

Sports

Wednesday, January 8, 1986

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Coach unsure where to turn

Elliott angry over suspensions

If he had it to do all over again, he probably would have stayed home.

Barrie Elliott's Sargent Farms AA major bantam reps won the silver medal at the Hespeler Minor Olympics hockey tournament over the holidays, but it cost them a lot. It cost them the services of Doug Poulton and Doug Parkes, and Elliott doesn't know when he will get them back.

The two players received gross misconduct penalties and will sit out games until a suspension length is decided by Ontario Minor Hockey Association officials based on referee's occurrence reports.

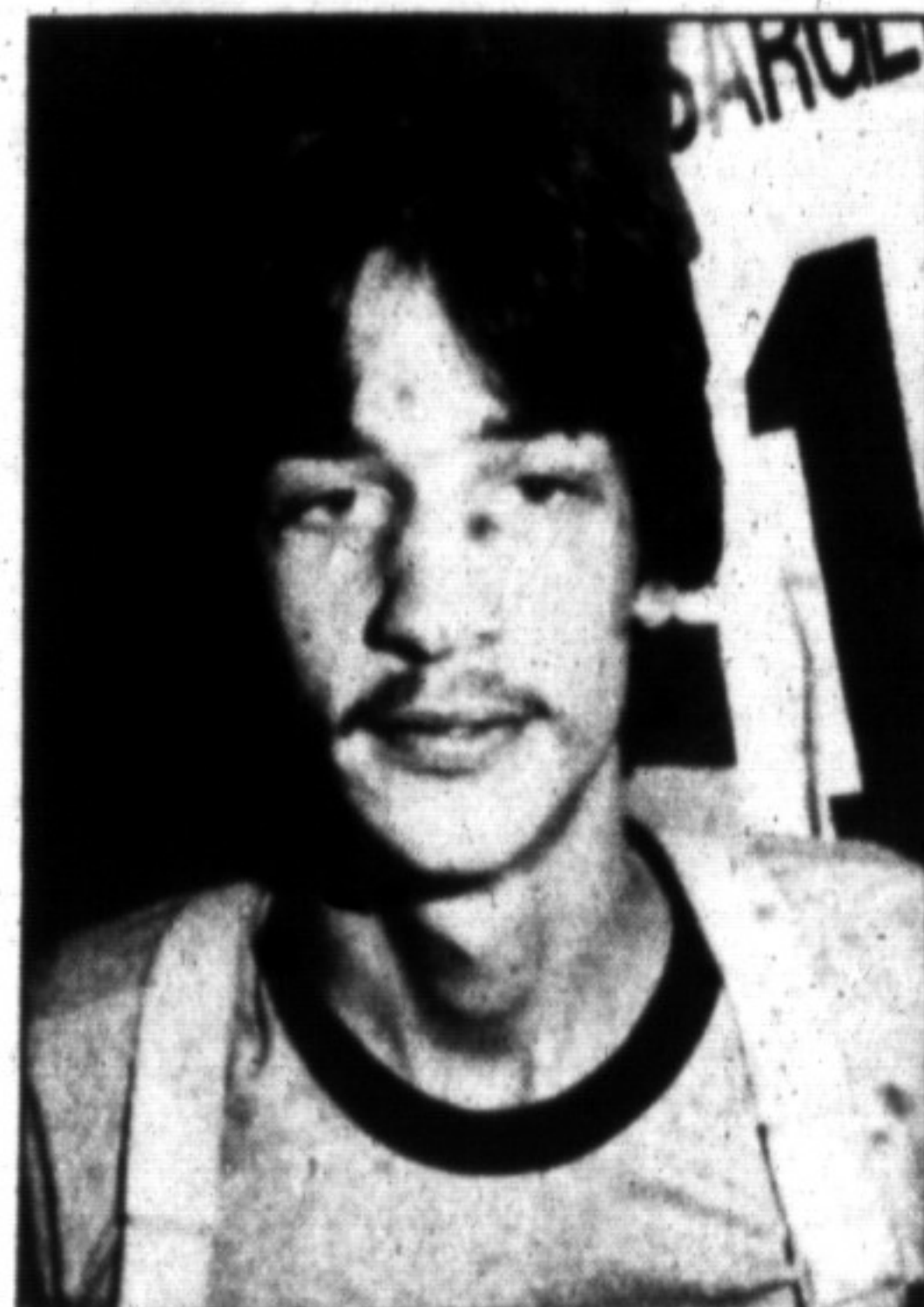
And Elliott doesn't know why it happened. And he's not sure how to plead his case so that his players, as he sees it, are justly evaluated.

