

Groenestege outduels Burlington netminder

IceHawks' unbeaten run now at 10 games

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The Burlington Cougars acquired highly-touted goaltender Chris Rowan last month in an effort to narrow the gap on the Western Conference's upper-echelon teams.

But Doug Groenestege and the IceHawks threw a temporary monkey wrench into those plans at Burlington's Central Arena Sunday night.

Milton had needed overtime to dispose of the Cougars in two previous encounters, but with Rowan between the pipes cruised to a 5-1 decision — its biggest margin of victory this season against a plus-500 club.

The decisive win bolstered the IceHawks' hold on the conference's number three spot and pushed their unbeaten streak to 10 games.

On a night where shots on net and quality scoring chances were pretty much even, Groenestege clearly upstaged his more talked about counterpart — although a couple of huge giveaways by Rowan's often-vulnerable blueline unit factored into that battle-within-the-battle.

Milton had enough scoring for the win before first intermission, as team-leading sniper Mike DeMarchi switched gears and set up Shandor Alphonso with a drop pass

and cross-ice feed on odd man rushes. From there, Mike Gershon, Kevin Morrison and 14-year-old star-in-the-making John Tavares put things out of reach with second-period markers.

The IceHawks gave up their lone goal against early in the third and seemed a little subdued down the stretch, although that could be partially blamed on a near half-hour delay — during which falling debris had to be cleaned off the ice and the Cougars called for a pad measurement on Groenestege that eventually cost them a delay of game penalty.

Keaton Turkiewicz scored the first even strength goal against Milton in four games with a five-hole deposit, and three seconds later mixed it up with rookie Matt Davis.

The convincing win came largely with just five defencemen, as Casey Gilholm missed the last two periods after breaking the heel of his skate.

At Memorial Arena Friday, Milton built up a five-goal cushion and coasted to a 6-1 win over lowly Mississauga.

Morrison tallied twice, while newly-acquired winger Jesse Jenish picked up his first two assists as an IceHawk. Also scoring were Alphonso, Ryan Bernardi, Jason Dopaco and captain Adam Pileggi.

The IceHawks begin a much tougher stretch of their schedule at home against vastly-improved Brampton Friday. Saturday evening they travel to Oakville. Both games start at 7:30 p.m.



Senior Spartans hang tough to advance to quarterfinals

Aggressive early press key to decisive playoff victory

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
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Kevin Houldcroft felt fairly confident heading into first-round playoff action against Oakville's T.A. Blakelock Tigers Thursday afternoon, but did express some concern beforehand.

"Yeah, we've got to pick up our game," E.C. Drury's senior basketball coach admitted following Wednesday's 59-32 decision over cross-town rival Milton District, which capped a perfect 10-0 regular season in the relatively easy North Division. "I told the girls that if we under-achieve because we're scared, that sucks."

Fortunately, his Spartans managed to shake off at least some of the timidness and passivity that had stifled early-game production this year.

While not capitalizing on its guests' foul trouble early on, Drury applied a stronger half-court press from the onset and pulled away down the stretch to knock off the Central Division Tigers 44-29.

Said Houldcroft, "I thought we played pretty well. Our press wore them down."

The Spartans eventually started hitting their free throws and limited top-shooting Tigers Nikki Silva and Olivia Nadon to a combined five baskets in the second half.

Jenny Hsu drained the only three-pointer of the afternoon to seal the deal with a little under two minutes remaining.

As usual, Katherine Greaves led the scoring with 15 points and forced several turnovers to keep the visitors off balance and frustrated. Laura Wellstead did likewise and collected 11 points, while offering solid supporting contributions to the win were Sarah Fredricks, Brooke Harper and Alison Radcliffe.

The Spartans enjoyed 10-9, 25-13 and 35-20 quarter leads en route to victory.

Drury's seniors took their 11-0 league record into yesterday afternoon's quarterfinal match with Burlington's Robert Bateman Wild, who went 6-2 in the significantly tougher Central Division.

If victorious, they'll face the winner of the M.M. Robinson-Burlington Central clash in semifinal play tomorrow afternoon in Burlington. But a loss



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

E.C. Drury's Katherine Greaves manages to pass the ball before getting tangled up and falling while being guarded by T.A. Blakelock's Rachel Pavis during Thursday's 44-29 first-round playoff win.

yesterday would not have brought the Spartans' season to a close.

"We've still got the playdowns for 'AA' OFSAA," explained Houldcroft. "We could conceivably be playing until December."

Drury's perfect regular season is the second in just three years for one of the school's girls basketball teams. In 2002, Greaves, Wellstead, Fredricks and Kim Robb were part of the junior team that also went 10-0.

Everson powers novice 'Canes to Clarington tournament win

Fueled by an eight-point weekend from Miltonian Brett Everson, Halton's AAA novices took top honours at this past weekend's Clarington Fall Classic Tournament.

A dependable sniper with the local tyke rep squad that secured the Tri County crown last season, Everson had three goals and five assists overall — including a single helper in the Hurricanes' 3-2 title win over the powerhouse Whitby Warriors.

Halton also turned back challenges from the Barrie Icemen and Central Ontario Wolves to reach the finals.

Fellow Miltonian Austin Dezeeuw, also part of the 2003/04 Tri County-winning tykes, had a goal and an assist to aid the tournament triumph.

