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# Merchants lapse in the intensity dept.

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
Special to *The Champion*

The Milton Merchants suffered a bad case of amnesia last weekend, as a forgotten game plan had them playing two lacklustre contests and skating away with just two of four possible points.

The Junior A contingent showed up for Friday's home meeting with Streetsville minus both their game plan and usual intensity, and were in fact lucky to squeak by with a 5-3 decision over the Derbys.

Two nights later in Toronto, their missing ingredients — combined with a late-season surge by their opposition — resulted in a 3-2 loss to the St. Michaels Buzzers, who have now locked up the eighth and final playoff berth in the Provincial Junior A West Conference.

The Merchants meanwhile, may now have a real battle with the Mississauga Chargers for third place overall in the west. Milton is five points ahead right now with a 23-14-7 record, but the Chargers have three games in hand.

Mississauga took both their weekend contests after dropping a heart-breaking 3-2 decision to the lowly Junior Rangers last Wednesday.

While expressing his desire to finish in the top three prior to the holiday break, Merchant skipper Gregg Carrigan appears much more intent now on breathing new life into his somewhat subdued team, and emphasizing the need to return to their successful game plan.

"It was horrible hockey tonight (Friday)," said Carrigan, who said a lot of running and more skating will be added into upcoming practices. "We're a bit of a mess right now. We've forgotten how this team's supposed to look."

Talent isn't enough for this team, we're not Bramalea or Oakville. We can't win many games without an absolute total effort."

Milton did manage to win without their usual hardnose, 60-minute effort Friday. Their

forechecking was lukewarm at best and they had big problems clearing their zone for large portions of the second and third periods.

Their defensive problems were due in part to the absence of captain Steve Clarke, who is currently sitting out a four-game, intent to injure suspension taken in Oakville two weeks ago.

Backstopping the Merchants was Dave Dolecki, who picked up his 13th win between the pipes after some clutch goaltending allowed his team to come back from a 3-1 deficit in the game's second half. At the other end of the ice, Derby cage-guarder Paul Desrochers was stellar in stopping 30-plus Milton shots.

Exchanging his usual aggressive checking game for some scoring punch, right winger Cory Holland led the attack with a pair of goals. He scored the only goal of the first period on a hard slapshot and then buried a shot in the slot late in the second on the powerplay.

Assisting on both was linemate Phil James while Robert Gubala also helped set up the second. Also finding the back of the net were Steve Adams, Brian Jones and Jeff Haydar — who added two assists, as did defenceman Mark McPhail.



**Gregg Carrigan**

Picking up single helpers were Adams and Jones. Streetsville goals, which all came inside a five-minute span in the second, were scored by Sivad Cejvanovic, Mike Woolridge and Scott Bingham.

McPhail and Richard Reid counted the goals in Milton's lacklustre loss to the Buzzers Sunday, only their second defeat of 1996. "Our guys didn't look too good, they need to get back to the basics that have won them games this season," said owner Brad Grant. "Having Clarke and Dave Aussem out of the line-up doesn't help either."

McPhail's goal came on the powerplay in the third, to draw to within one of St. Michaels — who held a 1-0 lead after the first and scored two quick ones early in the final frame. Assisting on his tally were Reid and Haydar.

Drawing helpers on Reid's second period goal were David DeMonte and Doug Janjevich — who recently returned from a hand injury. Dolecki was between the pipes.

The Merchants host St. Michaels this-Friday at Memorial Arena and then travel to Georgetown Saturday night to battle the last-place Raiders.

# Penman is king of the hill

Local skiers have been doing a big job representing the Milton Heights Racing Club lately, with a quartet of competitors finishing in the top 10 at various meets.

Milton's Jason Penman was the fastest racer on the Glen Eden hill two weeks ago as he helped his club beat the Chicopee Ski Club.

Emma Fredriksson of Milton and Kevin Martin of Campbellville each took home sec-

ond place finishes and anchored the Hershey Alpine Red Team's 114-82 victory over Hidden Valley. Fredriksson's combined time was 60:28 seconds while Martin's finished combined for 55:27 seconds.

A loss to Devil's Elbow by the Hershey Alpine Blue Team had Milton's Katie Williams place seventh with a combined time of 45:22 seconds.

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