Parkes and Poulton were tossed and had the book thrown at them during Milton's game against Waterloo, Sargent Farms' major competition at the tournament (they went on to win by goals-for-against difference).

Elliott said both gross misconducts were unwarranted. Poulton was retaliating after being speared in the groin. Elliott said. Parkes took three consecutive minors and then a gross misconduct during one play stoppage, and Elliott charged that game referee Bill Mercer baited his player.

Elliott has written a report criticizing the referee's conduct, what he saw as fraternization between Cambridge area coaches and officials, and choice of officials for games.

The Waterloo coach (Don



Doug Poulton

Lawrence, Elliott said) and Bill Mercer reffed (officiated) our game against Owen Sound," Elliott said. And, Elliott added, Mercer officiated in six of the seven games Milton played at the tournament.

The Milton coach sent copies of his report to the Milton Minor Hockey Association, to Ken Perrin, the convenor for the Cambridge area, to Rick Morpheu, the head OMHA referee and to Brian Zilkey, the OMHA tournament director.

The Milton coach hopes to be able to appear before whoever ends up judging the length of suspensions to be meted out to his players. The two have already sat out three games, and Milton has but three games remaining in the regular season.

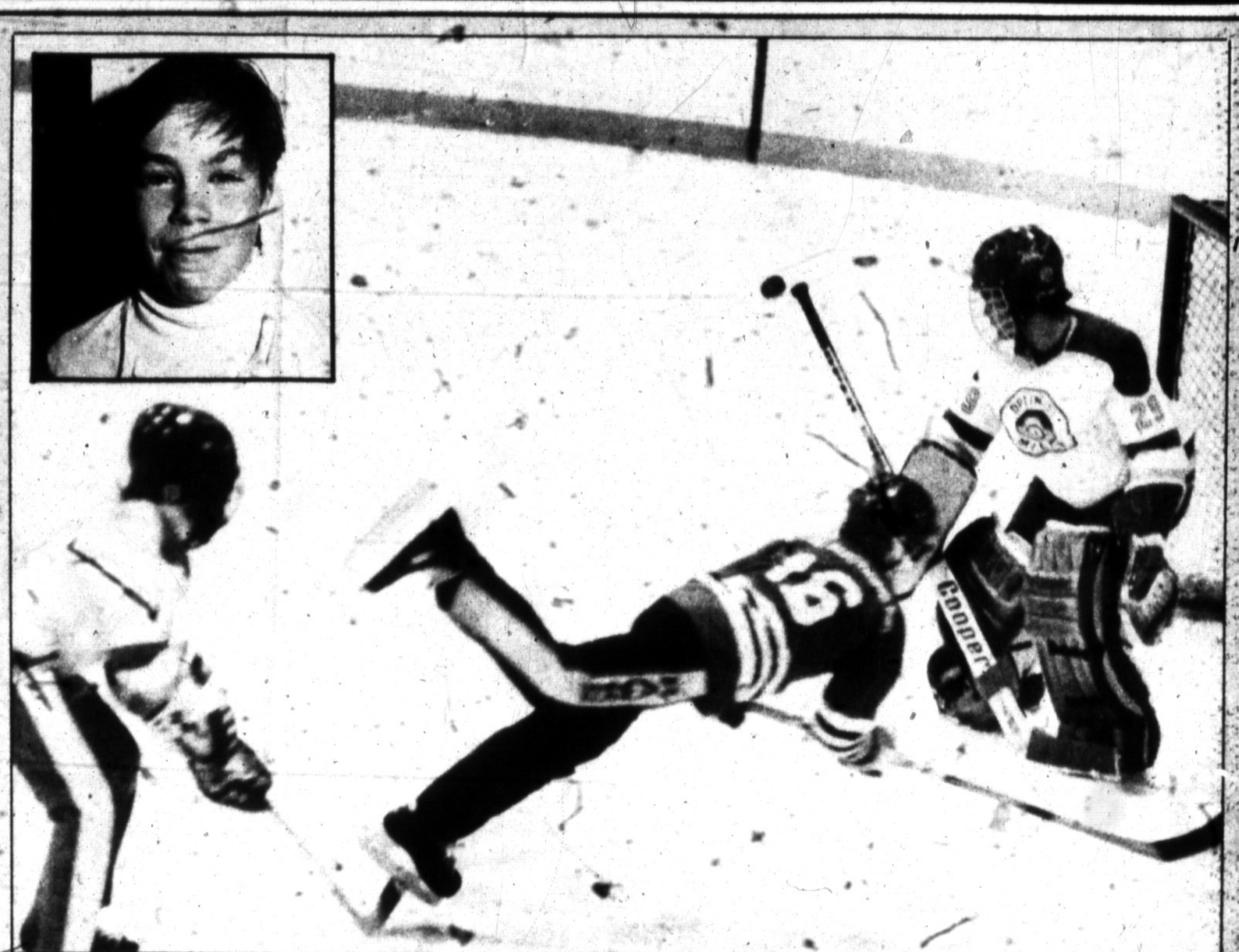


Photo by ROB KELLY

Is this what it looks like?

As a matter of fact, it isn't. It appears that Milton Optimist minor peewee Mike Cox (above and inset) tripped the Galt shooter just as he got a shot away on Ryan Peddie's net. But Cox wasn't penalized on the play. Milton faced Galt in exhibition action at Memorial Arena Sunday and battled to a

1-1 draw. Most Milton rep teams are winding down the regular season and preparing for the playoffs. Optimists have a good chance to contend strongly in post-season play.

