

SPORTS

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AE atoms clinch title with OT win

Championship wins don't get much more dramatic than this.

Determined to prove a round-robin victory over their formidable neighbouring rivals was far from a fluke, the additional entry atom Winterhawks erased a third-period deficit before eclipsing the Acton Tanners 2-1 in overtime to claim last week's 43rd annual Hespeler Olympic Tournament.

This marked their second tournament win in as many months.

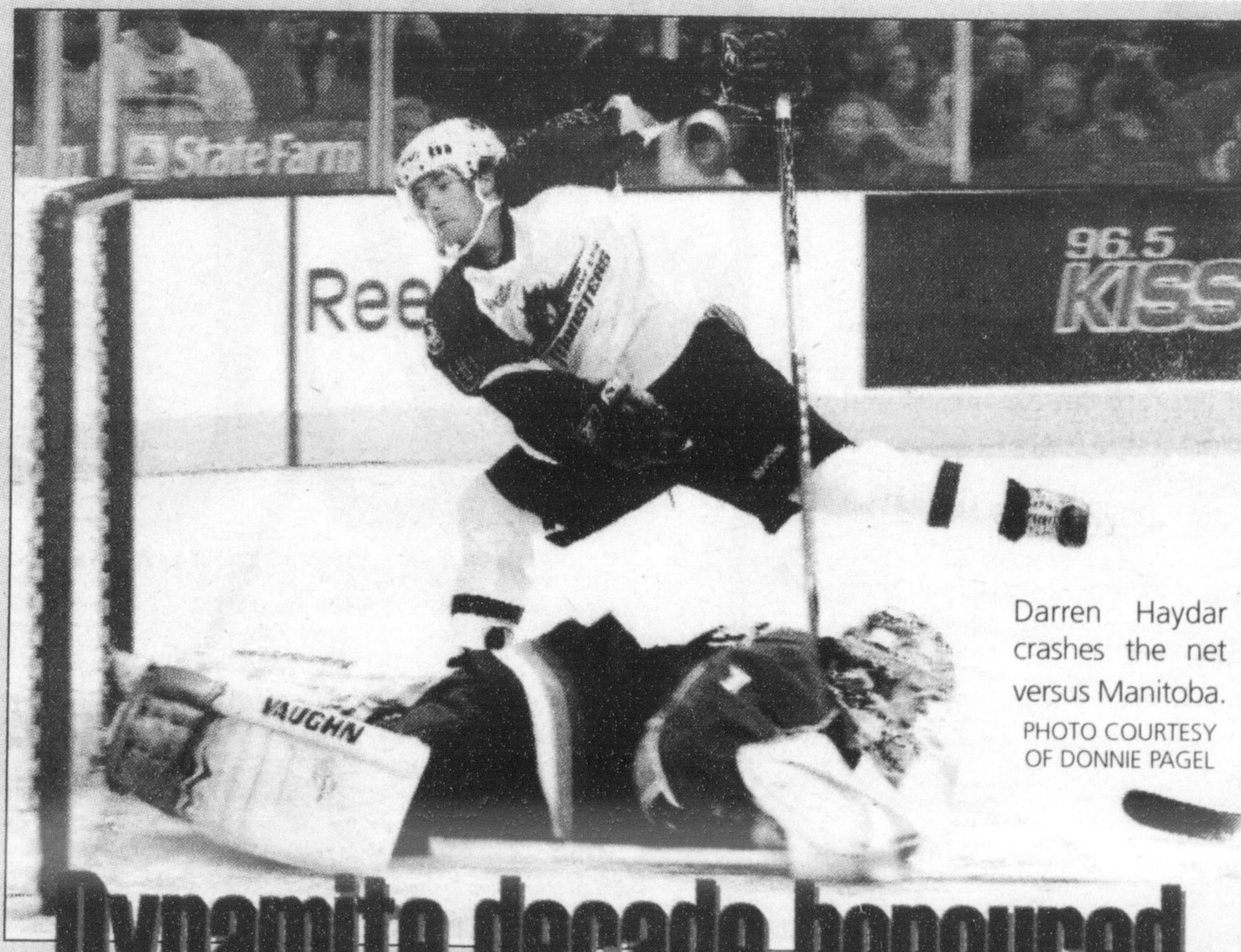
Oscar Fisher provided the heroics, burying a rebound with just 38 seconds left in sudden death. Assisting on the golden goal were Tyler Sharpe and Noah Caravaggio, who'd tied things up on a terrific end-to-end rush and backhand — his third tally of the tournament — with nine minutes left in regulation.

