

# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY DECEMBER 6, 1996

## Hawks golden at Silver Stick show sport 5-0 record

The Spectrum Airways minor bantam AA Winterhawks won the Silver Stick with a golden performance last weekend in Whitby.

The Milton-based crew were crowned North American Regional champions with an unblemished 5-0 record and have qualified for the International Finals, to be held in Newmarket in January.

Their flawless tournament showing helped maintain a perfect 1996/97 campaign, which now sees the local airmen sport a 28-0-0 record.

Coronation ceremonies began at roughly 4:30 p.m. Sunday, when the Hawks put the finishing touches on a 3-1 triumph over Livonia, Michigan in the finals. "It was redemption for the Canada Cup loss," said a jubilant coach Darren Rousselle, after besting his U.S. opponents.

Derek Mewhinney provided the heroics with the game winner in the dying seconds of the second period, when he took a pass from Bryan Shaw and fired one in through the five-hole. Forechecking by Shawn McConnell and Bren Silk caused a costly turnover for Livonia moments before Milton broke the tie.

Where Mewhinney was the hero, netminder Josh Arnold was the star. After giving the opposition a brief lead in the opening 90 seconds of play, he stoned the Americans with diving stops and glove saves and held his ground during their third-period comeback efforts.

Milton's insurance marker came early in the third when Jarret Konkle took a pass from Shaw along the boards, moved to the high slot and rifled a shot off the post and in. Jacob Vanderbreggen undressed Livonia's goalie on a shorthanded goal to erase their short-lived advantage.

A sound performance by the entire blueline corps protected their lead through the final frame.

A 4-1 semifinal win over defending OMHA champion Peterborough saw fellow cage guarder Chris Kovachik make his own contribution with a near-flawless showing.

Milton spotted Peterborough a one-goal lead before unloading with four unanswered goals and earning a championship berth. Mewhinney again struck for the winner in the third, and added two more for a natural hat-trick.

McConnell helped set up two of his markers while Konkle potted the tying goal early in the second.

The local squad chocked up convincing wins over Vaughan (7-3), Clarington (5-3) and host Whitby (6-0) in round-robin play.

Leading the offensive charge in round-robin action was Konkle with four goals and Jordan Jeans and Craig McDonald with three each. Mike Austen and Matt Craig tallied twice with singles coming from Kris Beal, McConnell, Mewhinney and Silk.

