some initial glitches and didn't ease up once they established a comfortable lead in the second period.

The complete-game effort resulted in a 9-2 annihilation of the team Milton would face if the playoffs began tomorrow. It also strengthened the IceHawks' bid for an overall top-four finish, plus the first-round home-ice advantage that goes with it.

"We wanted to make sure we got the two points and they (Chargers) didn't get any this time," said head coach/general manager George Dupont, whose troops' winning weekend lifted them to 18-12 on the year. "It's a step in the right direction."

Enjoying the biggest slice of the scoring pie was Wes Clark, whose three goals and two assists pushed him into 18th spot on the club's all-time scoring list with 104 points.

Ryan McInerney, who's really picked things up as of late, also stood out with a hat-trick and an assist. Rounding out the hit parade were Jonathan Ornelas, Mike Sansom and newcomer Nick Dzeduszycki — a 20-year-old winger from Leamington Jr. B who was brought aboard to fill the same type of physical role left by recently-departed Jason Oreskovic.

Oreskovic and Ryan Angelow have been dealt to Vaughan and Oakville respectively, both for future considerations.

While delivering its most productive effort since mid-October Sunday, Milton continued to struggle with the man-advantage — which caused more than a few anxious moments until a second-period uprising put things out of reach.

At Memorial Friday night, the IceHawks looked poised to secure their first decisive victory against the lowly Capitals. But a downright horrible third period took care of that.

Ahead 4-0 going into the final frame, the locals crumbled in just about every conceivable way — barely hanging on for a 5-4 decision.

Said Dupont, "I don't think it was so much a lack of effort as too much effort. Everybody starting running around trying to do the other guy's job."

Clark, Sansom, Andrew Bonello, Matthew French and Casey Gilholm did the scoring. Brampton struck four times on 11 third-period shots, tallying twice in the final six minutes to throw a real scare into the hosts.

Despite delivering its first winning weekend since Thanksgiving, Milton didn't come away completely unscathed — as captain Lee Swallow is now back on the disabled list with an undisclosed upper body injury.

Leaving Friday's game late in the first period, the injury-prone winger is scheduled to be more closely examined this week, although there's initial concern that he may be done for the season.

The IceHawks host Bramalea Friday and then begin a tough pre-holiday stretch in Georgetown Saturday. Both games start at 7:30 p.m.

