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# Sports

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## League gearing up for season

Everything is new and improved in the Central Ontario Jr. B Hockey League this season. There are new divisions, new teams and a new competitive attitude. This week The Champion is looking at all seven teams Milton Merchants will face this season.

### MILTON MERCHANTS

Optimism seems to be the key word around the Milton Merchants Jr. B hockey team this year.

Owner Brad Grant is hoping a new coach, a raft of new players and a new attitude brings the Merchants the success they have been craving for the last few years.

The new coach is Gary Ford, most recently the coach of the all-Ontario champion Streetsville juvenile team in 1986, and a former signee with the Montreal Canadiens and a 12-year minor leaguer.

Ford has come in with his whisk in action, sweeping out most of last year's team.

"Right now there will only be about seven guys with the team who also played last season," said Ford. "We're not necessarily going to have a young team, but we will definitely have a new team."

Probably the most impressive newcomer of the young season has been Corey Vincent, a Mississauga native who played in the Streetsville organization last year. He'll be sharing the goaltending duties with Alex Piazza, a returner from last year's squad.

On defence there will only be two players back from last year. Local boy Bryan Haringa and Paul Jeffries are both returning to a backline which will see five new faces. Paul Allen, another Milton product, will be a regular member, as will Paul Hartley, Paul Harron, Damian St. Croix and Bob Anderson.

"We've got a good mixture on the backline," said Ford. "There are some guys with size, some with speed. It's just a matter of getting some playing time together under our belts."

Up front, the scoring load will fall to the four veterans still around, Chris Reier, George Bach, Scott Gale and Dave D'Amico.

"Reier has been playing just super so far," praised Ford. "Bach, Gale and D'Amico have also been showing good leadership. We're still looking for a couple of pure scorers though. I guess you can never have too many of those."

With all the new faces around, the Merchants will likely start slowly but with some playing time and a chance to get to know each other, they should surprise some people by the end of the year.

### OAKVILLE BLADES

The Oakville Blades are taking a wait-and-see approach with their 1988-89 edition.

There are only seven returnees back from last year — none of them in the top eight in team scoring and only one over 18 years of age, goalie Kevin Alcock.

If there is one surplus this season, it's size. The Blades have several gentlemen in the 6-foot and 180 lb. plus category.

"We won't get bumped around," promises Blades' coach Ken Moodie. "Our emphasis with a young team is not to get outworked. Let's play good, tough, disciplined hockey. We have to stay away from retaliatory penalties."

Moodie says things will be interesting for the first while.

"I'm very happy with the guys so far," he said. "They're willing to learn and they work hard. But it doesn't mean they pick up things the first time."

"We lost a lot of experience in guys like Richard (Steve), Moore (Greg) and DeLuca (Tony) and our top eight scorers. That's a big void to fill. Alcock (Kevin) will take a few

games to get going." Oakville boasts its own version of the "Bruise Brothers" on the backline with veterans Bryan Morgan, Mark Van Vliet and Karl Lechowski, who were not shy to the rough going last year.

And don't forget burly newcomer Mike Berlet who comes to Oakville from the Wexford midgets. He goes 6-foot-2 and 190 lbs. and loves to throw his body around. Ted Dowling, of the Mississauga Braves midget corps, and local Marc Flindall, from the 'AAA' bantams, round out the rearwards.

Shawn Thompson, Brent Mahoney, who is this year's team captain and feisty John Duff are the veterans amongst the forwards.

New locals are Rob Ricketts and Shawn Kelly. Ricketts was up-and-down between the 'AAA' midgets and the big club last season while Kelly toiled for the 'AAA' bantams.

New imports are Paul Priestner from the Burlington 'AAA' bantams (6-foot-2 190 lbs.), Mike Foy from the Mississauga Blackhawks midgets (injured last year), Michael Orzel and Chris Krbavac from the Hamilton Huskies midgets, Michael Zita from the Toronto Marlies midgets.

Playing on AP cards this year will be Marty Savoy, Kris Spoor and Joel Montminy.

Walker is looking to the duo of Orzel and Krbavac to provide some scoring punch. The two played on the same line for the Huskies.

Alcock, the team's lone 20-year-

old, will handle the bulk of the netminding duties. He will be backed up for the time being by local Glen Williams from last year's 'AAA' bantams.

Williams' teammate, Sean Lovisa, may also be called up from time to time.

GM Murray Walker likes Williams' quickness and ability to concentrate.

"Williams (Glen) has got good reflexes," Walker stated. "He's a good standup goalie and reacts well. He is a good student of the game."

### BURLINGTON COUGARS

They are not very big, nor are they very experienced but the Burlington Cougars will have one quality in great doses — feistiness.

There are only eight returnees from last year's edition on this year's club. None of their top six scorers are back. In fact a defenceman, James O'Brien, has the highest point total of those returning.

But the deceptively inexperienced Burlington unit displayed enough savvy to reach the semi-finals of a junior 'B' tournament hosted by Richmond Hill recently.

"We had some injuries and we were down to 14 skaters at one point," said Cougars GM Joe Walsh. "They showed determination, effort and heart."

Brian Gregory, who plays goalie, is the lone veteran. He posted a 3.42 goals against average in just under 15 games, including three shutouts last season.

Stoney Creek junior 'C' acquisition Sean Dasilio is the other netminder. He was drafted by the London Knights in this year's Ontario Hockey League (OHL) draft but was a late cut.

O'Brien (10 goals and 29 assists in 43 games last season) and Andrew Moir (five goals and 28 assists in 43 contests) stabilize the backline.