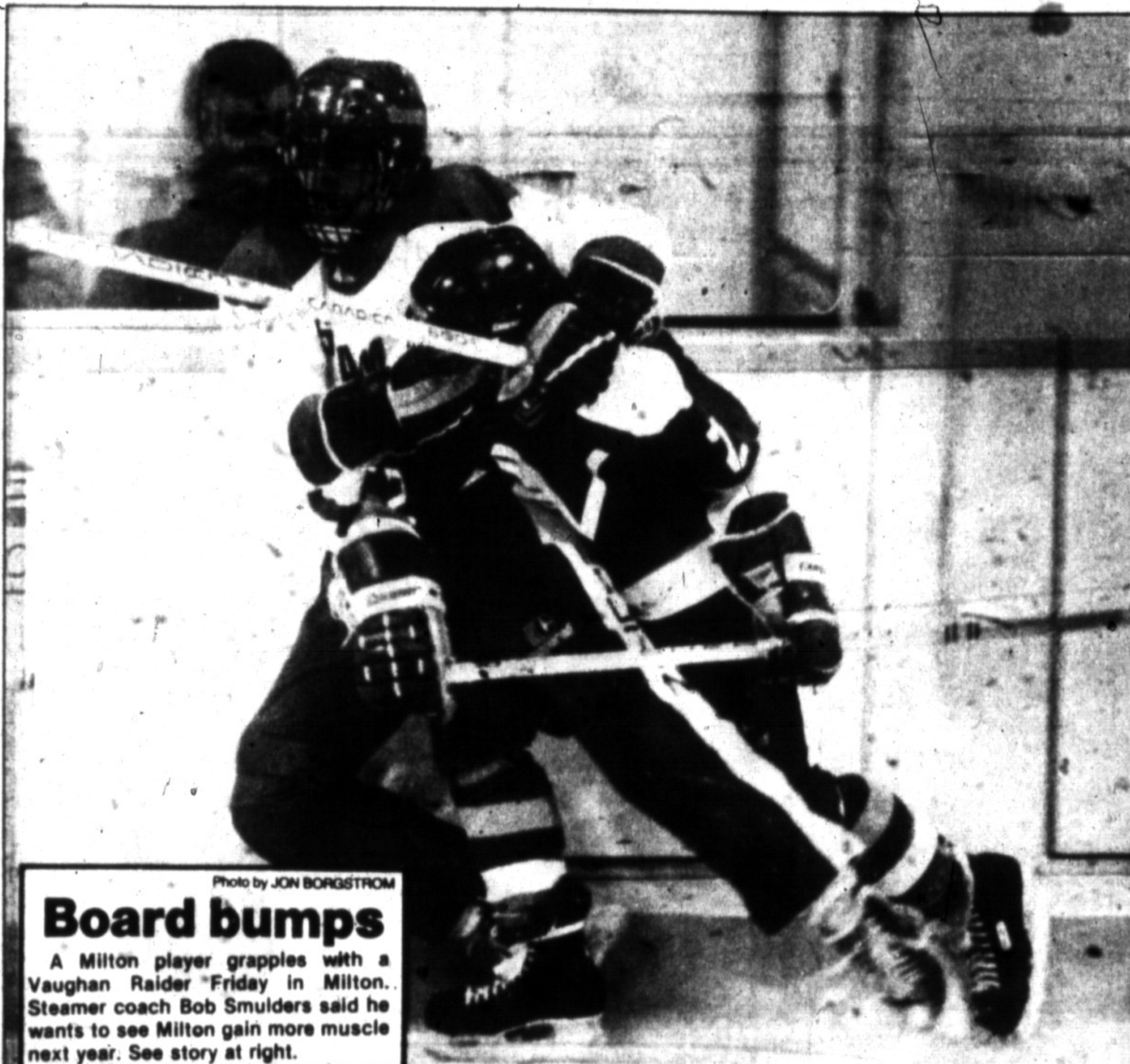


Photo by JON BORGSTROM

Board bumps

A Milton player grapples with a Vaughan Raider Friday in Milton. Steamer coach Bob Smulders said he wants to see Milton gain more muscle next year. See story at right.

More games, more losses for sputtering Steamers

BY ROB KELLY
 Champion Reporter

The question now is: Will they be able to win another game this year? And just beyond that modest enough hope is the other question: Will they be able to bump Nobleton out of the last available playoff spot?

The answer to both questions is maybe, but if that "maybe" answer is delivered truthfully it will sound shaky and hesitant. Because Milton's Steamers, the last-place franchise in the Central Jr. B hockey loop, offer only the slimmest hope that things can improve.

Steamers lost all three games last week, reportedly sleepwalking through a 7-2 defeat at Barrie but playing better in their latter two contests.

Steamers put on a more determined display Friday in Milton, mustering the most from their modest talents to almost tie Vaughan. Steamers were only a goal behind for most of the game and consistently outplayed Vaughan in the third period, but two breakaway goals provided Vaughan with a 7-5 win.

Saturday in Burlington Milton held one of the league's most powerful teams to a 1-1 stalemate throughout the first period, but Cougars came on in the second and drove to a 7-4 victory. In a season that has featured, for the most part, outstanding service

from both Milton goaltenders, starter Dan Haliburton added to his distinguished credentials by turning back a barrage of 61 shots.

