

NHL decisions leave hockey in the dark ages

Wendel Clark spears Chicago's Brian Marchment, Stu Grimson goes crazy, generally acting like someone in a screentest for Slapshot II. The NHL All Star Game is scheduled for anything but prime time. Eric Lindros threatens to sue the NHL regarding the entry draft. A video tape of hockey fight highlights shows more pugilistic skill than a similar tape of boxing's greatest fights.

Is it any wonder that the great game of hockey is given about as much regard south of the border as ice fishing, roller derby or five pin bowling?

We can't seem to decide if we want the utter sham entertainment of professional wrestling, or a real honest-to-goodness contested game.

It's hard to believe that the people who want a wide open, high scoring, exciting showcase for an all star game, can't see the stupidity of not insisting on a similar product every time teams hit the ice.

In fact, with the numerous newly constructed rinks, expansion teams and proposed



**Reaume With
A Sports View**
with BRAD REAUME

rinks for existing franchises, it's hard to understand why hockey's powers-that-be didn't insist that all new rinks conform to international size specifications. At least the larger ice surfaces would have promoted the more exciting aspects of hockey by taking some of the emphasis off size and putting it on speed.

To remove the stigma of sham contests the NHL should remove a fighter from the game, automatically. Stick work should be severely penalized and a lack of respect for the officials should result in a major suspension.

If a speedy game with plenty of goals is what the fans want then give it to them. It would

help fill arenas, boost interest, and ultimately lead to a major television deal which is good for the league.

The NHL has for too long given short suspensions for major transgressions of the rules. Grimson's exhibition should be rewarded with a suspension for the rest of the season. Clark should be facing a similar sentence, rather than the three he got, based on his stick swinging conduct.

Major league baseball moved to create a more genteel game decades ago when they outlawed the spit ball, and fashioned rules to bring skill and fitness to the fore. Years of avoiding the truth about hockey violence and in fact, condoning it, has caught up to the game. A transition, to a more acceptable form of the game is the only way to increase interest and credibility.

I remember when the NHL had a featured game on American network television on Saturday afternoons. In a recent survey Americans rated their interest in hockey embarrass-

ingly low, about the same as watching golf.

Lindros and the Quebec Nordiques' continuing stubbornness isn't helping the game either. It's a shame when an up-and-coming team can't translate a major asset into a winning team either by convincing him to sign or by trade.

The stalemate is just going to cause problems for the league and for both Lindros and the Nordiques. Lindros skills are eroding as he misses one of his key development years and the Nordiques are wasting the talents of their young roster. The Nordiques have more to lose and more to gain and should therefore instigate an end to the stalemate.

Hockey management, at every level has got to make some clear decisions to instigate change. A more workable international system and a more enjoyable game for fans and players are all within the NHL's grasp. In fact, the NHL has to take a leadership role in these issues. Everybody looks to the top for leadership.

