

Sports

sleblanc@haltonsearch.com



Cougars de-clawed

Milton IceHawks Ryan Bernardi (at left) and Matt Read (above inset) put pressure on Burlington netminder Oliver Wren en route to a 5-3 win at Memorial Arena Sunday afternoon. For full results of the IceHawks' weekend games, see page A20.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

IceHawks to fight Dupont's suspension

Ruling based on technicality, says owner

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The IceHawks won't be taking the suspension of their head coach/general manager lying down.

Owner Mario Forgiore offered that assurance this past weekend, in the wake of Thursday's Ontario Hockey Association ruling that the Milton Jr. A club had been paying two players in contravention to their status as amateurs.

As a result, George Dupont has been suspended

for the remainder of the season — including the playoffs — and the IceHawks fined \$12,000.

Dupont declined to comment on the matter when the decision was first made public and again refused to talk about it shortly before taking in Sunday afternoon's home-ice victory over Burlington as a spectator, apart from stating that "We're hopeful it'll get resolved in a positive way."

He was expected to meet with an attorney this week, perhaps as early as yesterday, and Forgiore said they'll "pursue any and all legal options available."

"It's a severe punishment and quite frankly I'm dumbfounded by it."

MARIO FORGIORE

"Our problem is that the league has made its ruling based on a technicality rather than the spirit of the issue, and in doing so they've ruined George's career," remarked the IceHawks' owner Saturday afternoon from Pensacola, Florida — where his recently-acquired East

Coast Hockey League Ice Pilots play. "It's a severe punishment and quite frankly I'm dumbfounded by it."

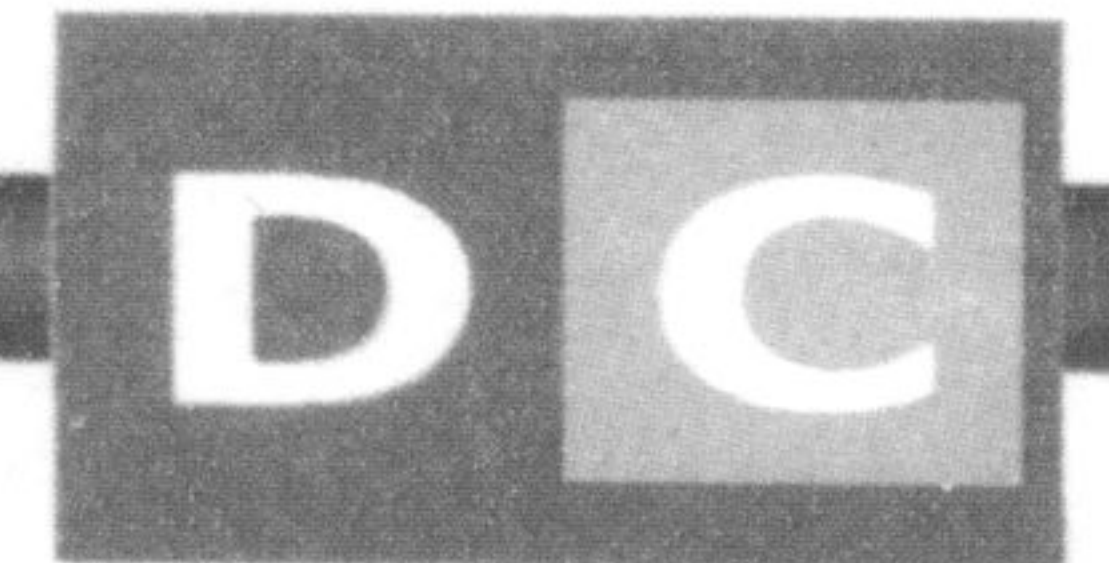
The suspension is especially costly for Dupont, who unlike many of his Provincial Jr. A League counterparts is a full-time coach and GM with Milton and currently in his final season of a three-year contract.

Forgiore said he won't name a new head coach while legal action is being pursued, although he did admit that if the season-ending suspension holds up it's unlikely he'll be able to keep Dupont around.

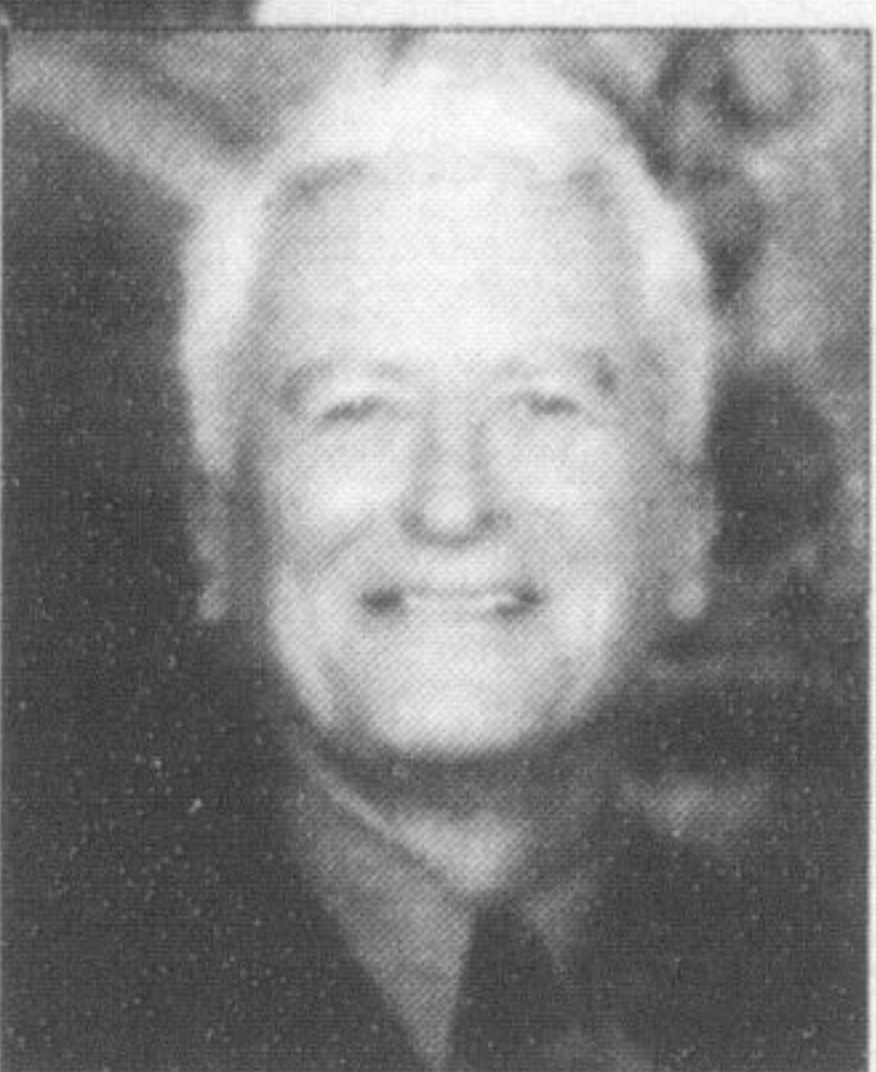
"We're going to see what happens this week."

• see **NEITHER** on page A20

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