Friday, Milton goalie Alex Gianuzzi, who is considered by many one of the top young prospects in the league, appeared to have an off night. Often called upon as a miracle worker by his desperate teammates, Gianuzzi looked flat particularly on the two breakaway goals scored by Vaughan's Steve Rumble and Dave Corbin. While the advantage always lies with the shooter in this, the most dangerous of defensive lapses, it's a measure of the performances Gianuzzi has turned in that he is expected to stop these shots.

The problem in Milton, now so blatantly evident, is that almost every team in the loop outguns them. Steamers must marshal every ounce of their resources to beat the top seven teams in the standings. They may be close to parity with Nobleton, although Nobleton is a physically larger team.

Steamers are incapable of protecting their superb but shellshocked netminders. The opposition invariably scythes into the Milton zone and knocks the diminutive (for the most part) defenders onto their bench warmers, firing shot after shot until one goes in. In the alternate scenario, the opposition's offence arrives in the Milton slot before the Milton defenders, sets up and triggers an ambush, and has the deed done by the time help (help?) arrives.

Milton coach Bob Smulders, anxious to praise his people for giving a good try Friday, nevertheless admitted that Steamers are woeful in their own zone. If he has the opportunity to coach next year, Smulders guaranteed he will go for more big people.

"Lots of guys skate over our defencemen," he said. "We go out trying to hit and we get hurt. We've got to have more muscle. Especially in this league, especially in this town. That's how we're going to beat guys."

