

Haydar and Admirals grab early series lead

Milwaukee within reach of semifinals

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

Darren Haydar and his AHL Milwaukee Admirals are now within striking distance of the Calder Cup semifinals.

Heading into battle last night in Chicago, Milwaukee led its rival Wolves two-games-to-one in the West Division finals — having won the first two tilts at home.

The Admirals looked poised to put a stranglehold on the series in Chicago Saturday night, enjoying 18 powerplay opportunities and firing 55 shots at young netminder Kari Lehtonen.

But all that offense — including four shots by Haydar — produced one measly goal. As a result, Chicago prevailed 3-1 in what was essentially a must-win situation.

Milwaukee kicked off the division finals with a 2-1 double overtime triumph Wednesday and followed that up with a 5-3 decision in game two Friday.

Although still point-less in round two, Haydar remains atop the Admirals' playoff scoring race and tied for seventh in the

league with five goals and six assists. He has two game winners and 31 shots — including 11 so far against the Wolves.

If victorious last night, the Admirals will have a chance to lock up the series at home tomorrow evening.

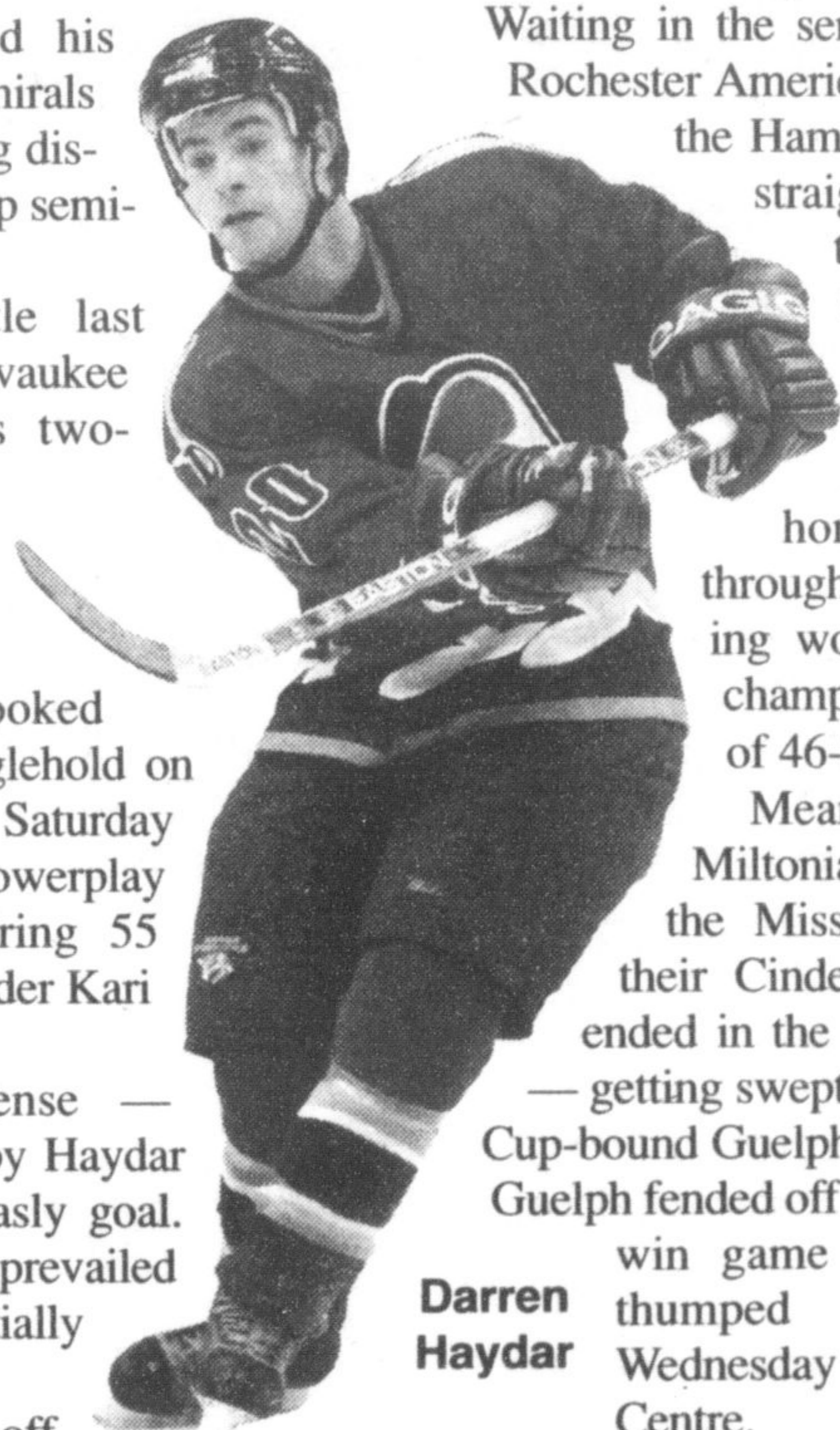
Waiting in the semifinal wings are the Rochester Americans, who disposed of the Hamilton Bulldogs in four straight — wrapping up their sweep at Copps Coliseum Sunday evening with a 3-1 win.

