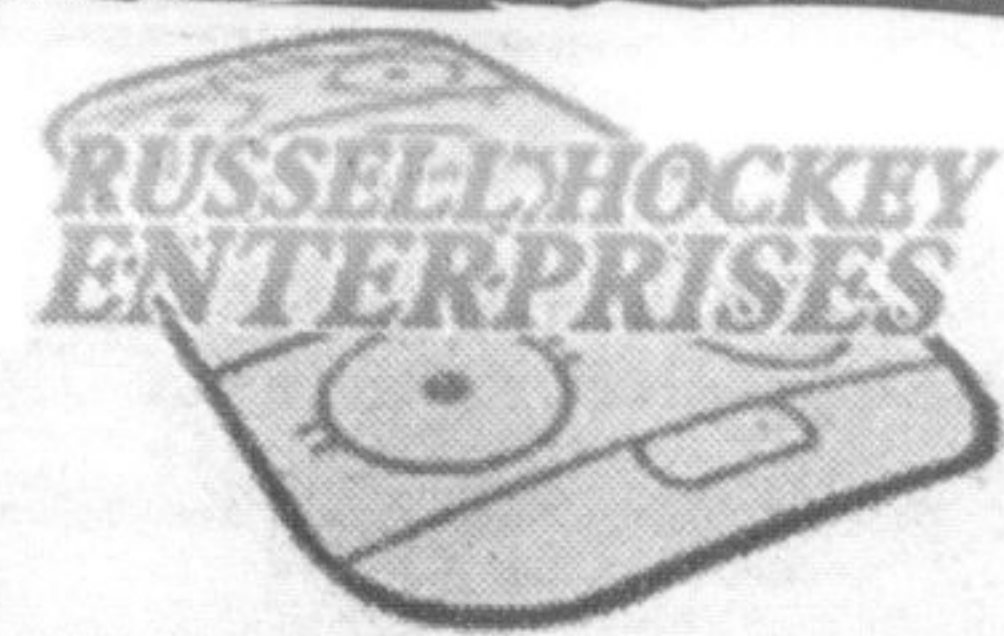


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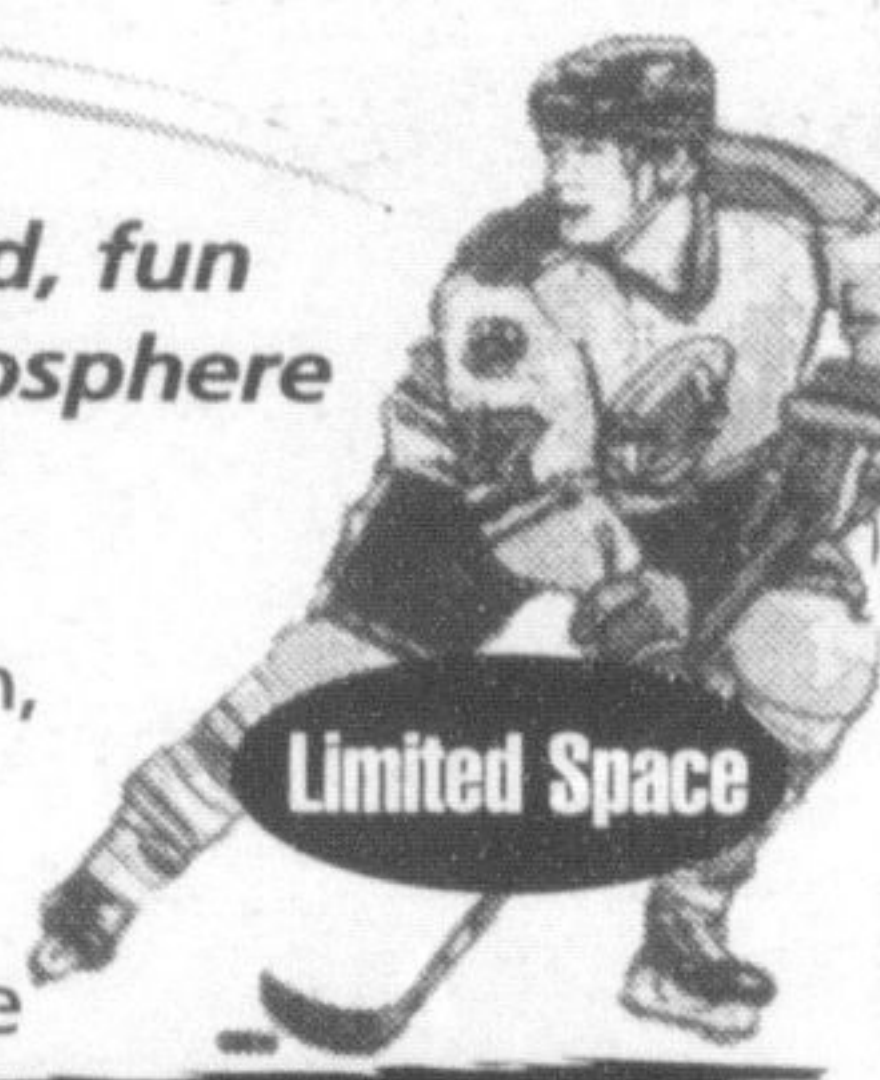


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# Tykes' Tri title bid nixed in overtime

By Steve LeBlanc  
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Milton's tykes were officially vanquished from the Tri County finals Saturday afternoon in Fergus, but their demise was essentially written the night before.

