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Sports

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Merchants goaltending should be solid

Evershed and Muldoon expected to share the job

By JEFF PASQUALE

A pre-season win and tie may not be much, but after last year's debacle of a season for the Milton Merchants, they'll take anything over a loss.

The Merchants, of the Central Ontario Jr. B Hockey League, played a home-and-home series with the Grimsby Peach Kings of the Niagara and District Jr. B Hockey League over the weekend and with a pair of third period comebacks won the home game Friday, 7-6, and salvaged a tie in Grimsby, 4-4, Saturday.

Pleased probably isn't the right word to describe how Rick Bince, the coach of the Merchants, felt about the weekend games. Encouraged would be a better way to describe it. Bince won't actually be pleased until the team wins the league with a perfect record and sweeps through the playoffs on their way to a provincial title.

"We showed a lot of character in the games," said Bince. "In the first game (Friday in Milton) we were down 6-5 going into the third period but scored twice to win. In the second game we were losing 4-2 heading into the third, but scored a pair again to pull out the tie.

"Those things (comebacks) are a good sign of kids who want to play. There is still a lot of coaching to do, though, to eliminate mistakes."

According to Bince, one definite strong point of the squad this year will be its goaltending duo of Chad Muldoon, a holdover from last season, and Jay Evershed, who last year played with the Jr. A Guelph Platers.

"Jay and Chad give us the best goaltending set in the division," said a confident Bince. "There will be some other teams with one really good goalie, but as a set, nobody will come close."

But which one is Number 1?

"I'm going to rotate the two goalies. That's the system I prefer to use. It's not in stone, though," said Bince. "If, let's say Chad had a hot hand against Peterborough, then I might use him two games in a row."

Bince definitely tries to stay away from designating his goalies starting and backup.

"Quite often a team will get used to having the starter in there, and when he does get a rest and the backup plays, the team lets down because they say to themselves, 'We can't win with the backup in net.'"

That's not to say the policy is written in stone. A lot of it will depend on how the team is doing.

"If we're fighting for every point we get and one of the guys gets hot, then I might have to go with him because we need the points. But if things go the way I hope they will this year, a fourth or third place finish, you can be a little more flexible. But that's not just goalies. That's all the positions.

"If one of our centers gets hot and starts finding the range then he's going to get more playing time especially the powerplay. That just makes sense," explained Bince.

Others who impressed during the doubleheader were forwards Pat O'Leary, Ken Gilford and Grant Thompson. Bince was particularly surprised with Thompson's play.

"Grant sat out last season, so his play in the weekend games was above my expectations. He's not real flashy, but more of a steady type player."

Milton's next action is Friday at 8 p.m. at Milton Memorial Arena

when they host their arch-rivals from Georgetown, the Raiders. Milton will make a return trip to Georgetown

Saturday.

Bince is also trying to schedule a home game with the Etobicoke Cap-

itals for Friday, September 22, one week before the team opens the regular season with a game in Bur-

lington against the Cougars, the team the Merchants lost to in the first round of last season's playoffs.



Photo by JOHN WARREN

Ahead by a wet nose

Everyone got a little damp during the snowmobile races held on the Kelso Reservoir at Kelso Conservation Area on the weekend.

The Optimists narrowly win senior girls T-ball championship with 33-32 nail-biter over Romac

The Milton Girls T-Ball Association held their annual championship day Saturday at Sam Sherratt Public School as all 26 teams in the league saw action. Both senior and intermediate champions were decided.

In the senior division, the Optimists squeaked out a close win over Romac, 33-32 in the final. Both teams had powerful hitting with the Optimists' Spring Lacourse hitting a

home run and Robin Hutchinson smacking five base hits and scoring five runs. For Romac, Troina Shea homered and Karen Arnold had a perfect day at the plate.