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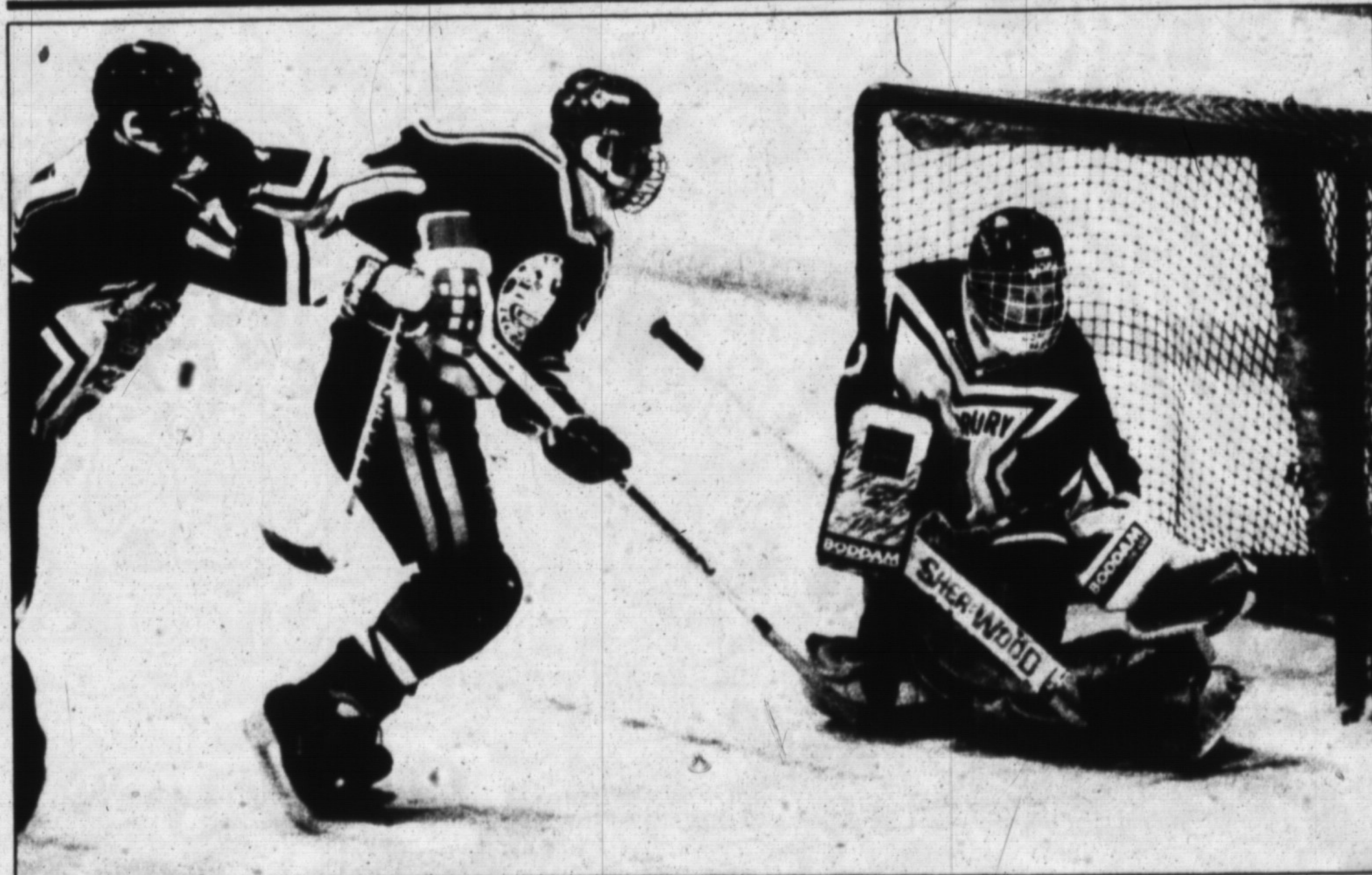


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Taking a closer look

E.C. Drury High School's Rob Newton knocks away a shot by Appleby College's Roger Duthie while Drury's Jamie Goodings (17) tries to stop Duthie from getting a rebound. Despite a 1-1 tie after the first frame Drury lost to the Oakville school 7-2. Appleby College improves their record to 6-3-2 while Drury drops to 3-7-2.

Five Sudbury golds in Drury wrestling win

The wrestling E.C. Drury High School Spartans grabbed the season's first tournament title this past weekend in Sudbury.

Ten Drury juniors competed in the Cadet Division and came away as convincing champions, outpointing Brampton's William Parkway High School 55-27, Durhams XL's and the host Golden Eagles followed with 26 and 25 points respectively.

Eight Spartans made it to their finals with Russ Arsenaull, Jason Near, Chris Price and rookie Matt Davenport. Arsenaull, Near and Davenport all earned their first career titles while Price captured his second of the season.

Impressive Spartan newcomer Mark Fisher earned his second silver in two tournaments while sophomore George Vanellis and rookie James Miller captured bronzes for their first career medals. Rookie Brian Link went 2-2 placing fourth to wrap up Drury's team scoring.

The next day seven senior Spartans took part in the senior high school division with all seven placing in the top four. Chris Spence went undefeated to capture the 134 pound title. Earning silvers were Loe Black at 119 pounds, Kirk Rowbottom at 112 pounds and Colin Widdis at 149 pounds.