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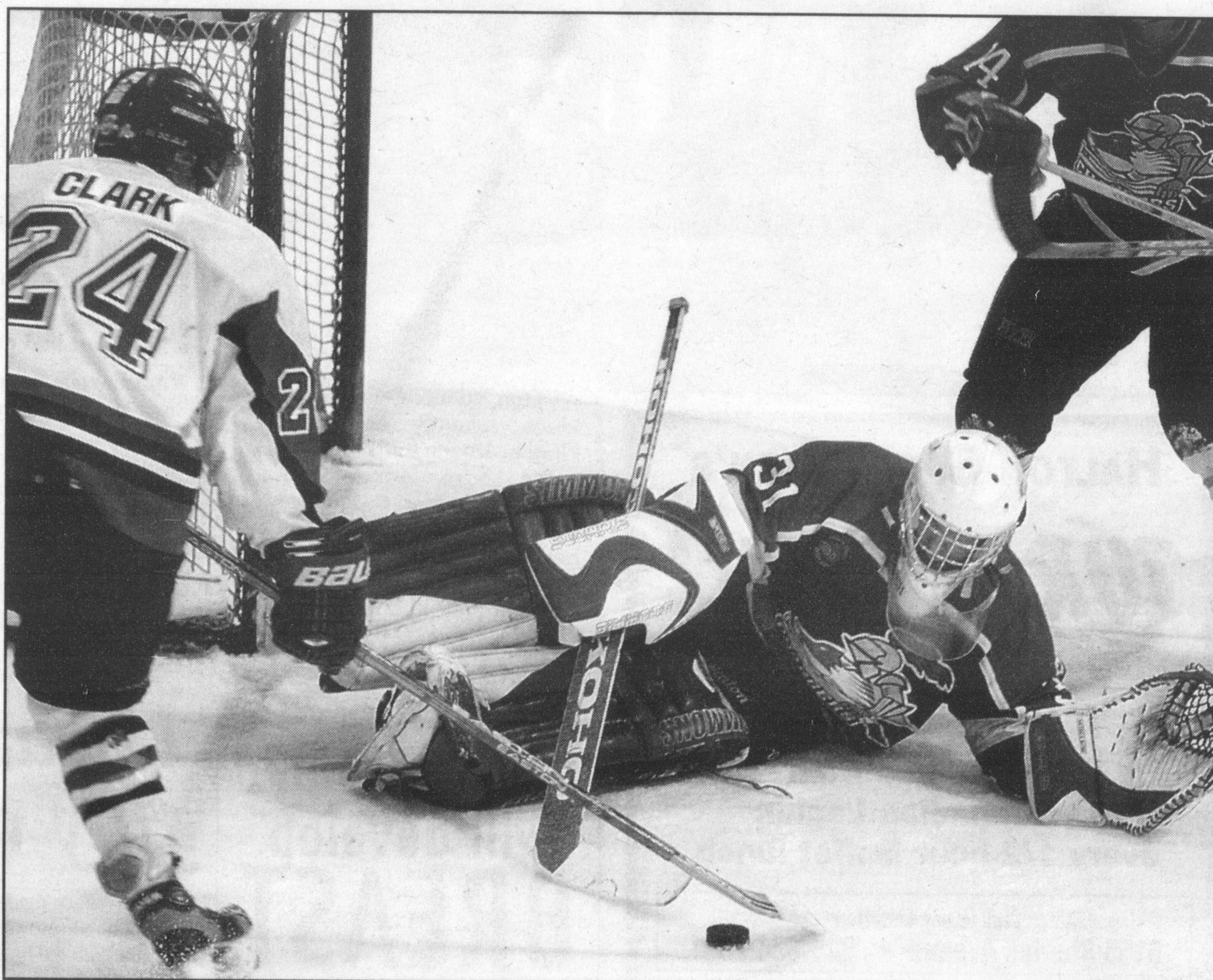
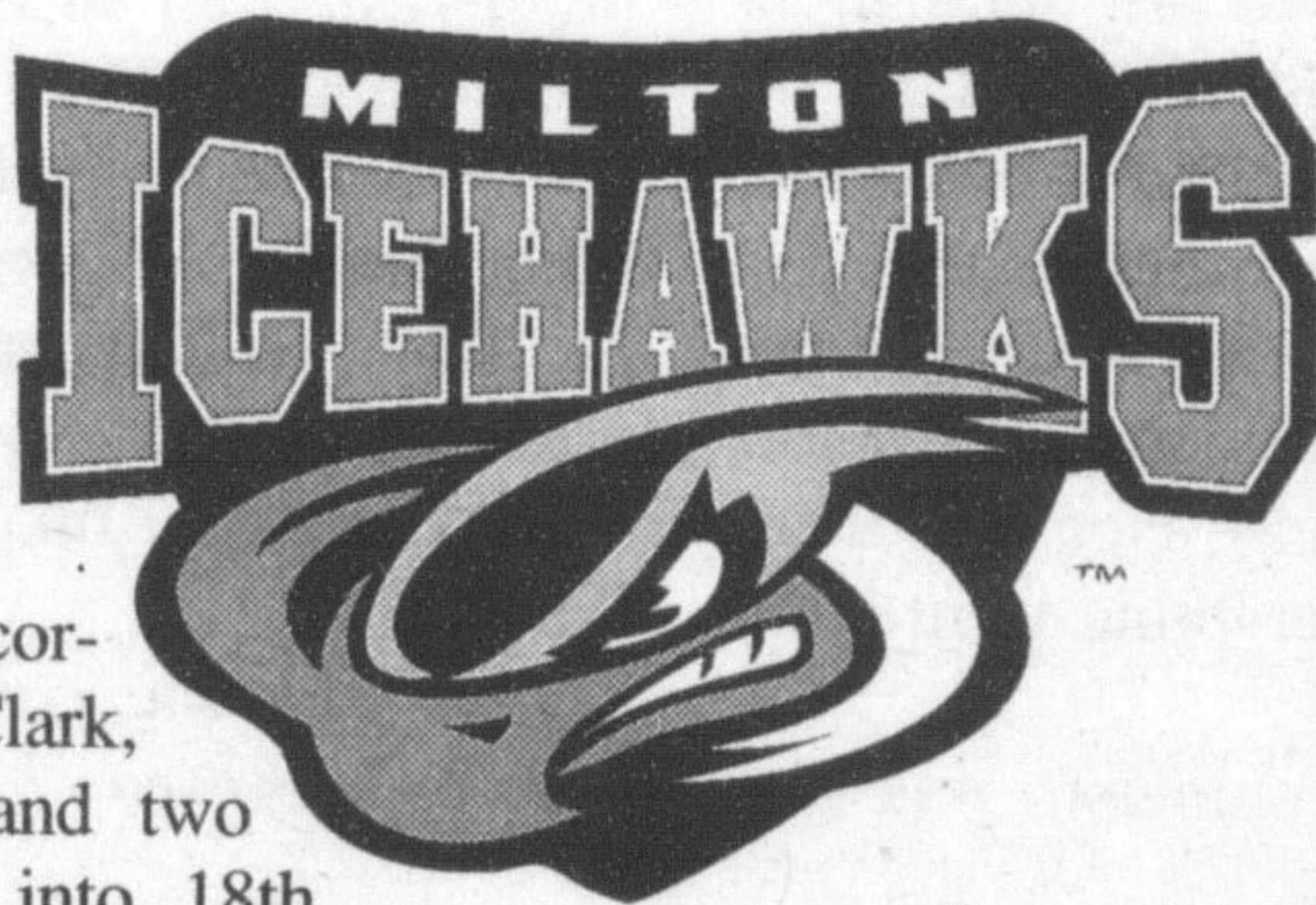