Eventually, it was the Optimists defence that won them the game with the MVP award going to shortstop Genevieve Vigneault. Jennifer Sweetland was Romac's MVP. In the consolation final, Lady Foot-

locker upset D&S Signs 22-20 with outstanding defensive play contributed to the winners by Kimberly Freidrich and MVP Elizabeth Cook. D&S got homeruns from Janath Corso and Simone Theissen, but it wasn't enough. Kristen Haringa was the MVP for D&S.

In the friendship game, Wakefield held KLA Consulting to two runs in their final at bat to hold for a 23-19 win. Melissa Haniff blasted a home run and picked up the MVP award for the winners while Jennifer Massie and Tara Flemming slashed triples. KLA got a home run from Laura Goodbrand and a four-hit, four-run game from Meaghaum McCamont.

The intermediate championship game saw Key Centre edge Best Buy Pet Centre 31-31.

The turning point of the game was the third inning when Key Centre outscored Best Buy 9-1 to turn a 17-13 deficit into a 22-18 lead. Kelly Howse hit a grand slam in the inning while Tracy Tonna also hit a round-tripper. Defensively for the winners, Julie Leal and Tonna each turned double plays.

Best Buy's offense was led with homeruns from Jaclyn Sutman, Christina Walter and Jessica Wellstead. The MVP awards for the game went to a pair of infielders, shortstop Jennifer Hayward of Key Centre and Best Buy's second baseman Stefanie Rammo.

Conservatory of Music overpowered Audrey Meredith in the consolation finals 30-28 thanks to homeruns by MVP Laura Spagnuolo and Becky Paul with two each and Imesia Ewan with one. Elizabeth Marshall was Meredith's MVP.

Despite homeruns by Jessica Roselle and Amy Wright, Zoez Computers lost to Halton Credit Union 27-26. Jennifer Hyde played a good outfield for Zoez while the defence for the winners was supplied by Jennifer McManus, Michelle Gregory and MVP Kelly Young.

Bolt Security edged Fehrguard 24-23 thanks to MVP Candace

Wriggleworth's home run. Megan Keeling also chipped in four hits and four runs to the winning effort. Fehrguard got two home runs from Virginia Young and one from Rachel Cogan but it wasn't enough.

MVP Tara Fiorita led Villa Float to a 33-29 win over Cyr Electrolysis with three home runs. Carrie Ann Nichols banged a last-batter homer for Villa. Lee Komow smashed a hit a four-bagger for Cyr.

In the junior division, MVP Jennifer Duff and Brandy McNeil were the big hitters for Duff Contracting in their 30-25 win over Austen Noble. Marian Boardman and Alysson Coulter were tops for Austen.

Tammy Elkie was chosen MVP for Sikkens Paints in their 32-31 win over Aim Lock and Safe. Elizabeth Wild homered for Aim.

Remax had hot acts runs from MVP Kristina Devries, Karen Clark, Jessica Culver and Katie Inch in their 33-30 win over Presto Pools.

Jodi Gleed was awarded MVP honours for Weedman as they defeated Dufferin Aggregates 31-28. Lindsay and Jennifer Nemeth helped out with homeruns for the winners. Stephanie Power and Showna Turner were outstanding hitters for Presto Pools.

In the final game of the day, Diet Centre trimmed Shoppers Drug Mart 34-29. The MVP award went to Diet Centre's Carley Dobson. Anne Jamieson stroked a homerun for the winners. Shoppers' top performers included Sarah Hills and Ashley Wocker defensively with Samantha Kindree, Ashley Leskin, Holly Stokes and Lindsey Banks with home runs.

In the throwing contest, Jessica Staples of Lady Footlocker won the 11 and 12 age group. Alaina Brouwer from KLA Consulting won the 10-year-old, Kristen Haringa from D&S Signs the nine-year-old, Stefanie Rammo of Best Buy Pet Centres the eight-year-old, Jodi Gleed of Weedman the seven-year-old and Ashley Hutchinson from Aim Lock and Safe the six-year-old.



Photo by JOHN WARREN

It looks like this runner from the Conservatory of Music is safe at second in a game against Audrey Meredith in junior girls T-ball action from over the weekend.