John Stevenson took a bronze while Brent Pickett and Simon Vanellis both placed fourth overall. Despite entering just seven competitors, E.C. Drury was also in the hunt for the senior team title. Drury placed a close third behind Hears and Elliot Lake.

Overall E.C. Drury captured 12 medals including five golds in a successful first time visit to northern Ontario.

Spartan rookies shine

E.C. Drury High School's wrestling team had 11 top five finishes among the various weight classes in their first meet of the year. The Spartans entered 20 wrestlers in the recent Georgetown Invitational for first and second year wrestlers.

Leading the way was last year's OFSAA fourth place finisher Anthony Douglas who captured the teams only gold with a perfect 4-0 record. Just behind Douglas was Ontario 1991 Bantam champ Chris Price, Russ Arsenaull and rookie Mark Fisher all earning silvers.

Arsenaull lost a one point decision and had the buzzer sound just as it appeared he would score a pin victory.

Also reaching the finals were Victor Sprenger of Milton District High School who wrestles with the Spartans, he placed third, sophomore George Vanellis who put forth one of his best efforts to date and rookie Brian Link.

Rounding out the top five finishers were Greg Ollerenshaw, James Miller, Scott McLaughlin and Mark Lawrence, all of whom are rookies.

Merchants clinch first to earn playoff bye

By BRAD REAUME

Strike up the band! It's celebration time in Milton.

A pair of Milton Merchant wins, 6-2 over Royal York and 6-4 over Ajax, have clinched the locals first place in the western division of the Central Ontario Junior B.

Clancy Seymour has continued to pace the team, notching a pair of goals in each win. In

addition Shawn Healey, Mike Murray, Jeff Daw and Joel McArter scored in the win over hapless Royal York, and Daner Finn popped a pair, Jason Ritchie and newcomer Sonny Cardillo scored in the win over Ajax.

Scott DeStefano who replaced David Kennedy as the Milton back-up goaltender, got his first two starts. According to Milton coach and general manager Rick Bince he played well in

backstopping the wins.

Bince was notably unimpressed with first place in keeping with the team's early season stand that first was unimportant. He has presided over two previous playoff years in Milton, years in which the Merchants have been dumped from the playoffs in the first round by their arch-rivals Brampton Capitals.

Though Bince professes no interest in a particular playoff opponent it would be unnatural not to want a shot at Brampton despite the fact that some of the steam has gone out of the rivalry with former coach Frank Carnevale in Europe and the Capitals down in the standings.

In local hockey circles, people said that Bince panicked last year when it became evident that Milton was unable to beat the Oakville Blades. Bince made a number of late season acquisitions, shaking up the remaining players to the point where they went into the playoffs not knowing who they'd be playing with or where.

This year things are different. There have been moves, but generally they have been few and based on player requests for more ice time. The new players have been given time to fit in

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No domination in north basketball

The Stewarttown boys cling to top spot in North Halton elementary school basketball action with a 50-19 win over McKenzie-Smith while the W.I. Dick girls team managed a 26-20 win over Brookville to maintain their lead.

In the boys division Stewarttown leads Centennial by a single point, due to an extra game played, despite losing to Centennial 41-25. Peter Mashinter hit for 12 points to lead all scorers while teammates chipped in 10 for the winners. J.M. Ogden notched 11 for Stewarttown with an additional eight coming from Jamie Scarlett.

In other boys division games Sam Sherratt downed Centennial 39-33 with Sherratt's Jeff Langille leading all scorers with 23 points.

Mashinter popped 10 points for Centennial.

W.I. Dick crushed Brookville 43-17 to stay in the hunt, only two points out of first place. Devin Richardson scored 13 for the winners while Robin McCall notched 12 for Brookville.

In the girls division W.I. Dick edged Brookville 26-20 with Tiffany Kishita the leading scorer with six points. Janice Coxie also claimed six for Brookville.

Sam Sherratt defeated Centennial 33-15 with Kim Friedrich scoring 10 and Kelly Pierson and Jennifer Sweetland getting six each. Kate Potosky zipped eight points for Centennial.

Stewarttown downed McKenzie-Smith 33-19 with Barb Merry getting six points and Shondra Stroud hitting for 11 for the losers.