

Sports

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IceHawk Dean Strong gets manhandled along the boards by Burlington's Steve Johnston Sunday. Milton won 4-0. For weekend results, see page 19

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

IceHawks stock up for playoffs

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

George Dupont isn't about to proclaim his IceHawks as the new team to beat in the Western Conference.

But Milton's head coach/general manager has to be feeling awfully good about the way things are falling into place.

Since the midway mark of the season, his charges have lost just three times — making them the division's hottest club through the second half.

And with this past weekend's pick-ups — including a goaltending upgrade and offensive

bolstering — the IceHawks may just have the size and depth needed to truly contend for the conference crown.

"On paper we're a better team than we were a week ago, but whenever you add players there's the question of reestablishing roles and chemistry," said a cautiously-optimistic Dupont Sunday afternoon, following Milton's 4-0 shutout of Burlington. "If we're able to do that we should do well."

Among Milton's four newcomers is 19-year-old cager Thomas Lee, an OHL veteran who posted a 2.46 goals-against average and 90.6 save percentage as the Barrie Colts back-up this season.

At 6'2" and 200 lbs., he's one of the team's

biggest netminders in recent memory — and certainly made an immediate impact over the weekend, surrendering just one goal in back-to-back wins.

Lee replaces Kain Tisi, who along with struggling captain Lee Swallow was dealt to St. Michael's of the Southern Conference Saturday. Tandem partner Jamie Flury remains with the club, but is on temporary hiatus while he attends to academic business. "I'd say we've got as good goaltending as anyone right now," said Dupont.

Equally encouraging is the size and offensive punch added with the likes of wingers Adam Pileggi and Brett Robinson, Bramalea's top two scorers who've been averaging about a point a game this season.

Pileggi in particular should provide extra grit up front, while Robinson already has six points as an IceHawk and could well be the piece of the puzzle that was missing on the powerplay.

Meanwhile, Milton also acquired the services of 19-year-old forward Brett McCully from the Orangeville Jr. Bs. At 6'3", 215 lbs., he not only helps round out the supporting cast but will no doubt offer an imposing presence against such seasoned and aggressive teams as Georgetown and Oakville.

The IceHawk newcomers — who bring the team's ranks up to 21 — will be well tested this coming weekend with a three-games-in-three-nights stretch that wraps up with a pivotal clash against Oakville Sunday.

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