Smulders consistently faces the close to monumental task of getting his squad up for games. Milton was flat against Barrie but, credit to them, they came into the Vaughan game motivated and motoring.

"They played hard," Smulders said. "We felt it was a game we should have won. Tonight we all felt we could have won. The effort was there. We controlled the third. You get to the point where you say, 'What's it going to take for us to win a game?' We had them down to four players on the bench. I said, 'This is where we're going to win this game. And we didn't.'"

In their closest and best game of the week in front of the hometown crowd, Steamers gave away two goals before they remembered they were in a hockey game.

Rick Clarke scored the first of his two for Raiders when he parked in the crease (surprise, surprise) and slam-

med in Phil Wewk's passout. Steve Azzuri made the same thing work again to put Vaughan up 2-0 on a pass from Wewk. Vaughan was all over Gianuzzi's doorstep as if they had a two-man advantage going.

Milton came back 12 minutes into the period. Tim Pollen (see other story this page) scored with a short shot, assisted by Robin Rossit, the ubiquitous offensive-defenceman.

Each team scored three times in the second period, a period that featured a fight before play started. In what must have been a prime exchange of insults just before the opening face-off, Milton's Graeme Hicken and Shane Walton squared off, and both were tossed with fighting majors and game misconducts. It set the tone for the second, which featured the rest of the penalties incurred in the game as Milton collected an additional seven and Vaughan an additional eight minor penalties.

Vaughan scored the first of the period as Wewk notched his second, beating Gianuzzi to the trapper high on a cross-net shot during a four-on-four situation.

Milton came back with a power-play goal. Rossit scored with a hard shot as Tim Pollen set it up.

Peter Gilliat took the puck from Milton's Sean Laverty with a sweep check when Laverty was about to skate off the ice and appeared not to be paying attention. Gilliat and company broke in and forced Gianuzzi to commit to the strong side of a three-man attack. Gilliat took a pass and scored to the exposed side of the net.

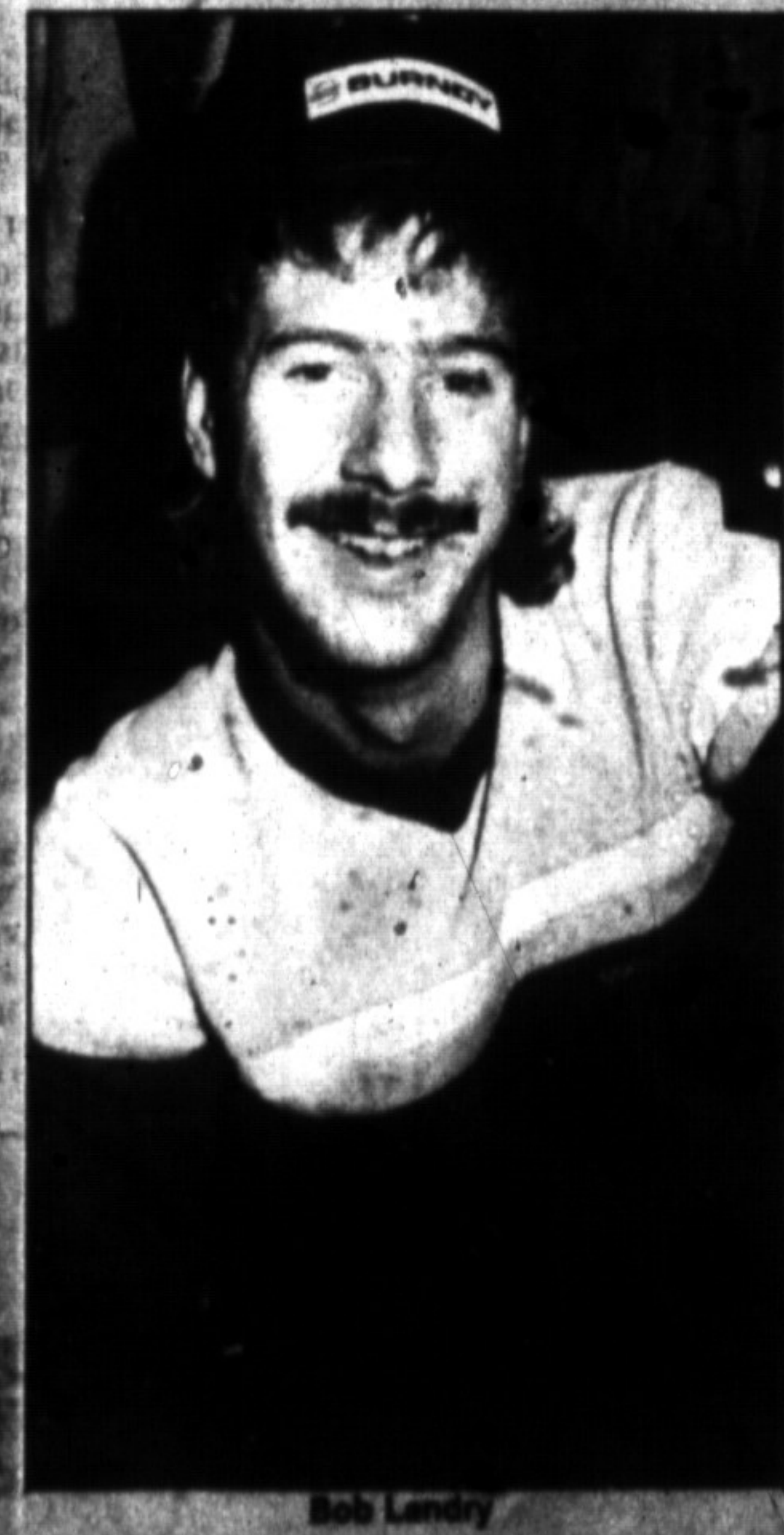
Geoff Pollen, pound-for-pound probably the hardest hitter and digger on the Milton team, scored a short-handed goal at 14:17, bouncing one in off the crossbar. Less than 30 seconds later, Vaughan scored on a power play, however, with Kevin Foest doing the honours.

