

Sports

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Top-ranked Blades stick it to IceHawks

Last-minute goal sinks Milton in spirited clash

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

It was an awfully painful afternoon for the IceHawks.

And losing on a last-minute blueline floater was just the half of it.

On the receiving end of plenty of extra-curricular stick work by nationally top-ranked Oakville — in addition to a fair share of legal punishment — Milton's juniors were like the walking wounded by the time an empty netter sealed the 6-4 decision.

"That was a travesty," fumed head coach George Dupont, referring to several stick infractions that went unnoticed by referee Mike Pearce — including one to Andrew Dias, where the recently-acquired winger was slapped with a 10-minute misconduct for losing his composure.



On the plus side, the IceHawks delivered by far their most physically-impressive effort to date this season — sacrificing their bodies from start to finish and holding their own in front of both nets against arguably the most intimidating team in the league.

And holding Oakville to under two-dozen shots was certainly another positive.

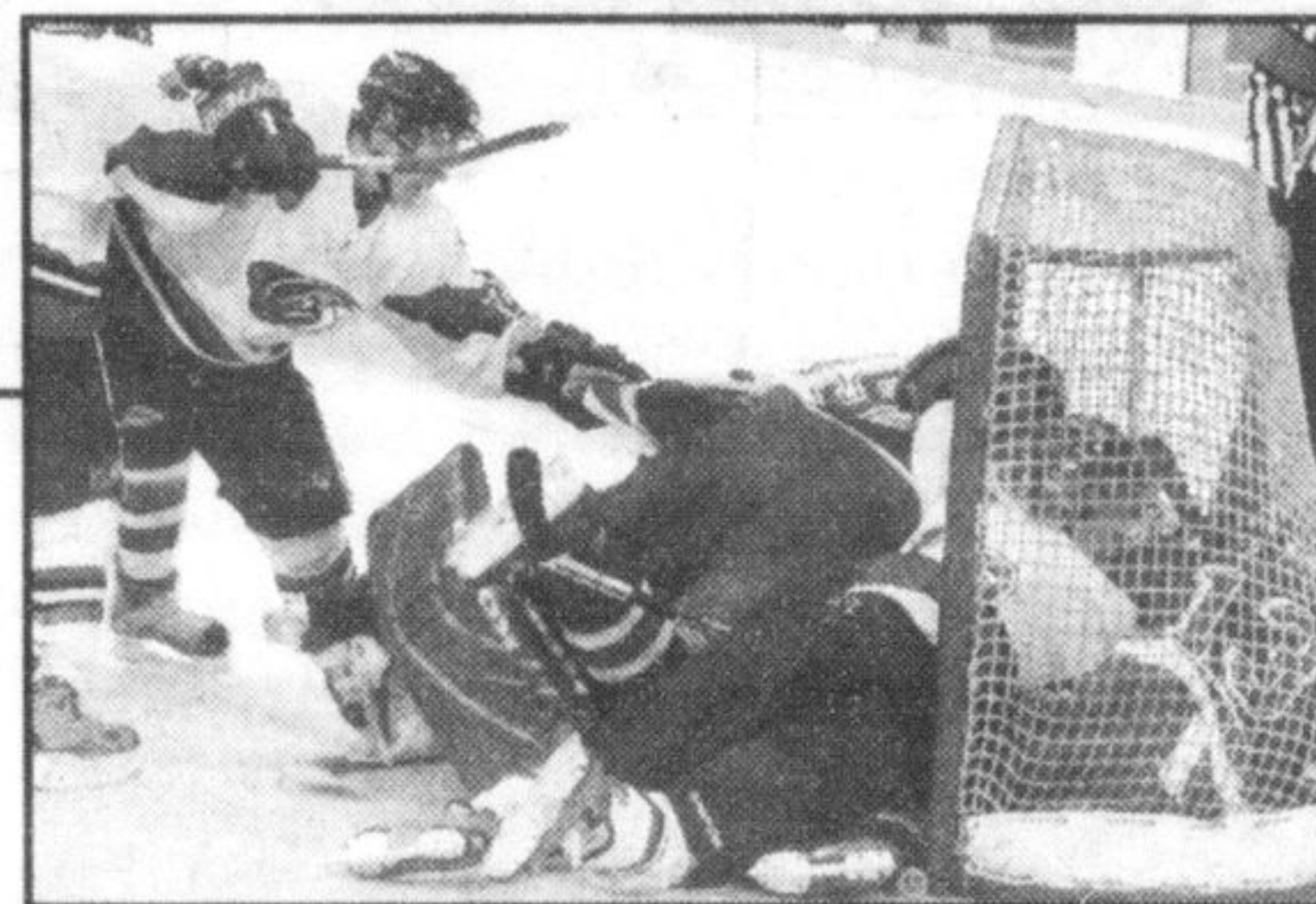
Added Dupont, "I thought we outplayed them through the last two periods. It was a gutsy performance. Unfortunately they (Oakville) cheap-shoted us all game and we weren't getting the benefit of the calls."

Oakville's Michael Swinton buried a screen shot from the point with 39 seconds remaining, while fellow veteran Steven Pinizzotto scored his second of the game into an empty net at 19:57. For the IceHawks, Jason Dopaco stood out with a three-point afternoon — sticking it to his former team by scoring early in the third and then assisting on goal-mouth scramble equalizer by Matt Price.

He also set up a first-period blueline rocket deposit by Jeff Caister, while captain Adam Pileggi scored on a big transition play midway through the second.

The emotionally-charged clash included a number of minor skirmishes and half-a-dozen player ejections.

The Blades have handed Milton its only two losses this season at Memorial Arena — something that should provide plenty of motivation when the two sides square off at the Thompson Road



A slew of players crash into IceHawk goalie Doug Groenestage during a highly-confrontational encounter with the powerhouse Oakville Blades Sunday afternoon at Memorial Arena.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

barn November 28.

At home Friday, Milton exacted revenge for a recent loss in Streetsville with a 5-1 decision over the Derbys.

A two-goal night from Mike DeMarchi and some sound cage work by Doug Groenestage were about the only bright spots of a game that lacked both intensity and physicality.

Pileggi, Shandor Alphonso and Kevin Morrison rounded out the scoring. Dopaco and Stefan Legein chipped in two assists each.

The IceHawks travel to Bramalea tonight to take on the winless Blues. Game time is 7:45 p.m.

IceHawk notes: Milton completed a three-way deal with Lindsey and Stouffville late last week to acquire 6'1", 190 lbs. forward Kory Helowka, who split his time between Oakville and Stouffville last season after toiling with the OHL Erie Otters in 2002/03 ... Goalie Thomas Lee has been dealt to the Eastern Conference Trenton Sting.

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