The win was especially sweet, given that the Winterhawks had two goals called back yet stayed focused en route to claiming the title.

Dylan Vieira was impressive between the pipes to cap a huge net-minding campaign for Milton. He and Adam Best gave up just four goals over five games, thanks largely to top-notch defensive support.

While held off the score-sheet in the finals, Wesley Magee stood out offensively at the tournament — with two goals in the initial 2-1 decision over Acton and a hat-trick in a 3-0 shutout of Dundas.

A 5-1 win over Cambridge saw Caravaggio tally twice and Sharpe, Dylan Skoryk and Jack Kaszycki add singles. Kaszycki had the lone goal in a 1-1 tie with Belle River.



Darren Haydar crashes the net versus Manitoba. PHOTO COURTESY OF DONNIE PAGEL

Dynamite decade honoured

Haydar named AHL's Player of Decade by Hockey News

It's certainly been a December to remember for Darren Haydar.

Along with enjoying an especially productive finish to 2009, the 30-year-old native Miltonian earned an American Hockey League Player of the Week honour and was named to the Canadian team for the January 19 AHL all-star classic in Portland, Maine.

But wait, there's more.

Acknowledging his long-time dominance in the league, The Hockey News recently named Haydar the AHL Player of the Decade. An article about the honour will appear in the January 11 issue.

"It caught me off guard. I didn't even know they had something like that," admitted the Lake Erie Monsters assistant captain, whose AHL resumé includes two Calder Cup championships, rookie of the year ('03) and MVP ('07) honours, records

for all-time playoff goals and points and an incredible 122-point campaign in 2006/07 in which he had a point in 39 straight games to shatter the previous league point-streak record. "It's definitely an honour."

Fittingly enough, the player of the decade award announcement came amidst a particularly hot stretch for Haydar, who had nine goals and seven assists in the last eight games of December.

As of last night he sat tied for seventh in league scoring with 16 goals and 19 helpers.

Making his way around the Great Lakes over the past seven-and-a-half seasons (with previous stints in Milwaukee, Chicago and Grand Rapids), Haydar's AHL dominance may soon be coming to an end — with a jump to Europe next season looking more like a probability than just the possibility it was in past years.

"I'm definitely ready to move on with my career," he told The Hockey News, referring to the mere 22 games he's seen in the NHL over the past seven-plus years.

Minor bantams reign supreme

Win Richard Bell Memorial for second straight tourney title

Milton's AA minor bantams went more than six seasons without tasting tournament gold, but are certainly getting their fill of it these days.

For the second time in as many months, the Winterhawks reigned supreme in tournament play, with their latest triumph coming last week at Oakville's Richard Bell Memorial.

Shaking off a first-round defeat, Milton reeled off five straight wins to clinch the title.

While their official championship coronation came with a 3-1 victory over the Oshawa Minor Generals, the highlight of the Winterhawks' tournament run came a few hours earlier against the host Rangers.

With the semifinal overtime down to two skaters a side, defenceman Matthew Gooding slid home a goal-mouth scramble — created by an Andrew Dodson breakaway — to eclipse Oakville 2-1.

It was the second game winner of the tournament for Gooding.

While he and Dodson provided the heroics, advancement to the finals was largely the doing of net-minder Anthony Henein, who was nothing short of brilliant while the Rangers dominated the second and third periods.

Sean Walter put Milton ahead late in the second, with help from Alex Webster and captain Ben Preisner.

The Winterhawks fortified their efforts for the championship, but still needed a rock-solid effort from goalie Nicholas Hoffman to knock off the Generals.

This was thanks to a pair of third-period markers.

Webster notched the winner on a nifty end-to-end rush and provided a great physical presence. He and Walter had a goal and an assist each in the finals, while Marcus Miller was the other marksman and assists went to Preisner, Dodson and Hoffman.

Jordan Harris exhibited a great deal of grit in his own end to lead a formidable defensive effort, while the

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