Steamers played their best hockey of the period as it drew to a close, with Rumble scoring on a nifty shot at 16:31 after strong pressure. Milton held the weight of the play for the remainder of the period to end it at 5-4.

Milton outplayed Vaughan throughout the final frame couldn't get anywhere despite the very strong effort, probably their best period of hockey in months. Vaughan picked up an insurance goal with just more than two minutes remaining on a breakaway, however. Jeff Rumble scored. Jim MacEachern pulled Milton back to within one but Vaughan scored another insurance goal (Dave Corbin) with 47 seconds remaining.

Rossit and Perry Sempecos scored for Milton in Barrie. Rossit, Pollen, MacEachern and Chris Turner tallied for Steamers in Burlington. Steamers played Tuesday in Oakville (results not available at press time). Friday, they face powerful Streetsville in Milton.

Milton may trade two veterans



Bob Landry

Guess who's back with the Milton Steamers Jr. B hockey club? Former captain Tim Pollen. But he probably won't be there long.

Milton coach Bob Smulders said Friday that "there's going to be some movement in personnel. That could include Tim Pollen."

While Smulders is understandably quiet on the subject until a deal is hammered out, it is known that Milton will dispense of Pollen's services, as well as those of top scorer Bob Landry, in exchange for younger players in a trade.

Pollen was suspended just before Christmas by Smulders. The suspension was indefinite. Smulders bounced Pollen because, he said, the centre kept asking to be traded. Pollen said he had asked only once prior to the Christmas confrontation.

Landry let it be known early in the year that if Milton faltered prior to playoffs he would like to finish the year on a contending club. Landry was the top scorer in the league last year.

Landry has been sidelined with a severe charity horse for the past several weeks, but expects to be able to play within a couple of weeks.

As late as Friday, Landry expressed no great desire to leave Milton, saying in the middle of the Vaughan-Steamer contest that Steamers appeared to be playing better hockey.

But the all-star forward may not have much of a choice in the matter. Much as his services have been valued by management and the various coaches Milton has gone through, Steamers are going nowhere this year. They are building for the future (someday the future may even get to Steamers). And the top clubs are very close in the standing this season. Landry, if he proves healthy, will probably be quickly snapped up by a contending club. Probably Tim Pollen will be too. The word at press time was that Oakville was keenly interested.



Tim Pollen