

# Sports

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## Forfeit win clinches crown for juveniles

*Fort Erie concedes game three to give Winterhawks third straight Niagara title*

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

Milton's AA juveniles would have preferred to clinch their third straight Niagara District title on the ice.

But given how their best-of-five championship series with confrontational-minded Fort Erie was shaping up, a game three forfeit victory and subsequent series sweep was probably just as well.

Still, it did leave a bad taste in the Winterhawks' mouths.

"It's pretty disappointing, certainly not the ideal way to win a championship," said head coach Jim Kosmalski, who was notified last Tuesday that Fort Erie would not be coming back to Milton Thursday for what in all likelihood would have been the final game of the series. "It's tough to swallow, especially for the graduating players. They showed up at practice Wednesday evening only to learn that their season was over."

The Winterhawks had taken the first two games in rather convincing fashion — 9-2

and 6-1 respectively — and were starting to get run by the clearly frustrated Meteors.

In particular, Barry Kosmalski was the target of at least three different opponents after tallying twice in the third period of game two March 21.

This followed some late rough-housing in the series opener two nights earlier at Memorial Arena.

Added Milton's bench boss, "It's too bad because they (Fort Erie) aren't a bad team and can play when they want to. Maybe it would have been better if we'd faced Niagara-on-the-Lake."

Kosmalski ended game two with three points, as did graduating forward Wes McDougall — who finished out his juvenile tenure with Kyle Burrell, Thomas Patrick, Julian Ricci and Jason Strong.

Also lighting the lamp in the juveniles' season-ending tilt were Adam Rutz, Kyle Scott and Mark Wilson, while backstopping them was Corey Curtis.

Jim Kosmalski and assistant Dave Burrell are set to hand over the coaching reins next season, although Kosmalski said he might maintain a scaled back role with the juveniles depending on who assumes control — stressing that he "won't let the team falter."

Last week's forfeit victory essentially marked the Winterhawks' third Niagara District championship sweep in as many years, following wins over Niagara and St. Catharines in 2004 and 2003 respectively.

## Tourney takes new name

The Winterhawks' season-ending tournament will fly under a new moniker this year.

Re-named the April Fools Classic, Milton's additional entry showcase runs from Thursday to Sunday — with a record-setting 49 teams set to battle in eight different divisions this time around at both John Tonelli Sports Centre and Milton Sports Centre.

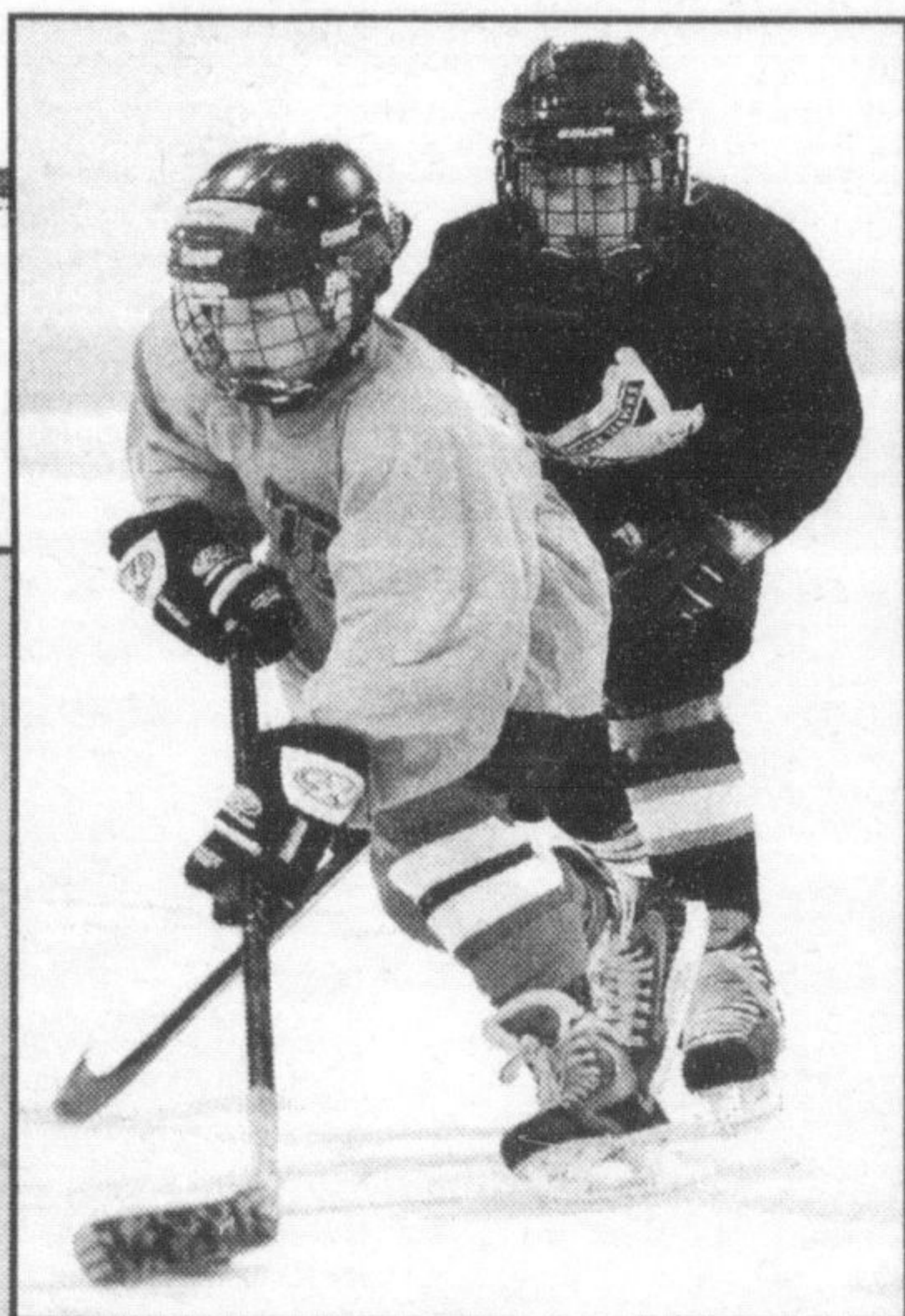
"The Optimist Club is still supporting us, but there's other key sponsors as well, so it seemed only right to change it," said second-year chairman Martin Larkin, when asked about the name change.

Teams from as far away as Georgian Bay's Manitoulin Island, Belle River and the Ottawa area will vye for division bragging rights.

The novice, atom and midget ranks should be especially competitive, with each loop sporting eight teams.

The minor peewees were Milton's lone tournament winner last year, with the midgets, bantams and minor atoms all being vanquished in the finals.

Round-robin games begin Thursday evening and continue until Saturday, with championship showdowns slated for Sunday afternoon at MSC.



### ✓ Sweet victory!

Regal Home Inspections goalie Michael Running celebrates the team's atom championship win over Chrysler while one of his teammates (inset left) skates past an opponent during Championship Day at Milton Sports Centre Saturday. For full results, see page 20.

Photos by ASHLEA WESSEL



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