Newcomers are Burlington bantam Greg Ryan, Burlington midgets Peter Hassard, Christian Keogh and Brad Rollo. The one to watch, according to Walsh, is Ryan.

"He's (Ryan) got good size," he said. "He's learning and improving all of the time."

Up front the Cougars boast returnees Dino Felicetti (15 goals and 21 assists in 41 games), Rob Beraldo (12 goals and 18 assists in 40 games) and Rob Honighan (seven goals and 11 assists in 16 games).

Rookies here are Burlington bantam Andrew Pearce who is coming off a major heart operation, Burlington midget Jason Rogers and Mississauga Torspos junior 'B' transfer Joe Kenney.

Down the middle the Cougars have veteran Kevin Gauthier (eight goals and 22 assists in 43 games), and rookies Scott McKay (Burlington bantam), Cory Holbrough (Burlington midget). Kenney can also play centre.

Kevin Gushie (22 goals and 10 assists in 40 contests) is the lone returnee on the right flank. New faces are Ancaster midget Peter Romeo, Burlington midget Scott

Laird, Burlington juvenile Spencer McIvor and Mike Short of St. Mary's University who toiled for the Cougars two seasons ago.

Walsh expects Short, McKay, Romeo and Holbrough to provide some scoring punch.

The Cougars open the regular season in Etobicoke tomorrow night.

### ETOBICOKE CAPITALS

Etobicoke Capitals' coach Rick Bince predicts his club will score a lot of goals again this season.

The Capitals were among the league leaders last year with 250 and Bince is confident they can do it again.

"We will be very, very explosive," he assures.

George Djurasevic, Nick Nikac, Rich Roberts and Mike Spadacini scored 85 goals for the Capitals last winter and Bince expects more of the same when the season gets underway tomorrow. These veterans are all 20-year-olds and should help the handful of rookies on the team adapt to the junior 'B' level.

He has veteran B.J. Nenic on the blueline and feels he has found a keeper in defenceman Dwayne Churchill. An added bonus was when 6-foot-4 Jeff Churney opted to play for the Capitals.

The 15-year-old had major junior 'A' potential and will likely suit up alongside 20-year-old Nenic.

Rock-em sock-em defenceman Anthony Gallelo will be looking to tee-off on opposing forwards. He will also see time as right winger.

Brian Neiser is over from Mimico after missing almost all of last year due to a serious ankle injury.

One of the top netminders in the league, Vito Mazolli, is back hoping to improve on a 4.92 goals against average.

Paul Capizzano and Bruce Cram should crack the lineup as rookies in the forward ranks.

Capizzano helped the Don Mills bantams to the Puralator Cup and is considered a Rod Anthony clone.

### MIMICO MONARCHS

The Mimico Monarchs underwent a major house cleaning in the off-season and as a result will be entering the 1988-89 season with an abundance of rookies on their team roster.

General Manager Al McDougall has hired two new coaches, Mike James and Scott Mosey, in the hope they will turn the franchise's fortunes around.

"We've had to start as a whole new team," said the rookie G.M.

The veterans are few and far between on this club. Mike Filipone, Pierre James, explosive Dan Porco, defenceman John Wawrow and netminder Steve Wiczaryk made the roster again this season.

After that, it's all rookies and the best of the bunch appears to be 16-year-old defenceman Kevin King. The 5-foot-11, 175-pounder has all the tools required to excel at the Junior 'B' level according to McDougall.

Chris Fantin, Darren Rutledge and Chuck Lucas will team with Wawrow and King to form the nucleus of the defence.

Up front, centreman Marty Wells has shown in the exhibition season that he belongs. The 16-year-old Mississauga Black Hawks graduate was the Monarchs' best performer in the exhibition campaign.

Mark Cavallin, Chris Terkalas and Filipone should see action on the club's number one line while James, Porco and Jason Greenless will form another potent forward group.

Gary Maracel, Tony Galente, Murray Lambert and Tim Newman will fill out the roster.

McDougall isn't about to make any wild predictions about the finish of his team; instead, he's content on waiting it out to see what the current slate brings.

Continued Friday



This was a situation faced often by the Milton Merchants Jr. B hockey team's two goalies Friday night — a shot on net by the St. Mike's Buzzers. Alex Piazza and Curtis Browning both gave it their all, but St. Mike's

came out of the exhibition game with a 7-2 victory. The loss means Milton finishes its pre-season with two wins and three losses.

## Merchants lose 7-2

By JEFF PASQUALE

Milton Merchants ran into a buzzaw Friday night when St. Mike's Buzzers of the Metro Toronto Jr. B came to town and showed the locals a thing or two about the game of hockey, downing them 7-2.

It was a close contest until midway through the second period when St. Mike's scored the last five goals of the game and turned a 2-2 battle into a 7-2 drubbing.

Scoring for the home-side were George Bach and Shawn Hensley, while assists went to Damian St. Croix, Chris Reier and Warren Brown.

Missing the nets for the Merchants were Alex Piazza and Curtis Browning. Browning is a newcomer to the Merchants camp. He played with Streetsville

Derbys last year but was dropped from the team after the game.

"I thought we stayed with them (St. Mike's) for two periods," said coach Gary Ford. "When it came to the third period though, their experience and conditioning came through. They've been together since April, and it shows. We did well, though."

There was only one goal in the first period, with St. Mike's scoring one minute and 30 seconds into the game. St. Mike's scored early in the second period before Milton's two goals came back-to-back and tied the game up.

Merchants completed its pre-season with a 3-3 record. The team opens its season Saturday night when they travel to Mimico.