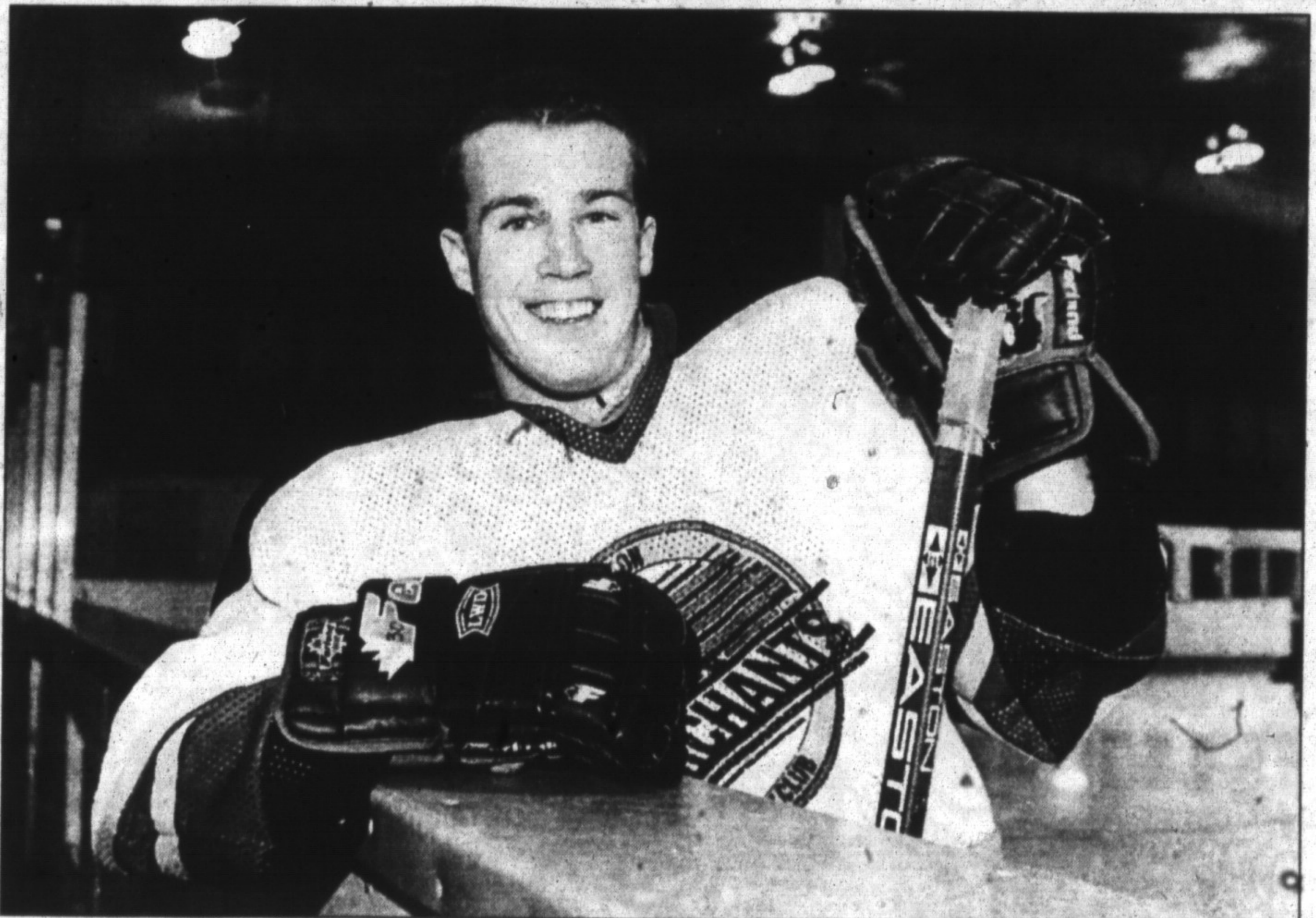


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Matt Van Arkel will be attending famed Notre Dame on a hockey scholarship and the Milton Merchants are actively moving to position other players so they will come to the attention of university scouts.

## Merchants get with college program

By STEVE LeBLANC  
Special to The Champion

The Milton Merchants are building for their future by addressing the immediate schooling needs of their 1996/97 roster.

While a number of former Merchants are now toiling in the NCAA — including second-year Princeton Tiger Scott Bertoli — this is the first year the Junior A club has organized its efforts to promote players to the university level.

Spearheading the initiative is assistant general manager/college advisor David Dermo. Now in his third year at this position, Dermo has been showcasing Milton's talent to numerous schools throughout the NCAA since the season began — and has already helped one Merchant secure a scholarship to an NCAA

school this year. Rookie sensation, Matt Van Arkel, who just recently celebrated his 18th birthday, signed his letter of intent to play for the Notre Dame Irish November 15. The Richton Park, Illinois native had visited the South Bend, Indiana school in early October and made trips elsewhere as well. Among other schools vying for his services were Boston University, Cornell and Yale.

"I chose Notre Dame because it's the closest to home and former NHLer Dave Poulin is the coach. He adopts a wide-open, offensive style that suits my strengths," said Van Arkel, who will receive a full four-year scholarship from Notre Dame. He had been courted by NCAA schools since last year's showing with Team Illinois.

Dermo said the acquisition of Van Arkel this summer got the education

advancement program off to an impressive start. "There were three teams in our league and three in Metro who were after Matt, and basically a strong school program at (Milton's) Bishop Reding (Roman Catholic Secondary School) was why he went with us."

With ambitions to go on to law school after university, Van Arkel confirmed that a good school package was the key reason he signed with Milton. The grade 12 student — who attended a private Catholic school in Illinois — is taking advanced math, religion, physics and English and boasts a solid 3.3 grade-point average.

Selling talented young players on Milton's commitment to education and player promotion, Dermo said, constitutes phase one of the program.

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