

# Sports

sleblanc@haltonsearch.com

## IceHawks ousted with shoot-out loss

*Efforts to prevent the sweep fall short*

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

*The Champion*  
Game over.

Surrendering two first-period leads and unable to stay out of the penalty box after doing so, the IceHawks just couldn't avoid the sweep at Memorial Arena Friday night — getting outdistanced 7-5 by the defending conference champion Raiders.

Knocked off in four for the first time since 1996, Milton looked poised to prolong the second round series — at least for a while.

The return of veteran marksmen Jonathan Ornelas and Brett Robinson plus three goals in the first nine minutes no doubt had some fans planning a trip back to Georgetown the following evening.

The end of a rather lengthy powerplay funk just 69 seconds into the do-or-die clash — courtesy of a five-hole deposit by playoff scoring leader Wes Clark — was a positive omen as well.



But that rekindled encourage-

ment was eventually extinguished under the weight of the Raiders' immense firepower, and their knack for capitalizing on opponents' mistakes.

Arguably the most critical of those came at the midway mark of the opening frame, when returning netminder Jamie Flury fumbled a neutral zone bullet from Tyson Gimblett on the goal line.

That cut the IceHawks' lead in half and squashed their final brush with momentum.

### Penalties costly

They'd give up two more goals before intermission and then take a rash of penalties down the stretch, allowing their opportunistic guests to notch a couple of powerplay goals and pull out the victory.

John Wheaton sealed the deal with a last-minute empty netter, shortly after Clark narrowed the gap to one with his second of the night and eighth of the post season.

"Yeah, it's especially tough (to get swept)," said Ornelas, who returned from a shoulder injury and scored the series' only short-handed goal early in the third. "As dominant as Georgetown is, I really thought we could beat them. I don't know what happened."

Actually, the RPI-bound sniper — who lost his grandfather early last week — has some idea of where things slipped away.

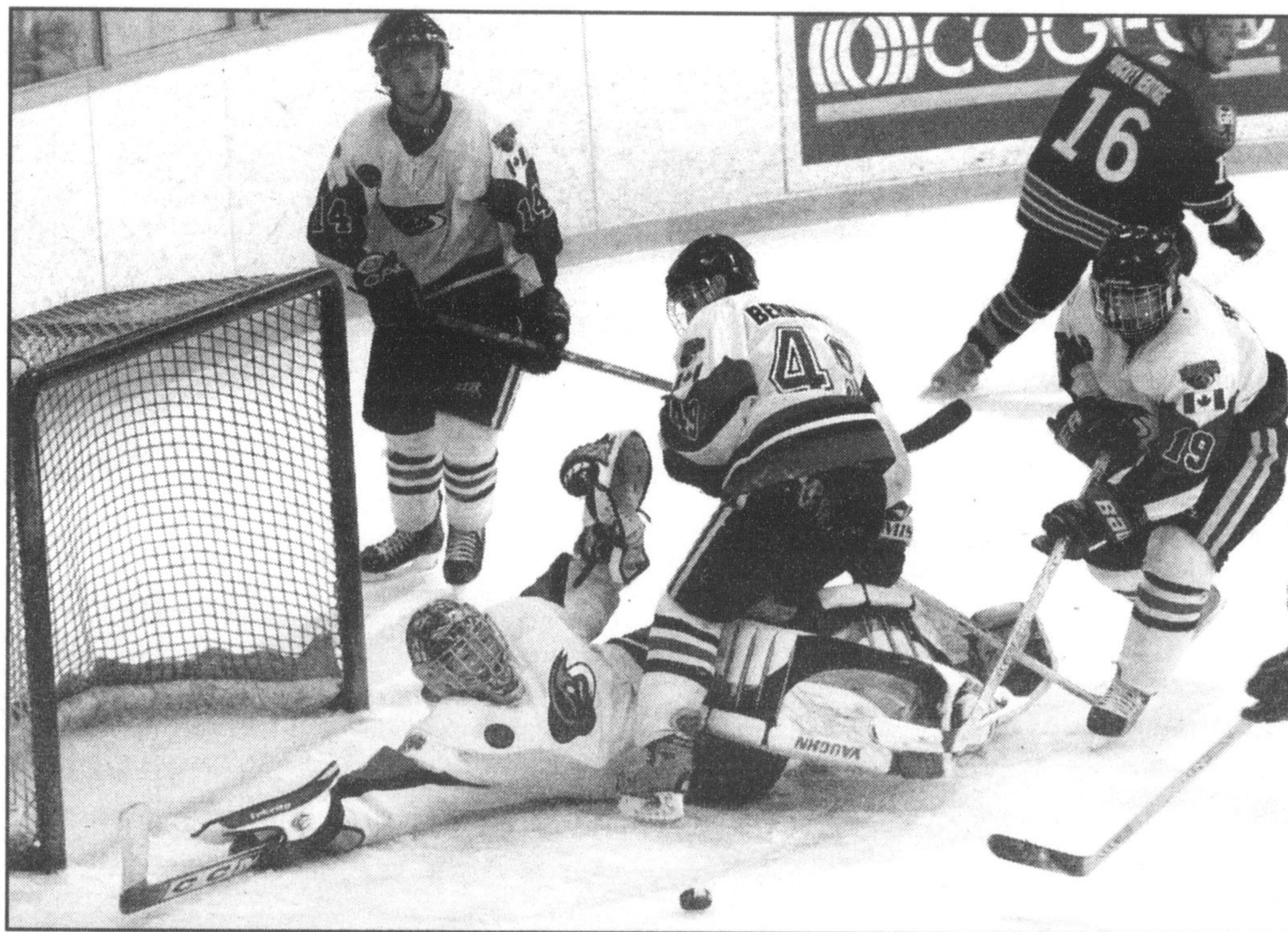
"I guess if it was meant to be, that one bounce would have gone our way," he recalled of Georgetown's fluky last-minute equalizer in game two that led to overtime heartbreak.

