

New faces may change standings in MHL



Mark Haskett

Beaver

Cont'd from pg. B1

strongest squads in the tourney. They could have beaten most atom squads in the province.

Against Detroit in first-round playoff action Chris Glover scored Milton's only goal in the second period. Blair Kitchen assisted. Brian Clement, Sean Darke (two) and Lionel Crump scored for Detroit.

In the novice final matters were decided with a shoot-out after the two squads battled to a 2-2 overtime tie. Sault Ste. Marie took a two-goal lead on markers from Mike Dubois (unassisted) and Mike York. Brendan Yarema and Dubois assisted on York's goal.

Compwure came back with two second-period goals. Brian Clement and Darke earned the markers, and each assisted on the other's goal. Jody Kaufman also assisted on Clement's goal.

Sault Ste. Marie scored three times in the shoot-out while Detroit scored only twice. The shoot-out was simultaneous; players raced at opposing goalies from centre ice at the same time. Under such circumstances the netminders are always at a disadvantage but the young goalies, Craig Stoller for Detroit and Jamie Capicciotto for Sault Ste. Marie, hung tough. After the game the enthusiastic Americans, who had cheered their squad loudly throughout, congratulated Sault Ste. Marie with an equally loud cheer.

PeeWee

In minor pee-wee, action Milton's Optimists made it to the playoffs but no further as they bowed out on the short side of 2-1 decision at the hands of Hespeler. Hespeler in turn was knocked off 8-2 by the powerful Hamilton Huskies squad in the championship game.

In the Hespeler/Milton contest, Optimists took the lead in the first period on a goal from Trevor Brandt. Mike Cox and Mike Lee assisted. But Hespeler came back to tie the score late in the period, with Jeff Fallows cashing one, assisted by Bryce Macey and Bob Long. Hespeler moved into the lead in the last period on a goal from Mack Walters, assisted by Macey and Steve McKenna.

Milton manager Mike Boyle had hoped to meet Huskies in the final because Hamilton had edged Milton 3-2 in the tournament opener. Huskies beat Milton with a breakaway goal late in the game.

In the championship match, Hespeler established a short-lived lead in the first period on a goal from Walters, assisted by Macey. But Hamilton came back with two goals in the first, two in the second and four in the third before Hespeler scored their other goal. John Koshowski scored twice for Hamilton but otherwise the scoring was well-spread. Mike Bodnaruk, Tim Pearce, Mark Frankovich, Jamie Bell, Cam Bartolotta and Jim Shadwell picked up the other Hamilton goals.

Steve Parks got one back for Hespeler with an unassisted marker late in the final period.

Bantam

Richmond Hill bumped Milton Remax minor bantams out of Beaver action in the first round of the playoffs and to make the pill doubly bitter to swallow, Milton's arch-rival Oakville went on to win the tournament.

Oakville shaded Richmond Hill 5-4 in the championship. A one-goal margin was the difference in the Milton-Richmond Hill game too. Richmond Hill beat Remax 4-3.

The two teams swapped goals in that game until the third period when Richmond Hill pulled ahead for the last time. Milton had played catch-up hockey all game long but after that last Richmond Hill goal with 7:13 remaining, they couldn't do it again.

Jason Page opened the scoring for the visitors but Remax's Shawn Healey tied it with 15 seconds remaining in the first period. Page added the second of his hat-trick effort early of the middle period but less than a minute later Steve Schaffer countered for Milton. In the third period Nick Lombardi put Richmond Hill back in the lead but in the middle of the period Healey scored his second to unassisted to tie it. Page put the game away with seven minutes remaining.

In the championship match, Richmond Hill powered to a 3-0 lead before Oakville effectively countered with three goals of their own. Richmond Hill scored again but Oakville added two more to walk away with championship hardware.

Kevin Forbes scored twice for Oakville and Greg Mayrou, Brian Dewar and Paul Rudolph added the other Oakville goals. Lombardi, Page, Jon Louids and Allen Gauld scored for Richmond Hill.

The standings shuffled again in Milton Hockey League action Sunday evening but there was also shuffling of a different kind. As the teams turn onto the homestretch of the schedule it appears the weaker clubs are attempting to add a few new good players in order to shake things up prior to playoffs.

Super Choice Country Market featured new additions Mark Haskett and Jeff Martin for Sunday's action and West End Bulls had Doug Riding playing for the first time. Bulls coach Dale Harnden intimated that they also had someone else waiting in the wings.

League director John McLean was concerned about the new players and said he would check on their eligibility. The coaches of the two bottom-place clubs seemed willing to try anything in to improve their positions regardless of whether the league eventually shoots it down or not. And, surprisingly, there was not too much unfavourable comment on the situation from the league leaders.

Those two teams are on the bottom of the league. Straight Line Fence sponsor Rick Rivett said. "I have no qualms about them picking up a couple of players each. That would just make it a six-team league."

