

Hockey Mustangs down Reding in playoff battle

By BRAD REAUME
The Champion

One Milton school was sure to advance into the second round of Halton high school hockey playoffs as Milton District faced off with Bishop Reding in the opening round.

True to Milton District coach Bob Pitt's word, his team was not cowed by Reding. Despite trailing 2-0 midway through the game the Mustangs came back to post a 5-3 win. They advance to play Appleby College today (Friday) at 5 p.m. at Appleby College Arena.

Pitt was forced to express his team's determination after they suffered a 5-0 loss to Reding in the last game of the regular season, albeit, a contest that did not affect the playoff match-ups.

"I told our guys through the whole game that if we stayed on them that we would wear them down," said Pitt. "We played them tough for two periods and hit three posts."

The Reding bench was without head coach Ange Poletto who was in Ottawa, and the squad was short two regular defencemen as Rob Lockhard was out with an injury and Rob Hamdon was unavailable to play. Assistant coach Leo King said that Poletto's absence didn't really make any difference.

"They outworked us," King said, "especially in our end. We were down to three defencemen and had to drop a winger back. In the end they wanted to win a little more than

we did."

Reding's Joe Piazza opened the scoring at 3:56 of the first period when Scott MacDonald and Rob Bednarski combined with him on a nicely executed three way passing play. MacDonald drew the Mustang defenceman and dropped the puck to Piazza who fired a wrist shot past Mustang goaltender Ryan Peddie from the right faceoff button.

Milton had a number of good chances in the first period but Dan Fiorita in the Reding net held his team in. A second Reding goal at 3:29 of the second period, this time off the stick of Eric Mattson, gave the Royals a seemingly substantial lead. Mattson converted a Terry Truman pass from the back boards for the goal. Caleb Powell also picked up an assist on the lay.

The key play of the game may have also been the strangest. A pass out from behind the Mustang net deflected off a skate a ended up inches from the goal line underneath a standing Ryan Peddie. The puck remained under Peddie for several seconds before a defenceman spied it and scooped it out of harm's way.

Only a few short minutes later at 8:06 of the middle frame, Milton hit the scoreboard when Derek Morely banged in a loose puck from a scramble in front of Fiorita. Chad Wrigglesworth and Steve Kaldenbach were credited with assists when their attempts fell short.

Seconds later Reding scored but the goal was immediately waved off

as the puck momentarily lodged in a Reding player's equipment on its way to the net.

In the third period Milton District took command. Kaldenbach scored at 1:43 to tie the game when a rebound ended up on his stick for a second before he deposited it into an open net. Glen McBryde converted a Paul Ouellette pass from the back boards into a 3-2 lead at 6:42 and Morely knocked home the eventual winner four minutes later as he cut across the crease.

Reding did not roll over. Brian Mallany knocked home a goal at

12:44 directly from a faceoff to the left of Peddie. After the game Mustang players complained that the puck was dropped prematurely.

As time wound down Fiorita was pulled in favour of an extra attacker and it almost worked as Piazza clanked one off the left post seconds before Dion Corba picked up a loose puck, wheeled and fired the puck from just in front of his own net into an empty goal and a 5-3 win with seven seconds on the clock.

The game was extremely chippy with players on both sides not adverse to delivering cheap shots. The

referee combatted rough play with lectures and offsetting penalties.

Piazza crashed to the ice in the neutral zone clutching his throat after he had taken a stick blow. After a few minutes he was able to regain his breath and he returned to action.

Mattson was smashed into the boards near the end of the contest and had his helmet pop off before he bonked his head in the collision. After a few minutes on the ice he left the rink under his own power but was taken to Milton District Hospital to check for a possible concussion.

Merchants grab 3-0 lead

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impress Brian Lewis, who is the NHL head of officials, and is in the building watching his kid (Duanne) play," said Bince. "All I know is that it hurts us."

"They only had one guy penalized in the second period, he got a two, five and game for a fight, and they had one guy get a minor and major in the third period. We had Rocco, Mitrovic, Blackman, Emmet, Dunphy, Murray all getting multiple penalties, some with majors and others getting double minors. Two of their goals came when we were two men short."

"It's not right," Bince continued, "these guys look like they've got halos and wings and I know they don't."

Still the penalty problems couldn't dampen Bince's enthusiasm for the win. "The place was rocking. We were all so hyped," he said. "I sure hope I can bring a divisional winner to Milton. The fans deserve it."

"There were lots of rock 'em, sock 'em hits. It was great stuff. Everyone got their money's worth."

If Milton needs to they will play the fifth game of their series tonight (Friday) at Memorial Arena at 8 p.m.

If they won the fourth game in Georgetown last night (Thursday) they'll await the winner of the Oakville/Brampton series. The schedule will be announced when the teams have been determined.

Nelson wins Royal tourney

Bishop Reding Secondary School hosted its third annual Midget Boys Invitational basketball tournament last weekend with Burlington's Nelson Lords taking the crown.

The Lords downed north Burlington's L.B. Pearson 41-28 to take the title. Loyola (Oakville) and Assumption (Burlington) tipped off in the consolation final with Assumption winning a thriller 49-47 in double overtime.

Reding began their tournament with a 45-27 win over Assumption. Mason Clauser paced Royals with 10 points. Neil Bagley had eight.

Reding then advanced against L.B. Pearson. Pearson managed a tough fourth quarter to win 58-44. Pat Sweeney led the scoring for the locals with 13.



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