

Sports

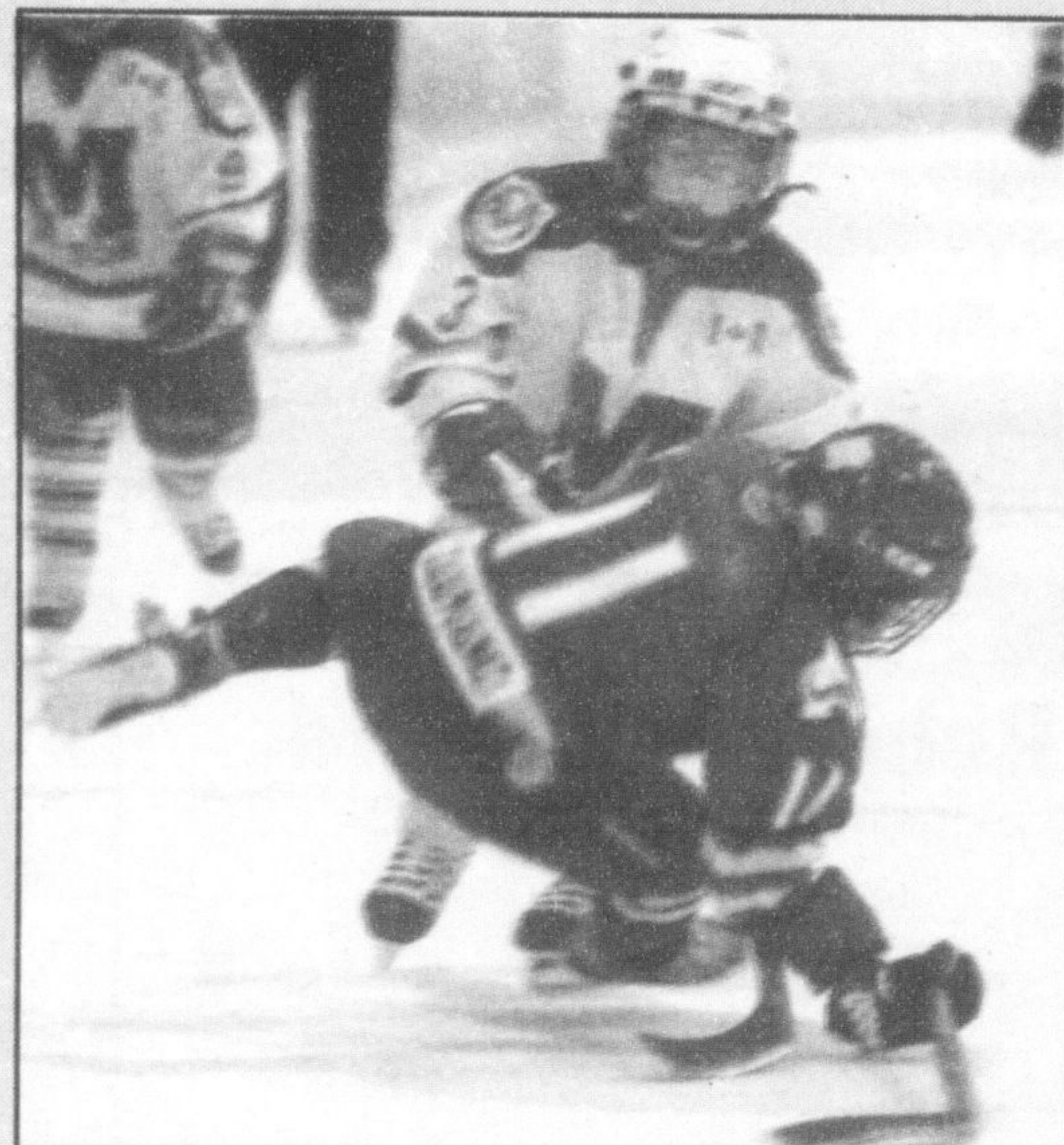
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Tykes edged

At left, Winterhawk Richelle Tam races past an Ancaster opponent with teammate Nicholas Zorzi close behind in 'AA' minor atom play at Milton Sports Centre Saturday. Below, Milton's Tyler Gaetan collides with a visiting rival. On the strength of two goals and an assist by Michael Hunter, the Winterhawks kept things tight with Ancaster — getting nipped 5-3.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE



Appeal of Dupont's suspension still going ahead

Promotion with ECHL Ice Pilots temporary situation, says Forgione

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

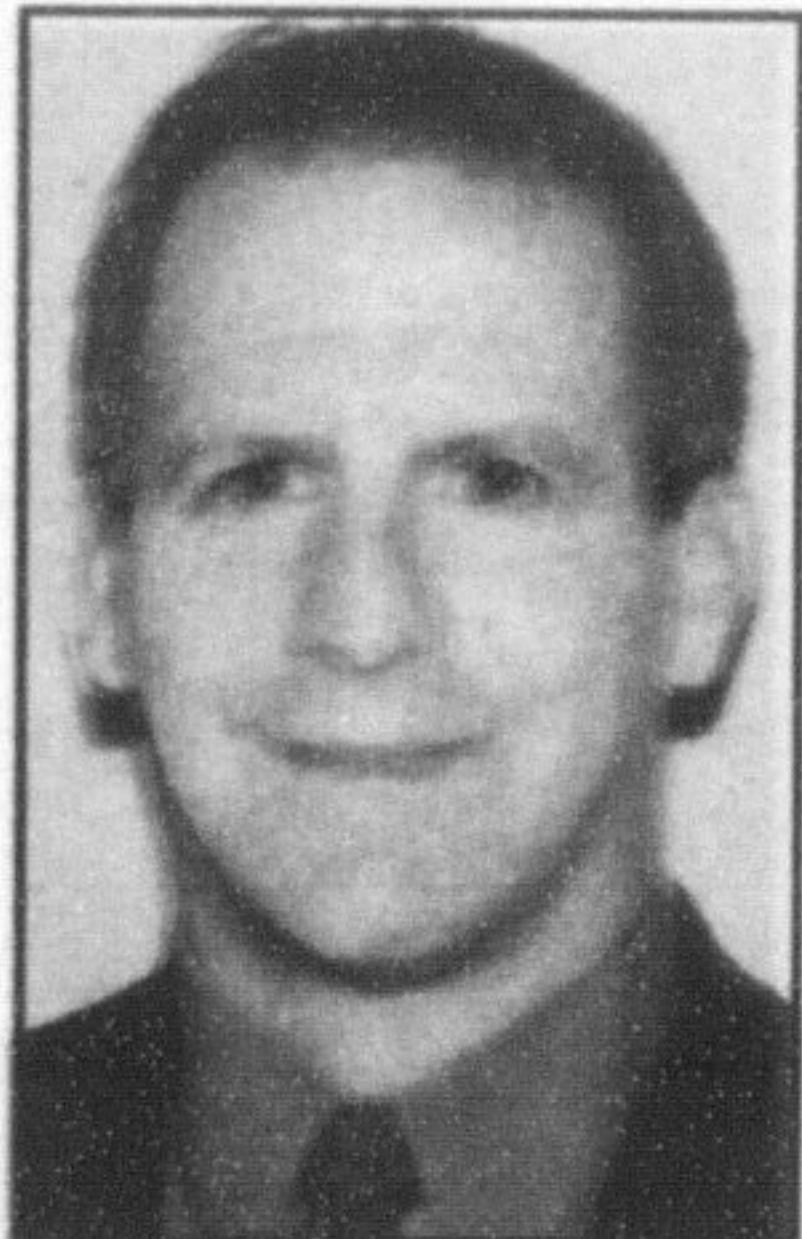
George Dupont's promotion with the ECHL's Pensacola Ice Pilots doesn't eliminate the possibility of him returning to Milton.

IceHawks/Ice Pilots owner Mario Forgione offered that assurance Sunday afternoon, in the wake of handing over the Pensacola reins to

Dupont Friday — after bench boss Rick Adduono was let go from the struggling Florida-based club, which now sits at 11-18-3.

"It's just a temporary position. We're still looking for a permanent replacement (for the Ice Pilots) and are still going ahead with the appeal of George's suspension," said Forgione, who brought Dupont on board with Pensacola as a temporary assistant coach exactly a month ago.

Suspended from the IceHawks December 1 for the remainder of the season (including playoffs) for what the Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) ruled as the paying



George Dupont

of players in contravention to their status as amateurs, Dupont will be represented by legal counsel this coming Saturday when the IceHawks formally appeal the decision.

While not wanting to speculate on the outcome, Forgione said he wasn't overly optimistic about the upcoming hearing — saying that the "OHA seems to want to make an example of Milton on a number of issues. I don't see them overturning their original decision."

Saturday's appeal will be heard by the entire OHA board, with the exception of the three members who handed down the original ruling.

Should the suspension be held up, the IceHawks plan to take the matter to the Ontario Hockey Federation — and Hockey Canada if necessary.

"This is a huge impact to George's career and we'll take the appeal process as far as we have to," Forgione stressed.

The IceHawks' owner maintains that neither his team nor Dupont did anything wrong in regards to the two players in question, stating that the OHA ruling was based on a technicality rather than the spirit of the issue.

The suspension — plus a \$12,000 fine against Milton — was the result of an investigation sparked by a complaint from the Streetsville Derbys.

Dupont remains unavailable for comment.

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