And from Sandstone Transport coach Derek Griffiths. "They (the new players) can't play in the playoffs anyway. And if they manage to alter the standings in the meantime so what? It's going to be us and Straight Line Fence (for the championship) and that's it."

McLean said he would check with the Ontario Hockey Association as to the eligibility of the new recruits. The situation regarding Haskett and Martin is especially unclear. Both played for the Jr. B Milton Steamers this year and if they are still on OHA cards they are ineligible to play MHL hockey.

Superchoice coach Tom Chuchmach defended his action Sunday. Chuchmach is now the coach because he broke his foot playing and former coach Willy Ceelen now plays in his place.

"We've been having a hard time. We've had a lot of injuries," Chuchmach said. "I'm probably out for the year."

Les Wilson (one of Superchoice's better forwards) is out for the year because of a car accident. Steve Jobin crushed his fingers at work. And at the beginning of the year we lost Mike Shepherd (the former Jr. B goalie) and Brett Patterson (the former Jr. B defenceman) because they wanted to go play with their buddies (on Century 21 Hawks). We had a tough time even getting enough guys for a team this year."

For his part Bulls coach Harnden is adamant about keeping reinforcement if others get them. Should Riding not be allowed to play in the playoffs he plans on making sure no one else's late drafts do so either. "If we lose, they lose," he said.

The cutoff date for signing new players was supposed to be two weeks ago but given the flexibility both Rivett and Griffiths showed in the face of events, McLean is playing his cards close to the vest. There may well be a league meeting to decide if the latecomers can work through the playoffs, providing that they are not on OHA cards.

But there are complications which could block any such agreement. While Bulls have only three points on the season and should probably be granted some sort of bonus just for showing up every week; the situation is less clear-cut with Superchoice. Superchoice has 10 points, just three behind Haggart Crane Service. Should they be able to alter the standings significantly they can improve their playoff situation, at least to the extent

that they will probably last through the first round. The two top teams in the league get a bye while the third-place finishers play the fifth and the fourth-place team plays the last-place club.

Although Bulls teeter on the edge of being mathematically excluded from finishing anywhere but last they have been putting on a good show lately. On Dec. 30 Bulls dropped a narrow 6-5 decision to Straight Line Fence and Sunday they tied Superchoice 2-2. It was a game Bulls could have won. They led 2-0 with less than three minutes to play.

"That shouldn't have happened," Harnden admitted. "But I guess one point is better than none. I thought we outplayed them the whole game and we should have won. But the guys are working harder and we're getting better. Next year it'll be a whole different story." Harnden was asked whether it's hard to see people to come out and lose every week (Bulls have but one win in two years).

"The guys are good about it. They've got a good attitude about the whole thing. We're not overly serious about it but we want to win. And they deserve to win, especially the guys who have been here for two years."

Dave Harnden scored both Bulls goals. Harnden, the former Jr. B player who is one of the more talented members of the league, played an intense game Sunday as he sensed near-victory. Often one sees Harnden running a comic monologue as he drifts by the opposing bench, lampooning both squads and the referees when the game is out of reach. But Sunday he was in the game throughout, coaxing his teammates on.

Superchoice scored with 2:15 remaining, pulled their goalie and scored again with 35 seconds left in the contest. Chuchmach clapped his hands when the buzzer sounded but it

was as much from relief as vindication. All the scoring in the game came in the third period. Harnden popped his first at 10:25, with assists from Ed Gaeton and Brian Finn, and he added his second at 5:32 when he beat Bob Bellevue to the stick side for the second time. Greg Orpen assisted on the play.

Mike Van Wart put Superchoice on the comeback trail and they pulled off the cliff-hanger tie thanks to a goal from newcomer Haskett, assisted by fellow newcomer Martin.

Haggart Crane Service battled Century 21 Golden Hawks to a 3-3 stalemate. Haggart jumped to a 2-0 lead in the first period but Hawks knotted it in the second. Haggart pulled ahead late in the period but Hawks came back again in the third.

Pat Haggart and Roger Delnin scored for Haggart in the first and Mark Mullaly countered twice for Hawks to tie it. Rick Bridgman put Haggart back in the lead late in the second but Mike Kalapaca got Hawks' comeback goal.

Straight Line established a 2-0 lead over Sandstone with two first-period goals and they didn't surrender the lead. Bill Lyons and Eric Ellison put Straight Line in front before Kirk Mauro countered in the second period. Terry Ellwood, Bruce Ellison and Rob Champoux put the game out of reach with goals in the final frame. Richard Shannon countered for Sandstone.

"We were a little down," Sandstone coach Griffiths admitted. "The guys were getting too fancy with their passes and we missed a few breakaways. I'm not too upset; though it would have been nice to win. That was a four-point game for us. And they haven't beaten us all year."

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