

Milton beats league leaders

Steamers cut up Oakville Blades; win 7-4

By ROB KELLY
Champion Reporter

Oakville Blades coach Ken Moodie sat in the first-aid cubicle next to his team's dressing with his hands clenched. His chest rose and fell with the fast scoops of air that accompany frustration, defeat, anger. He talked in staccato bursts to a sympathetic cohort perched on a countertop five feet away. The two of them were just out of earshot from the sullen crew surrounding the dressing room after Moodie's league-leading Oakville Blades fell to Milton Steamers Friday evening.

Blades had just dropped a 7-4 decision to Steamers at Milton's Memorial Arena and while pundits would have remarked that Moodie's refuge in the first-aid room was entirely appropriate, it was not really the case. Milton struggles in the middle of the pack in Central Jr. B action but Moodie has never taken them lightly.

"Milton's got a good team," he admitted. "They could easily be up a few points (in league standing)." But Moodie, who is consistently polite in interview situations, had

harsher words both for his own team and for Milton goalie Paolo Zulian.

On his own team: "Yes, we've had some injuries but that's no excuse. Tonight our forwards were sitting there picking cherries in our slot."

And on Zulian: "Their goaltender is good but that was a disgusting display of stickwork. He swings it like an axe. All I can say is he'd better watch it in the playoffs. A lot of teams won't take that."

Zulian incurred only one minor for stick-swinging but it came at a dangerous time, late in the game when Milton was two men short and Oakville was threatening. Milton enjoyed a two-goal lead but Oakville is consistently dangerous on offence and had them managed to score (although there were only two minutes remaining in the game) they could have provided Milton with a scrappy and unpleasant finish.

"They speared me twice in the second period. Actually, they speared me a lot of times," Zulian retaliated. "I owed them." And Milton coach Gary Hudson added: "Their goalie (Wayne Cowley) did the same thing in the first period."

The game was largely a free-wheeling contest between two squads that exhibit similar talents, except that Oakville exhibits them more often than Milton. Both teams are strong-skating and offence-oriented and on a good night (as in the last two games) they produce entertaining hockey.

Friday night Milton jumped to an early lead with two quick goals early on, fast as a one-two body punch combination. "Kill the body and the head will die," the old boxing axiom says, and Oakville never really recovered from the double-blow. Perri Hood and Mike Seiling did the initial damage.

That early lead and the subsequent win were both something of a vindication for Milton's Hudson. The coach had been planning a January push predicated on a "Now or never" approach to the remaining games. That philosophy fell flat both in Milton's previous loss to Oakville (7-5, Dec. 27) and in Mimico on Dec. 29, when Steamers relinquished a 5-3 lead to lose 8-6.

"We had a good meeting after the Mimico game," Hudson said after the victory over Blades. "Against Mimico, we got run out of the rink. We had Mimico under control but they came out and started hitting us and we folded. It was as if everyone just wanted to go home and watch TV. But tonight everybody was up for the game."

That was proven by Milton's tenacity, albeit bad-tempered tenacity, late in the game. Steamers accumulated 22 minor penalties in the contest, getting caught nine times in both the second and third frames. Oakville had 17 minors, matching Milton's nine in the second stanza but adding only six in the last period. But Blades' power play was largely in a blackout for the evening and Milton's penalty killing, an all-around effort, was adequate. Blades had only one power-

play goal, in the first period. "They've never been able to finish the good teams off before," Hudson noted approvingly.

Hood scored Milton's first with assists to Dale Dawe and Tim Pollen with just 1:21 elapsed and Seiling got Steamers' second at 2:43. Rick Stachura and Kevin Holmes assisted. Pete Jeffrey put Milton up 3-0 in the middle of the period on a rebound that saw Blades' Cowley caught out on the wrong side of the net. Oakville's Mike Pelletier cashed on a Blades' power-play chance five minutes later, flipping the puck over a diving Zulian following a passout from Rod Anthony. Claude Bertrand was in the sin bin for Milton serving a hooking sentence.