Photo by RIZIERO VERTOLLI

Afternoon standout Wes Clark — who amassed five points to punctuate a thoroughly productive weekend — goes in against Mississauga goalie Michael Corrado during Sunday's 9-2 rout of the Chargers at Memorial Arena. The lopsided win capped Milton's first winning weekend in over a month.

Haydar snaps lengthy goal drought

Darren Haydar finally got the monkey off his back in San Antonio Saturday night.

Ending his longest goal-scoring drought in several years at 11 games, the AHL sophomore capitalized on a neutral zone turnover — beating the last remaining defenceman and tucking one through the five-hole — in the second period.

His tally, number three in what's been a rather modest season so far, helped the Milwaukee Admirals upstage the Rampage 5-3.

"It was probably my best game of the year," said the 24-year-old right winger, whose mid-game marker fueled Milwaukee's third consecutive win over San Antonio this year and the second straight of the weekend. "I'm still seeing limited ice time, but I played well and was the first star."

Up until Saturday, Haydar had been struggling to put up points since delivering back-to-back one-goal

games in late October.

The Nashville Predators hopeful — who at this point last season had nearly three times as many points and was well on his way to AHL Rookie of the Year honours — sat with three goals and six assists in 18 games prior to last night's road trip in Houston.

Milwaukee returns home tomorrow evening to take on Chicago.

This season Haydar has been reunited with Raitis Ivanans, one of his teammates during the Milton Merchants' All-Ontario championship run in 1997/98. Ivanans has played at just about every semi-pro level and is currently filling a utility role with Milwaukee.

As of last night, Haydar's Admirals sat tied with San Antonio for third place in the AHL's West Division at 9-4-3-2.



Darren Haydar

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