

## Impressive start for D-1 rookie

*Alexander makes immediate impact with Syracuse Orange*

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Quentin Hillsman knew he'd recruited a "special player" in Kayla Alexander, but figured it might take a while for the rest of the NCAA's Big East Conference to realize that as well.

So much for that notion.

As much an opponent to be concerned about now as a player to watch for in the future, Syracuse University's blue-chip freshman centre is paying immediate dividends — and is a key reason why the Rochester, New York-based Orange is off to its best start (9-0) in more than 30 years and just recently cracked the USA Today/ESPN Top 25.

Counting 11 points and four rebounds toward Sunday's 56-42 victory over Dartmouth, Alexander has double-digits in six of nine games and — despite not having a distinct size and strength advantage over her average rival like she did in high school — remains a consistent rebounding force.

"We expected Kayla to be a special player here. But she's been doing it since day one and that's the surprising thing," Hillsman told the *Champion* late last week.

Of course the six-foot-four-inch cager's track record strongly suggested she'd become an impact player in the NCAA sooner or later.

Along with being part of the National Elite Development Academy in Hamilton and leading Milton District to the Halton AA title last fall, Alexander already has a fair amount of international experience under her belt — most recently as a two-way standout for Team Canada at this past summer's FIBA U19 World Championships in Thailand.

That kind of elite-level competition, she's convinced, has helped pave the way for a smooth transition to university ball.

"The international experience I've had over the past couple of years has definitely been great preparation

• see NCAA on page A21



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**HOLDING COURT:** Syracuse Orange freshman Kayla Alexander (40) competes against Presbyterian College.

## AE novices work overtime for title

*Winterhawks clinch tournament championship in 5th round of OT*

Just one word comes to mind when it comes to recent championship appearances by the additional entry novice Winterhawks.

Wow!

Determined to exorcise the demons of a sixth-round overtime loss at last month's Energizer Fall Face-Off Tournament in Flamborough, Milton came out on the more favourable end of another epic encounter last week-end.



In a Stoney Creek Ace Bailey Memorial Tournament run that was equal parts dramatic and dominant, the Winterhawks eclipsed the host Jr. Warriors 4-3 in the fifth round of sudden death.

Justin Lozer provided the heroics, netting his fourth of the weekend after taking a great pass from Matt Anderson when the teams were down to two skaters apiece.

Also scoring in the thrilling finale were tournament standout Adrian Channell — who finished with six goals — and Ben Marshall and Gavin Snow, who had three each on the week-end.

Josh Ben was rock solid between the pipes in the championship to cap an exceptional tournament run in which he allowed just five goals in as many games. One of the two other goals against him came in an initial clash with Stoney Creek that Milton won 2-1, thanks to goals by Snow and Randall Samms.

The Winterhawks kicked off the weekend with a 6-1 victory over Welland and went on to blast Fort Erie 11-0 and dismantle Welland 10-0 in a lopsided semifinal.

Besides a hat-trick by Channell in the semis, Milton's production was quite balanced in Stoney Creek, with all 15 players scoring at least once.

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