Rookies Mike DeMarchi and Brad Snetsinger rounded out the game-four scoring.

Andrew Bonello and captain Dean Strong had two assists apiece.

Replacing Flury after the fourth goal, Thomas Lee stopped the next 17 shots and 27 of 29 overall to keep the series clincher close.

Friday marked the first home game back from suspension for



IceHawks goalie Thomas Lee dives to stop a shot in front of a sea of bodies during third-period play at Memorial Arena Friday night. Milton lost the do-or-die game 7-5 and was eliminated by Georgetown for the second straight year.

Photo by  
HERB  
GARBUTT

George Dupont.

The returning head coach wouldn't quite finish things up behind the bench, however, as he was ejected for arguing with the officials with about 14 minutes remaining.

Just moments later defensive anchor Matthew French was given his walking papers as well, with a 10-minute misconduct.

The second-round sweep was particularly painful for Milton's veterans, who took the Raiders to double overtime of game seven

last year before finally losing the conference championship.

Friday was also the swan song for a number of IceHawks, most notably French, Ornelas and Clark — who placed himself among Milton's top-15 all-time scorers with a productive two-year stint.

In other West Conference playoff action, Oakville led three-games-to-one as of last night, after Hamilton managed to stave off elimination with a 6-2 win Saturday.

## Violations costly for 'Canes coach

*Brennan crying foul over his suspension*

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

*The Champion*

Nobody's disputing the fact that rules were broken.

As for the circumstances surrounding those violations — well, that's where opinions vary.

Caught in the middle of the controversy is Milton AA midget forward Greg Pepper, whose recent call-up to Halton's AAA team led to the suspension of Hurricanes head coach Chris Brennan.

Brennan contends that Pepper, a member of his OMHA champion additional entry midget squad last year and called up once

**"You can plead ignorance all you want, but the rules are the rules and it's pretty hard to dispute that they were broken."**

**MMHA'S WAYNE MONK**

before earlier this season, was on his official affiliate player (AP) list when used in Guelph February 8.

Unfortunately, that list never made it to the OMHA, which in recent years has been clamping down on administrative violations.

Making matters worse was the fact that

the AA midget team had its own game in Flamborough that night.

Consequently, Wayne Monk — Milton Minor Hockey Association's rep onenor — brought the violation to the OMHA's attention on behalf of his own midgets.

The result was an immediate season-ending suspension for Brennan.

"Just follow the rules and leave our players alone," said Monk.

However, Brennan points out that he had every intention of signing Pepper on for the playoffs and believed that the AP list was in the proper hands.

Furthermore, the suspended coach said it was Greg and father Tom Pepper who elected to go to Guelph that night — a decision no doubt made easier by the fact that the AA midgets were already out of the

• see **PLAYER** on page 23



Hey Milton!

**WATCH FOR**

Phone Book

2004

The Canadian Champion

"MILTON'S CHOICE SINCE 1860"

**...COMING SOON!**