Steamers started the second period the same way they began the game, with a quick goal. Bob Landry took a hit but still managed to feed the puck to Ken McDonald and McDonald connected from Cowley's doorstep. Blades notched their only goal of the middle act at 3:02 with a corner pocket shot from right wing by defenceman Chuck Lewis.

Oakville came back with a high-powered attack minutes later while they enjoyed a man advantage but they couldn't get the puck into Milton's net. Steamers dampened Oakville's rally with a short-handed goal at 7:15. Pollen recovered a loose puck near centre ice and moved in while Cowley challenged and the defence moved in behind the out-of-position netminder. Pollen's shot was lost in the crowd but a second later the goal light flashed on.

At 10:42 Jeffrey scored his second on what amounted to an abandoned net. Cowley had followed the play to the right and was caught out when Jeffrey moved in to houseclean in front of the crease. He took a pass from Dawe to score.

There was a lot of slam-dancing along the boards in the second and third periods and it erupted onto the middle of the ice as the game continued. Officials attempted to keep control with offsetting penalties, much to the disgust of fans from both sides, but in the third it was Steamers who took most of the calls.

Blades came back with two goals in the third to make it 6-4 on the strength of goals from Andy Pritchard and captain Ron Hoover, but Landry capped the scoring at 16:36 when he converted Bertrand's rebound.

At Mimico, Landry scored four goals, twice on power plays. Dawe and Randy Perusello got the other Milton goals. Darren Stevens, Vince Molinaro and Ross Pears each had two for Monarchs. Scott Hampell and Mike Luinyou added singles.

Notes: Steamers face Barrie Colts Friday at Memorial Arena. Game time is 8 p.m. Saturday Burlington Cougars come to Milton for a 7 p.m. start. Steamers will be holding a dance afterward in the booster club.



Milton Steamer Captain Mark Duval appears to have the upper hand in this little disagreement at Memorial Arena Friday night. Oakville captain Ron Hoover is ignoring the tiff in the background.

Beeliners champs

Milton Beeline Truckers struck gold in Brampton over the holidays as they came home with top honours in a nine-team tournament.

The Milton novice A reps posted a formidable tournament record: in five games they scored 28 goals, allowed only three and earned three shutouts. Milton took the championship with a 2-0 shading of the tough Caledon squad.

"They all played great hockey," said Milton coach John Dent. "It was a big surprise. I didn't know if we could get by Burlington but we did it pretty handily."

Milton defeated Burlington, a team that has meant trouble for Milton in the past, 4-1.

In the championship game, the two well-matched squads played an end-to-end free-wheeling contest, but neither team could penetrate the other's defence for the first half of the contest. But with 5:27 remaining in the second period, Milton's Shayne Ferrier broke away from two Caledon defenders to pop in the game winner. Jason McCall got Milton's insurance goal with a solo effort in the final period. Steve Hunter and Steve Ferrier shared the shutout for Beeliners.

For most Milton players it was the first time they'd received a tournament-winning trophy and Beeliners worked hard to earn it, with two lopsided wins and two more convincing victories prior to the championship. Milton blew by Unionville 9-1 and shut out Streetsville 10-0. They went on to beat Burlington and then knocked off Brampton 3-0.

Kyle Martin went on a scoring tear for the tournament, notching eight goals. But in the first game against Unionville Ferrier showed the way with a hat trick and four assists. Martin and Fabio Pento had pairs and Mike Harris and McCall added singles.

Martin had a hat trick in the Streetsville walkover and John Moffatt scored twice. Chris Grimwood, Doug Janjevich, Pento, Ferrier and McCall scored the other goals. McCall was the pivotal playmaker in the contest with five assists.

The contests got tougher as Milton moved towards the championship. Milton scorers in the Burlington contest were Martin, Pento, Grimwood and McCall. Beeliner Paul MacDonald recorded two assists. Mark McPhail and Jess Eason also patrolled the back line effectively for Beeliners.

Martin scored twice and McCall plugged an unassisted goal in Milton's Burlington shutout.

In Tri-County action Milton dropped a 2-1 decision to league-leading Oakville Saturday. Beeliners came from behind to knot the game 1-1 in the third period at Oakville when McCall scored on Derek Risdale's set-up. But Oakville scored with 58 seconds remaining to take it.

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