

Atoms A's drop three post-Christmas matches . . .

• from REP HOCKEY on page 12
 Jon Ellison popped the first one for Milton when he moved down the right wing boards even with the net and banked a shot off the goalie and in. The second goal was by Derek Rockel, with an assist going to Ellison

on the powerplay. Rockel converted the backhand pass across the crease from Ellison.
 Milton then travelled to Ancaster and were crushed 8-1 by a team that dropped down a rating from AA to A. They were simply too big and too

strong. Milton managed to keep the game close, giving up only a pair of goals in the first period. The first came at 8:29.
 In the second period the teams traded goals. Milton's marker came from Andrew Sandziuk, who cleared

the puck into the Ancaster zone and then pounced on the goaltender's misplay. To this point Milton had played exceptionally well against a much stronger team.
 In the third period Ancaster scored five unanswered goals, three of which occurred with less than 1:20 left in the game. Milton had completely run out of gas.

In the third contest, Milton played again on the road and again they were beaten, this time 3-0. The first period featured a pair of evenly matched teams. Oakville broke the deadlock at 6:19 of the second and added another for a 2-0 lead 1:05 later. They managed the only goal of the third period to take the win.

The shutout loss was rare for Milton, but they could not put together a sustained attack through the last two periods. Their ability to mount a strong defence simply melted away. Milton hurt themselves by taking several unnecessary penalties after the whistle had been blown. Some of the players have been letting their concentration lapse and that is causing the penalties.

The squad travelled to West Lincoln for a tournament in mid January. They split their games, winning 7-2 over Pickering but losing to powerful Ancaster 5-1.

Pickering got on top first with a quick goal at 1:03 of the first but Milton came back a minute and a half later to tie. Before the three minute mark Pickering surged ahead again and held the lead into the second period.

Stephan Glover played a strong game in net, holding Pickering scoreless while Milton rattled off six unanswered markers. Andrew Sandziuk popped his first of three to get on the Milton side of the scoresheet. He converted a pass from behind the net by Ryan Leal.

Milton tied the game in the second on a two man powerplay when center Andrew Sharpe hit Sandziuk in the slot. They went ahead on a perfect three-way passing play from center Billy Robbins to left winger Jason Medeiros and across the ice to Ryan Parker whose hard, low shot to the goalie's weak side went in.

Sandziuk finished his hat trick when Leal pushed the puck past a defender and Sandziuk raced in, corralled the rubber and went in alone, firing high for the marker.

Billy Robbins controlled the puck for 30 seconds in the Pickering end to set up the fifth Milton goal. When the Pickering defence finally challenged him he passed to Medeiros, whose low shot hit the twine.

Graham Darling notched the sixth Milton goal when he swatted in a Rockel rebound picked clean out of

the air. The final goal came on a power play from a scramble in front of the net. Robbins was credited with the point. Leal, Justin Mikelanas, Sharpe, Medeiros, Robbins, Stuart Colvin, Ellison and Parker all collected assists.

After the win Milton faced Ancaster and though they played their best hockey against them, they lost 5-1 allowing Ancaster to advance to the tournament final. Three of the five Ancaster goals came on powerplays. Ancaster put home one in the first, doubled their score in the second and finished with a three-goal flurry.

Defender Daryl VanLoosen ruined the Ancaster shutout when he converted Rockel's pass into a display of stickhandling as he forced his way to the Ancaster goal to score with 2:10 remaining in the game.

The Optimists continued their solid play, taking three of the next four possible points, first tying Orangeville 2-2 and then doubling Flamboro 6-3.

Both teams deserved to win this game, so the tie was the fairest outcome. Milton opened the scoring at 5:22 of the first period when defender VanLoosen picked up a pass from center Billy Robbins in front of his own net and carried it all the way to the Orangeville goal. His shot along the ice eluded the netminder.

Orangeville tied it up in the second on a powerplay when Milton could not clear the puck out of their end. Milton leaped back into the lead at 6:40 of the second period, when Sharpe's shot on net rebounded to Leal, parked in front of the net. The rest of the period went over to Orangeville when Milton took a rash of penalties.

Orangeville tied the game at 4:01 of the third. Milton created the opportunity when a misdirected clearing pass ended up on an Orangeville stick, facing a wide open net.

Milton then played their final game of the regular season against Flamborough. The Tri-County and All-Ontario OMHA playoffs are right around the corner. The ice in Flamboro was noticeably slow and sticky, which interfered with the flow of the game.

