

# Sniper Travis Riggin shines in all-star spotlight

## Merchant scores hat trick as West is best in showcase

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

Travis Riggin may have taken the scenic route to the Provincial Jr. A League All-Star Game, but once there made a direct beeline into the spotlight.

A trip to the East-West showcase had been a long time in coming for the 19-year-old Kincardine native, who began his Milton Merchant tenure more than half a decade ago.

After two successful seasons as an up-and-coming Major-Junior prospect — one in which the club went all the way to the provincial finals — Riggin graduated to the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) where he spent the bulk of a three-year term with the Kitchener Rangers.

Since returning to Milton this fall he has helped lead a powerhouse offensive unit. His efforts earned him a trip to Iceland Arena in Mississauga Sunday, when he led a Merchant foursome into the East-West All-Star Game.

Once there, he sparked his West Conference cohorts to an 11-3 shellacking of the East's elite with a three-goal performance. His scoring included a top shelf slapshot and breakaway conversion in the opening frame and a five-hole blast — out of nowhere — in the final 11 seconds of the game.

"I was happy with my performance today (Sunday). I didn't expect to score three times but my linemates (Mississauga's Chris Colman and David Gallo of St Mike's) did a great job feeding me the puck," said Riggin. "It felt great to represent Milton. This organization has treated me so well. My father recently underwent surgery on his leg and was unable to come down this weekend. I'm hoping to get a tape of the game to show him."

While Riggin was the standout for the local club, fellow Merchant all-stars Matt Van Arkel, Mark McPhail and Jeremy Wenzel made more than adequate contributions to the West's dominance Sunday.

Van Arkel registered at least 10 shots on net but just couldn't beat the East's cage guards. He wasn't completely shut out in the overall

points department however, as he helped set up Riggin's final tally in the third.

Second-year rearguard McPhail played perhaps the best defence among the West's eight-member blue-line corp. He made good tie-ups in his own end and initiated a number of breakouts. He was also on the ice for four of his team's goals including Riggin's first.

Rookie netminder Wenzel meanwhile, saw lots of rubber in the final frame. He allowed a goal by Trenton's Kevin Baker but stoned East attackers on 18 other shots. Bramalea's Bob DeCosta recorded a second-period shutout while Dan Kerluke of Brampton and Oakville's Matt Swain also turned hat-tricks for the West.

Swain drew MVP honors, along with a \$250 scholarship, for his side while Newmarket winger Scott Stephens took the award for the East.

## Trio leads team to the tourney title

A trio of Milton-area rink rats led the charge for the Halton Hurricane major atomis recently, when the team swept into Markham and left with an undefeated record and the tournament title.

Tim Johnston provided the biggest chunk of the heroics among his local mates in the championship tilt, setting up Dan Syvret's game-winner in a 5-4 triple overtime victory against Ajax/Pickering.

While Johnston was the standout in the championship game, teammates Ian Robertson and Adam Rutz played a major role in getting the 'Canes there. Robertson scored once and Rutz drew two assists in Halton's 4-1 semi-final triumph over the host Markham squad.

The playoff wins followed a regular round-robin showing, in which the 'Canes scored two wins and a pair of ties, and allowed just four goals against. Tim Johnston was in net for a 2-0 shutout over York/Simcoe as well as a 1-1 draw with Whitby.

Adam Rutz scored MVP honors in Halton's opening win over Whitby, in a 3-2 decision, with a goal and an assist. The 'Canes also tied Waterloo 1-1.

## Minor bantams playoff bound, looking ready

Milton's major bantam A Winterhawks will take their 21-4-3 record into Georgetown tomorrow (Thursday) evening, when they begin Tr-County playoff action against the Georgetown Raiders.

The 'Hawks' outstanding regular season showing earned them first overall in the Harrison Division.

Backstopping the pack are Todd Chappino and Brett McClure while Joe Aquilina, Justin Arone, Matt Brown, Jed Cosby, Matt Dickson, Steve Harding, Adam Hearn, Jeff MacLeod, Sean Mahoney, John Melito, John Richardson, Kyle Smith, John Stringer and Mike Theriault have all contributed to the team's success, which they hope to continue in both the Tri-County playoffs and OMHA playdowns.

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