Eager to square the best-of-five series with the nearly unbeatable Highlanders - who lost just once all season, to their championship adversaries - the Winterhawks delivered one of their most spirited performances of the year in game two at Milton Sports Centre.

Their efforts met with heartbreaking results, however, as a blueline floater 22 seconds into overtime found its way past a partially screened Nicolas Solari. This sealed a 3-2 Fergus triumph, and - effectively - the local underdogs' fate.

"That overtime loss really took the steam out of us," said

head coach Bob Barrett, after Saturday's 5-0 decision clinched a championship sweep for the Highlanders. "But hey, our guys gave Fergus their only loss and we had a great season. I'm really proud of them."



Taking Fergus to sudden death Friday was largely the doing of top gun Matthew Struthers, who put on a stick-handling clinic all evening long and scored Milton's two goals late in the opening frame - both on lengthy wrist shots.

The Highlanders would even things up on a doorstep jam early in the second period, and that's how the scoreboard would remain until the extra session - despite a handful of offensive flurries for both sides.

Solari was rock solid between the pipes - especially so when challenged down low - and received particularly strong defensive support from Fisher, who helped set up Struthers' initial tally.

Other assists were recorded by Sam Corn, Scott Harris and Justin Whetham.

Struthers had numerous chances to complete the hat-trick in game two, and created nearly as many opportunities for himself in must-win play the following afternoon, but was held off the score-sheet for one of the very few times this season. Fergus jumped ahead early in the series clincher and never let up.

Bobby Barrett was in net for the third period Saturday.

The tykes have one more shot at securing some hardware in mid-April, when they finish out the season at the Mississauga IceDogs Tournament.

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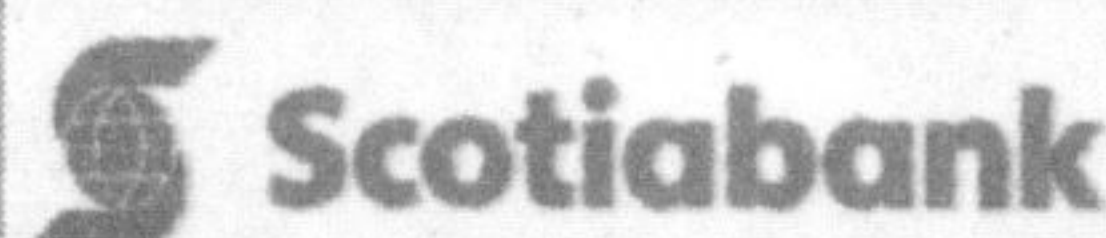
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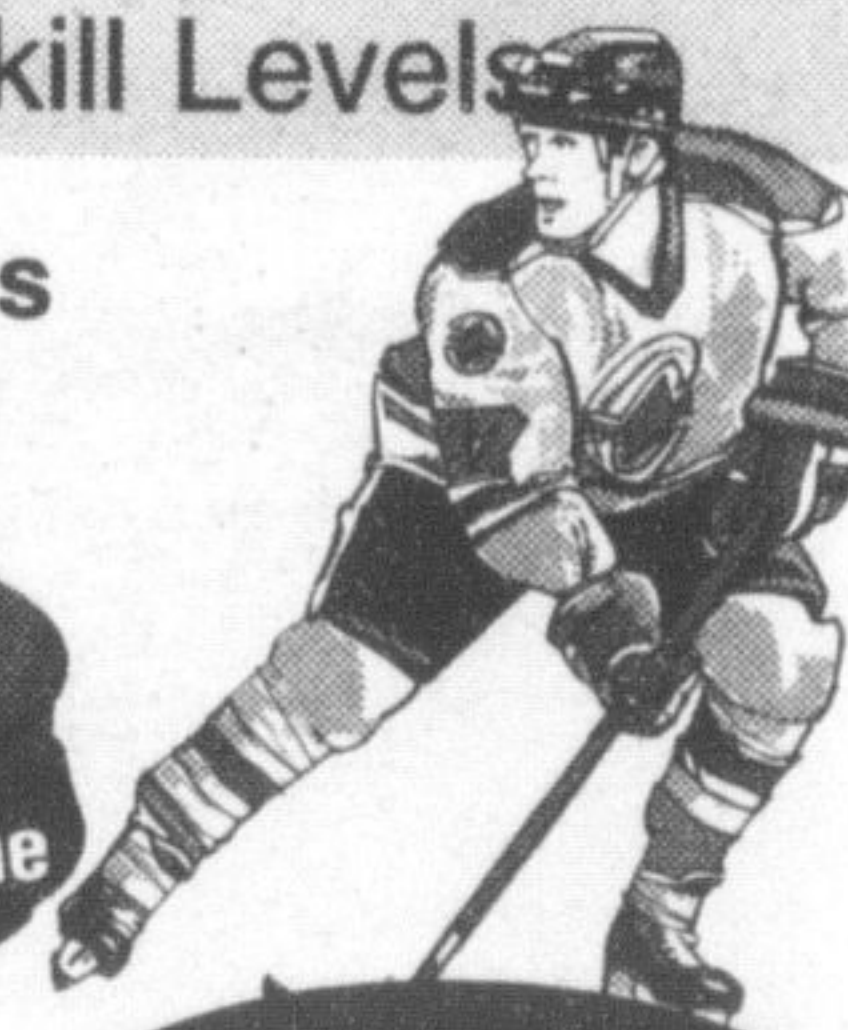
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