Milwaukee has home-ice advantage throughout the playoffs, having won the regular season championship with a record of 46-24-7-3.

Meanwhile, fellow Miltonian Daryl Knowles and the Mississauga IceDogs had their Cinderella season abruptly ended in the OHL finals last week — getting swept by the now Memorial Cup-bound Guelph Storm.

Guelph fended off a late comeback bid to win game three 6-4 and then thumped Mississauga 5-1 Wednesday night at the Hershey Centre.

Part of the IceDogs' first-ever trip to the league championship, Knowles had a goal and three assists in the playoffs and earned his second conference title in as many years — having secured Tier 2 Jr. A West Division bragging rights last season with the Georgetown Raiders.



Darren Haydar

Rogue Hall overcomes lack of experience to clinch final

Rogue Hall gave up racing experience to all five of his rivals, but he more than made up the difference with sheer will and talent during Friday's \$92,500 Mohawk Pacing Series final at Mohawk Racetrack.

Now a perfect 4-for-4 in his budding career, Rogue Hall earned the decision for driver Paul MacDonell after wrestling the lead away from pacesetter Big League Barry as the field turned for the home stretch.

The three-year-old colt then held off late charges from both Ponder and Dream Possession to deliver a two-and-a-quarter length victory in 1:53.

Trained by Guelph's Rene Laarman for owners Robert Grand of Campbellville and Rob Schlegel's Glenview Livestock of Wallenstein, Rogue Hall was sent off as a heavy 2-5 favourite following a highly-impressive second leg win April 30.

"He has a lot of heart and determination," stressed Laarman. "He always seems to kick in down the stretch with another gear. He showed a lot of potential last year (as a two-year-old), but he



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wasn't just a 100 per cent."

MacDonell — who also captured last year's edition of the Mohawk Series with Jr. Mint — was noticeably impressed with Rogue Hall's effort.

He said, "When you consider that was only his fourth lifetime start and he was able to come up against these kind of colts and pace right on past them."

Rogue Hall, who banked \$46,250 to push his season earnings to \$74,750, is scheduled to get this week off before traveling to Windsor for the Provincial Cup later this month.

His next appearance at Mohawk is expected to be in the Burlington Stakes June 5.

Weekend a washout for Sr. Sox

The Senior Red Sox had eight rain-outs last May, and are well on their way to surpassing that number this year.

Milton didn't even get to start the season without falling victim to Mother Nature, as Saturday's home-opening double-header against Brampton and Oakville was nixed due to a heavy morning downpour.

Consequently, the Red Sox' Sunday morning contest versus Erindale was also postponed, since Saturday's canceled games in Oakville had to be made up.

"It's been pretty brutal," said manager George Moore, referring to spring rain-outs over the past few years.

The Red Sox were hoping to get in a game in Oakville last night, although scheduled showers were likely to put the kibosh on that as well.

If so, they'll open the season tomorrow evening in Burlington. Milton's home opener is now slated for Saturday, with a double-header at Brian Best Park against Dundas starting at noon.

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