

Do-or-die time for 'Hawks after straight losses

Milton hoping to stave off elimination tonight at Memorial

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The IceHawks couldn't wait to leave Gordon Alcott Arena Saturday night, but would like nothing more than to make a return trip there tomorrow evening.

Down three-games-to-two after a losing weekend that was capped with a heartbreaking 4-3 defeat in double overtime, Milton now needs a do-or-die victory tonight at home to get back to Georgetown's barn for a winner-takes-all seventh clash.

But staving off elimination even once — much less twice — will require a much tighter defensive effort than what was offered during games four and five.

Beginning to show signs of fatigue and significant cracks in their armour, the IceHawks' five blue-liners turned the puck over far too often in their own end this past weekend.

One of those give-aways allowed Raider Matt Sweazey to bury a straight-away snapshot about eight minutes into the second sudden death frame at a jam-packed Alcott Saturday.

Tom Fenton stopped seven other overtime chances — including a rising blast by Kevin Harvey that was gloved in absolutely dynamite fashion — and made exactly 50 saves overall to effectively distance himself from a rather mediocre performance the night before.

Milton showed a fair amount of jump at the other end of the ice and forced overtime with an equalizer by young call-up John Tavares. Setting him up were Chris Bain and Jason Dopaco, who along with captain Shandor Alphonso finished the weekend with three points apiece.

Sweazey and John Wheaton led for Georgetown, combining for 11 points in the back-to-back wins — including eight in game five.

Milton IceHawks vs. Georgetown Raiders (Georgetown leads series 3-2)

Game 1	Georgetown 5, Milton 4
Game 2	Milton 4, Georgetown 2
Game 3	Milton 6, Georgetown 2
Game 4	Georgetown 7, Milton 3
Game 5	Georgetown 4, Milton 3 (DOT)
Game 6	Tonight at Memorial (7:30)
•Game 7	Tomorrow at Georgetown (8:00) • if necessary



Photo by HERB GARBUIT

Georgetown goalie John Barrow follows an airborne puck in traffic during Saturday's game five tilt at Alcott Arena.

A 1-for-10 powerplay campaign and a few botched breakouts proved disastrous at Memorial Arena Friday.

The IceHawks gave up the first goal of the night while enjoying a two-man advantage and never really shifted out of neutral — getting brushed aside 7-3. Back from an undisclosed illness for the first time since the middle of round one, Georgetown starter John Barrow was relatively steady between the pipes, but wasn't severely tested in his much-anticipated comeback.

Fenton's penchant for going down a little early allowed the

Raiders to finally open the floodgates — with the bulk of their scoring done on upstairs shots — while Alphonso, Dopaco and Brett Robinson buried the biscuit for Milton.

In addition to Tavares, who has one more game of eligibility, Marlie teammates Sam Gagner and Akim Alou were also in the lineup Saturday.

The Milton-Georgetown winner will move on to face the Oakville Blades, who eliminated Hamilton with a 4-0 whitewash Friday evening to reach the conference finals.

Vince, Catch 22 shine in Florida

Finish second in \$25,000 Ariat Challenge Cup Thursday



Ainsley Vince

Milton's Ainsley Vince shone under a heavy downpour Thursday night in the \$25,000 Ariat Challenge Cup at the Winter Equestrian Festival in Wellington, Florida.

The 28-year-old show jumping ace and longtime partner Catch 22 finished second among a field of 60 competitors, advancing to a 10-entry jump-off and completing it just a little behind final challenger Kent Farrington with another flawless round.

"It was raining so hard I could barely see," recalled the two-time Canadian Show Jumping champion. "I

really didn't plan to go so fast, I thought I would end up fourth or fifth, but Catch 22 felt super. He has days when he's on and that is all there is to it, and it was one of those days."

Vince also showed strongly with Uno Thursday. The pair delivered an eighth-place finish with four faults in the jump-off in the \$7,500 1.45m competition that included 71 entries.

Vince and kid sisters Courtney, 25, and Sydney, 22, are based in Florida for the winter and continue competing at the Wellington festival this week.

Drury finishes strong for silver

• from REJUVENATED on page 17

When asked if Moffat had been expected to medal in what's considered a particularly tough decision, assistant coach Simon Vanellis explained, "We knew he could, but he's definitely turned it up in the past month, put it that way."

Peter Leaman (72 kg.) and Kyle Shermet (77 kg.) would cement the Spartans' silver-medal finish with wins in fifth-place competition in the early evening Friday, with OFSAA rookie Shermet's 6-2 decision over Scott Moore of St. Matthews locking up second place.

Leaman looked poised to reach the gold-medal round until a controversial match against eventual champ Ryan McCracken of Kenner ended in an overtime loss in the semifinals.

Also placing in the top 12 with 3-2 records were Nick Ronan and Carl Chan, whose title hopes were dashed with the buzzer sounding just as he was about to tie the score in a 2-1 heartbreaker.