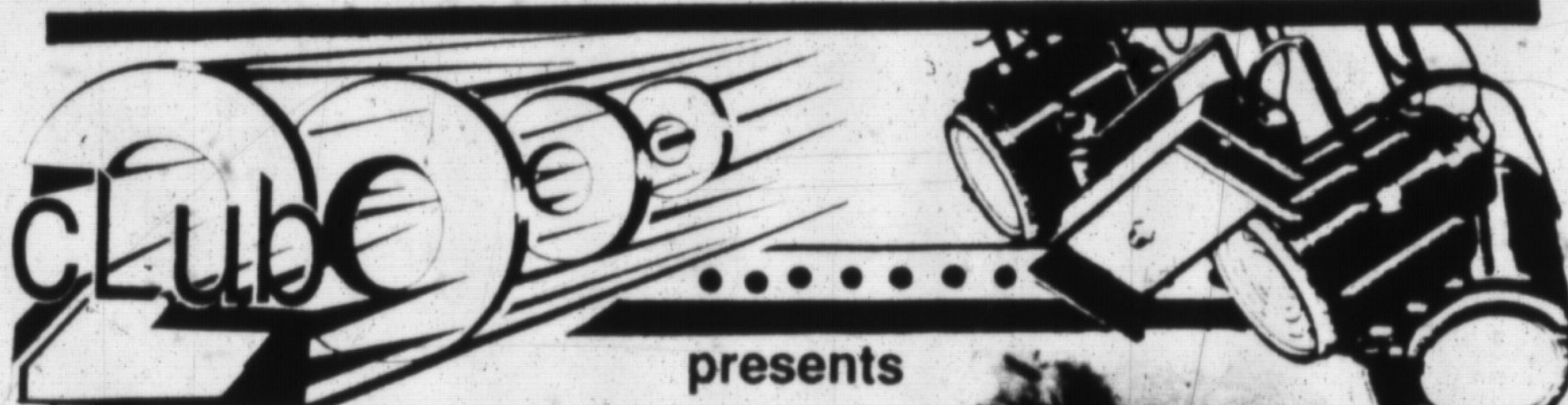
In their fastest start of the year, Milton opened up the scoring seven seconds into the contest when Robbins won the opening faceoff and forced the puck ahead on the right side to Parker, who picked it up at the Flamborough blue line and worked his way around the defender to shoot from the right faceoff circle.

Flamboro tied it on a power play at 5:24 when a long, bouncing, erratic shot skidded by the goalie Peter Dennis. At 9:56 Milton captured the lead on an excellent passing play, from Sandziuk, to Sharpe, to Leal for the score.

Robbins picked up a loose puck while playing in a four-on-four situation. He raced down the right side, swung in to split the defence and deked the goalie with a great head fake to score into the open net at 4:40 of the second.

Milton jumped into a 4-1 lead in the second when Sandziuk scored from the midst of a goal crease scramble. Milton scored again in the third, 33 seconds in, when Ellison took a Rockel pass down the right boards and around the net in an attempt to stuff it in. The Flamborough goalie was temporarily successful, but Rockel swooped in again and smashed it home for the score.

Milton finished the scoring when, in a shorthanded situation, Sandziuk challenged the puck carrier and kicked his clearing pass out of the air towards the Flamborough net. He tore into the zone after the loose puck and popped the breakaway marker.



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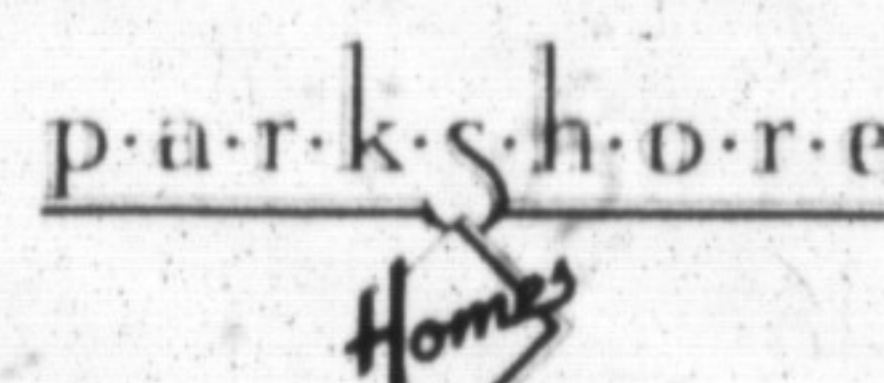
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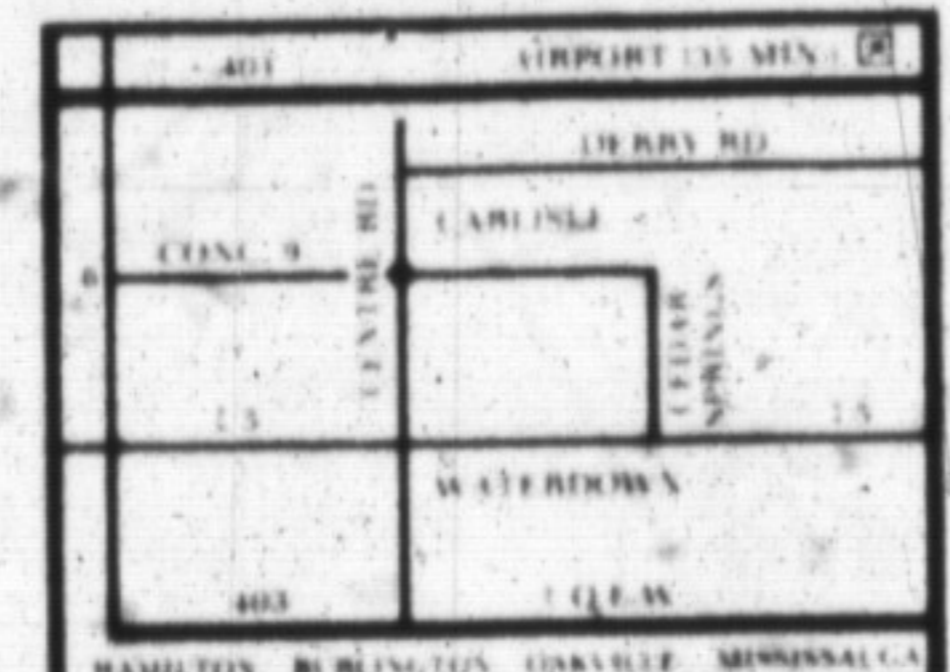
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