The Hurricanes will play host to the Montreal Ice Storm in a special exhibition tilt at John Tonelli Sports Centre December 4 at 4 p.m.

Bantams sweep St. Kitts

Milton's AA bantams capped a home-and-home sweep of St. Catharines Thursday night with a 5-2 road win.

The Hunt Chrysler Jeep Winterhawks built up a 4-0 lead and salted things away with a third-period deposit by Ryan Cochrane. Rounding out the scoring were Brayden Abraham, Matt Fratarcangeli, Eric Gottwald and Brian Hunter.

Rep Hockey

Taylor Prestidge turned back 18 shots for the win.

On Saturday the bantams surrendered a late goal and were edged 3-2 by powerhouse Oakville — falling to 3-8-3 in league play.

Prestidge was rock-solid in net, while Abraham and Wade McGinnis did the scoring — each being set up by Hunter. Tyler Lafontaine and Brandon Rae-Hunt counted single helpers.

AE2 atoms battle to draw

Milton's AE2 atoms rallied from a two-goal deficit to tie Flamborough 3-3 Thursday evening at Milton Sports Centre.

Andrew Smith potted an unassisted goal and helped set up an initial tally by Owen Cutrara, while Dylan Lee also lit the lamp.

Ryan Melanson, Ryan Tanasan and Zach Wadham had the other helpers in the hard-fought stalemate, which pushed the Winterhawks record to 7-5-1 — good enough for second place in Tri County.

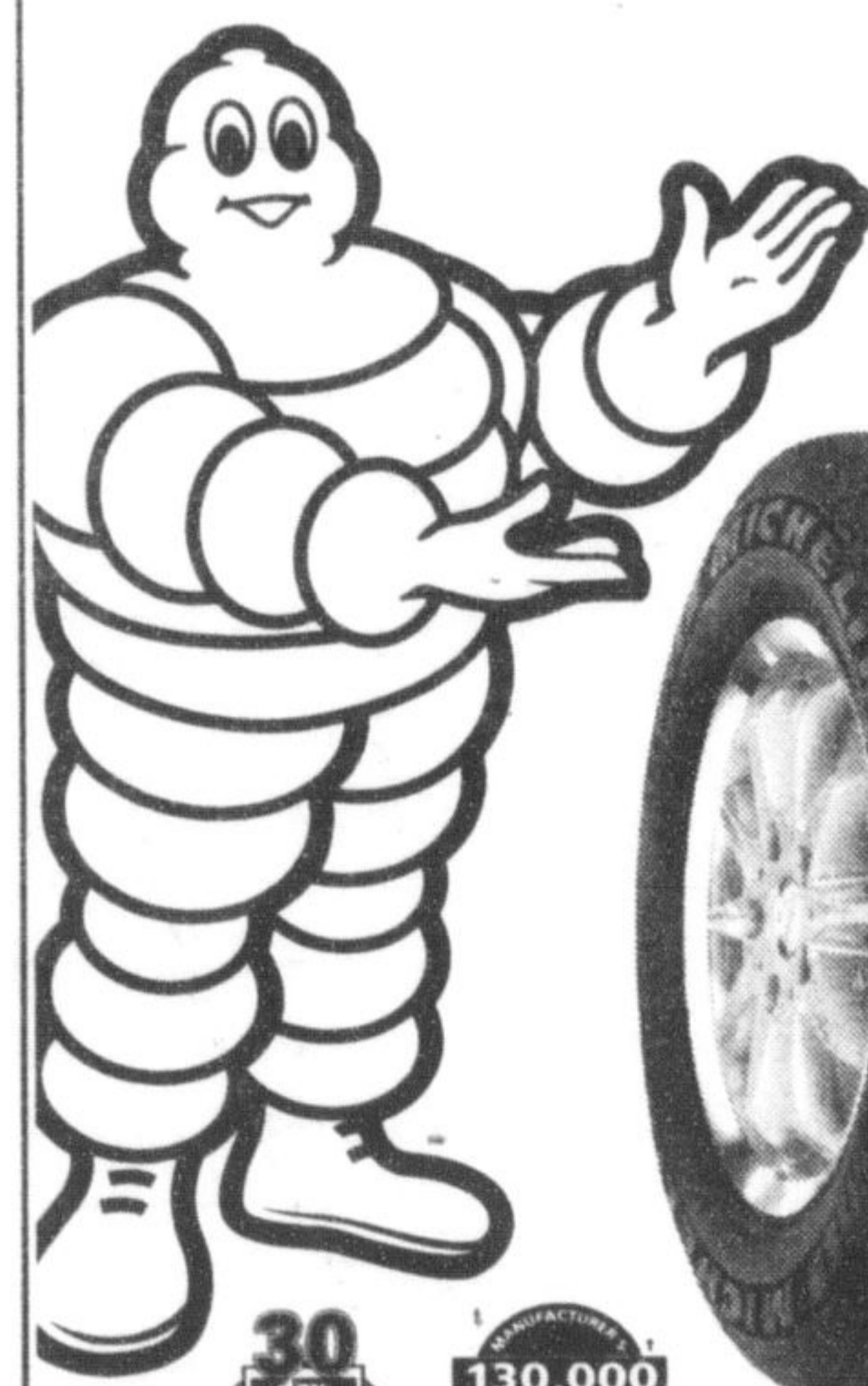
Providing topnotch goaltending, particularly down the stretch, was Tristan Kivac.

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