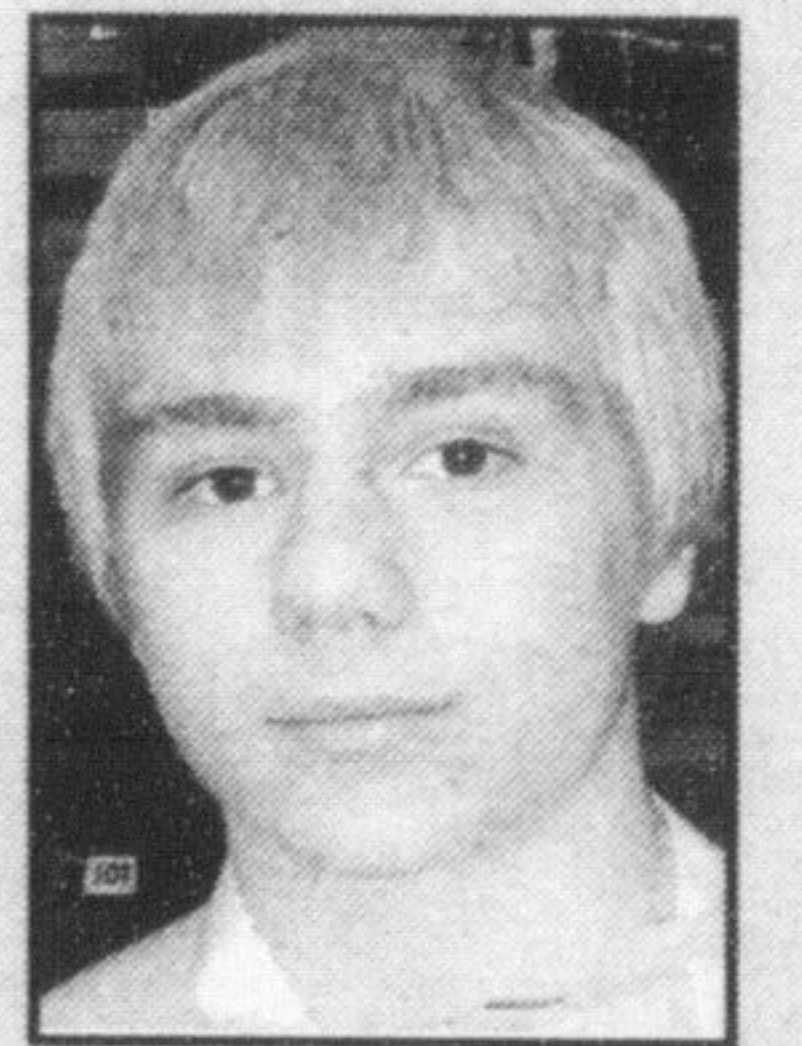
Chris Flanigan, Ranbir Hans and Steven Adams rounded out the record-setting squad.

The Spartans now head overseas, first for a meet in Germany later this week and then for two tournaments in Namibia, Africa over the March break.

Leaman, Shermet, Ronan and Iwasa-Madge will then represent Milton at the nationals in St. John's, Newfoundland next month.

The Junior Dynamo wrestling program gets underway Thursday at 4 p.m. at the E.C. Drury High School wrestling room. The second session runs March 15 from noon to 1:30 p.m. A twice a week schedule will begin after that until the end of April. The program includes instruction and competition in olympic freestyle wrestling.

For further information, call Simon Vanellis at E.C. Drury at (905) 878-0575.



Alan Moffat

Juvs advance to Niagara District finals

Lincoln kept battling back, but the juvenile Winterhawks just kept scoring.

In the end it was Milton's scoring that won out, with a 6-4 decision in Beamsville Wednesday night that secured a three-

games-to-one series victory in Niagara District semifinal play.

The District Winterhawks stayed composed while their hosts erased four separate deficits, finally pulling ahead for good with

about eight minutes remaining on a scramble deposit by Derek Blanchard.

Assisting on the play were Luke Boltuc and Rob Hunt.

Chris Coates sealed the deal with an empty netter, while Kyle Burrell led overall with a pair of goals and an assist. Also denting the twine were Dan Lynch and Harley Mouscos, with Jeff Kitchen and Chris Whiting contributing two helpers each.

Backstopping Milton to victory was Corey Curtis.

"It was a good back-and-forth game. They stuck with us, but we kept in their face," said assistant coach Dave Burrell. "And the refereeing was amazing. They brought in junior officials and they really helped keep both teams in line."

Looking for their third straight league championship, the local juveniles will take on either Fort Erie or Niagara-on-the-Lake in the finals, which could start as early as this weekend.

Strong showing by Springers

The Milton Springers Gymnastics Club delivered a strong collective effort at the recent second provincial qualifier — with two members booking passage to the Ontario championships.

Particularly impressive in Oshawa were the younger competitors, including nine-year-old Argo 1 gymnast Heather Sadler, who qualified for the provincials with an overall second-place finish — thanks largely to golden performances on both bars and vault.

She also took fourth on floor and sixth on beam.

Age-class teammate Lindsay Bright tied

for top spot on bars and shared third-place honours on vault with fellow Springer Leighton Bannock, who highlighted her weekend with a silver on bars.

Among the 11-year-old Tyro 2 competitors, Brittany Schrader secured a place at provincials with a third on vault. Maddy Bannock missed her first qualifying meet due to injury and two uncharacteristic falls on bars left her just short of a top-three placing.

The Springers now prepare for their third qualifying meet later this month in Mississauga, with the provincial championships slated for late April in Kingst.