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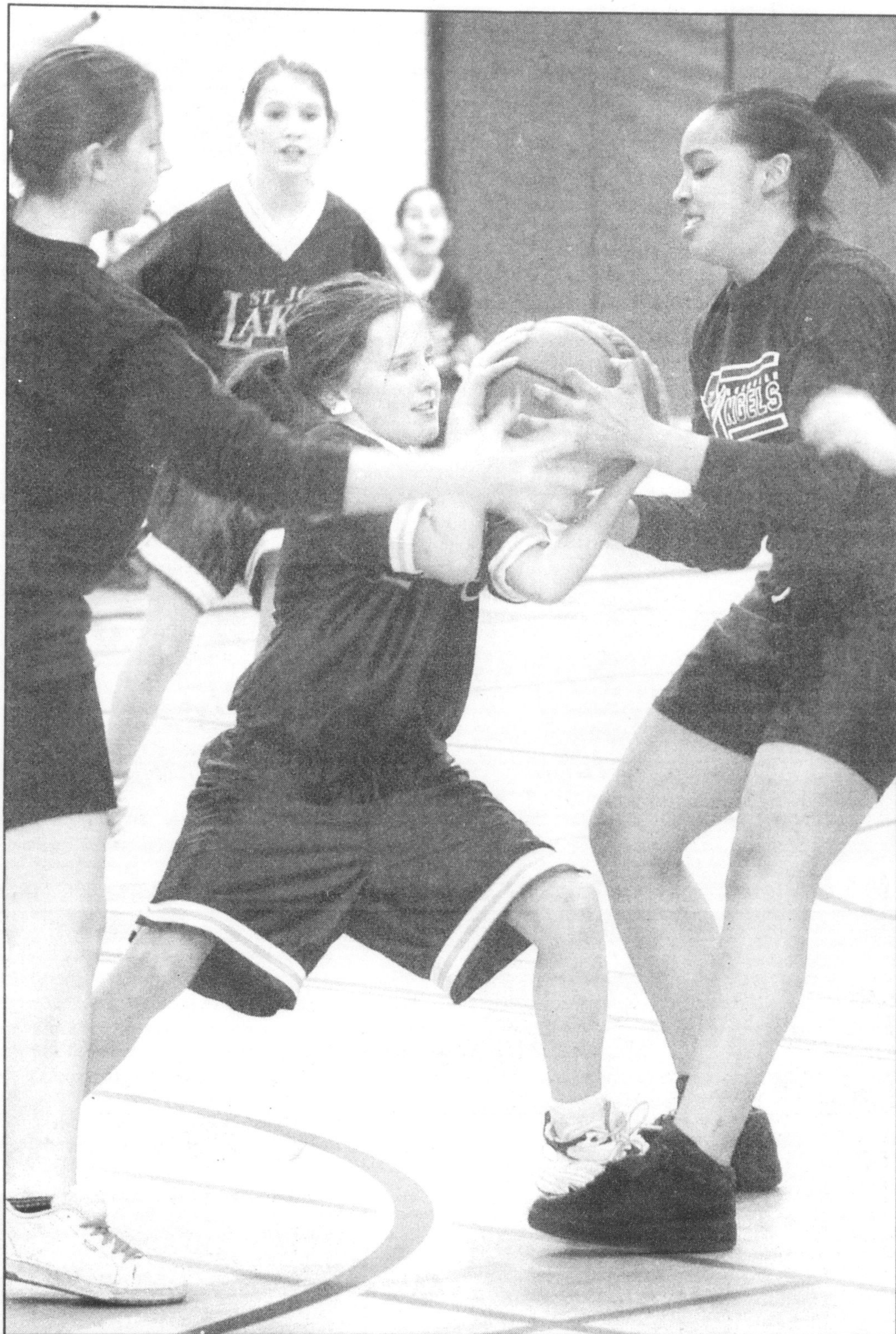


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

No, it's mine!

St. Joseph's Shannon McCullagh (centre) tries to maintain possession as Guardian Angels defenders Jocyn Dietrich (left) and Natasha Samuda attempt to steal the ball during girls basketball play Monday afternoon. Guardian Angels won 37-17 to improve to 2-1 on the year.

Minor midgets get blanked in opener

But series deficit shouldn't faze 'Hawks too much

By MURRAY TOWNSEND
Special to The Champion

They've been knocked down, but knocking them out could be considerably more difficult.

Milton's AA minor midgets dropped a humbling 7-0 decision to the Burlington Eagles in game one of their best-of-five second round OMHA series, but have already proven they can battle back from adversity.

The Winterhawks finished second last during the regular season with a record of 6-18-4. The Orangeville Flyers — their first round opponent — had a mark of 16-10-2. And after taking a 2-0 lead in the series, they probably figured that Milton was down for the count.

However, the Winterhawks got up off the mat and won the next three games for a sensational series turnaround.

Coach John Nadalin figures that had something to do with the slow start against Burlington. "I'm hoping this is just an emotional letdown after winning such a big series against Orangeville."

Even so, the Winterhawks started off by carrying the play, and had several good chances in the early going. Both Mike Hannah and Jeff Lynch were denied goals with outstanding saves before Burlington scored on a rebound on a seemingly harmless shot from the point, and then popped in another rebound a couple minutes later.

Lynch had a couple good scoring chances early in the second period, including a breakaway after he was sent in alone by Daniel Kearns, but nothing was getting by the Eagles cager in this game — as several other Winterhawks would learn.

Milton counterpart Nic Nevins earned his pay late in the second period with a series of point blank stops, as well as in the third period when the Eagles were smelling blood. Two of Burlington's goals were scored in the final minute.

Other positives for Milton included some nice work on the powerplay, good penalty killing from Luc Hartwick and some nice defensive plays and hits by defenseman Jon Monk. Mike Vipond and Daryl Brinke added hustle and tenacity up front.

The main positive is that a 7-0 loss counts the same as 1-0 and it's only the first game of the series. "We have to be more physical..." noted Nadalin, "and take away the middle of the ice. Our confidence is still high, it was just one of those games. We have a lot of gutsy guys in that dressing room who don't give up until the end."

The minor midgets played last night in Milton, with results not available at press time. The Winterhawks also host game three Tuesday at Milton Sports Centre. Game time is 7:45 p.m.

In other AA OMHA playoff action, the major bantams — who disposed of first-round rival Ancaster with a game-five overtime win — were humbled 11-0 by Burlington in game one of the second round Sunday. They host game two tonight at Milton Sports Centre. Game time is 8 p.m.



**TONIGHT'S
TICKET**

**IceHawks (29-17-1-1)
vs. Georgetown (40-6-0-1)**

Game time: 7:30 p.m. at Memorial

Last meeting: Georgetown won 5-2

Who to watch: Despite being a bit thin and over-worked at times, Milton's blueline unit has looked impressive in recent weeks and should be severely tested by the physical and talent-deep Raider forward ranks.

The skinny: Expect a highly competitive tilt between north Halton rivals who are both still battling to secure key playoff spots.

Champion's pick: Georgetown by one

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