

ESSEX 73's HOCKEY HIGHLIGHTS

Short staffed 73's go 3-1 during busy week

By KEVIN E. NEELS

The Essex winning streak was finally snapped last week with a tough overtime loss to the Wallaceburg Lakers on home ice, but the boys picked up the tempo and rattled off three consecutive road wins to remain undefeated away from home.

As in the previous two meetings between the Lakers and the 73's, this was another close encounter. Each team managed to score once in an evenly played first period. Dan Croft notched the Essex goal.

Period two belonged to Wallaceburg, mostly due to the fact that the 73's could not stay out of the penalty box. The visitors held a wide margin in play but could only muster one goal to take a 2-1 lead into period three.

Within a two-minute stretch early in period three, the home team regained the edge, scoring twice. Referee Ryan Renaud put the 73's in

a hole once again late in the game with a handful of calls, some questionable. It paid off for Wallaceburg. With less than a minute remaining, defenceman J.P. Shaw bulged the twine behind Eddie Wheeler to send this one into overtime.

The Lakers still had about three minutes to go while on the power play and looked to be ready to end this one, but a superb penalty-killing job by the locals gave them a chance. It was not to be, however, as a super effort by forward Justin Durston ended it in favour of the Lakers.

After the winning goal you would have thought that Wallaceburg had just won the championship as they mobbed each other. At centre ice, however, it was a different scenario. Essex Head Coach Tony Piroski and referee Ryan Renaud were discussing the game, and it was clear to those in attendance that it was not a friendly conversation. Piroski and

Assistant Coach Lee Jones had a few more words for Renaud down in the hallway and face some disciplinary action for these encounters.

Essex arrived in Belle River the next night and faced off against the Canadiens with only 15 skaters due to injuries and other commitments. Eddie Wheeler played well in the Essex net as the Canadiens peppered him with 37 shots, compared to only 26 for the 73's. With Wheeler firmly between the pipes, Essex went out and made the most of their scoring opportunities, with a pair of power play goals and three short-handed tallies. This is the second time this season that Essex has accomplished the shorthanded effort. The visitors had the only goals in period one from Dan Croft and Chris Warren.

The lead increased to 4-0 after two periods on goals by Chad Slade and AJay Sweet.

Belle River finally got on the score sheet early in period three, cashing in on a rebound, but that was the only thrill they had for the evening as Essex added three more unanswered markers to post a 7-1 win.

"We made our chances count in this game," said Captain Rob Shepley. "We knew we had a short bench coming in, and the rest of the guys picked up the slack."

Dresden was the site of Friday's game. Dresden has been the only team to beat Essex in regulation time so far this season so the 73's were looking for a bit of revenge. The Jr. Kings drew first blood with an early powerplay marker. Essex went ahead 3-1 with a trio of powerplay goals within a six-minute span mid period. Dresden pulled to within one with a late goal.

The home team did all the

scoring in period two scoring a pair of goals to take a 4-3 lead into period three.

The visitors turned the tables in the final frame notching three markers, one into an empty net for a 6-4 victory. Vince Santia tied it before R.J. Hotts finished with a pair.

"It was a good close game; penalties were minimal," said Tyler Gallant. "We played the fundamentals."

The hectic week ended Saturday night with a game in Mooretown. Essex played once again with only 15 skaters. This was a sloppy game, as both teams seemed to struggle with puck control. The Flags felt they had taken an early lead in the game, but the referee waived off the goal indicating that the puck had been directed in with a hand. Rob Shepley gave Essex a brief 1-0 lead before Mooretown tied it a minute later.

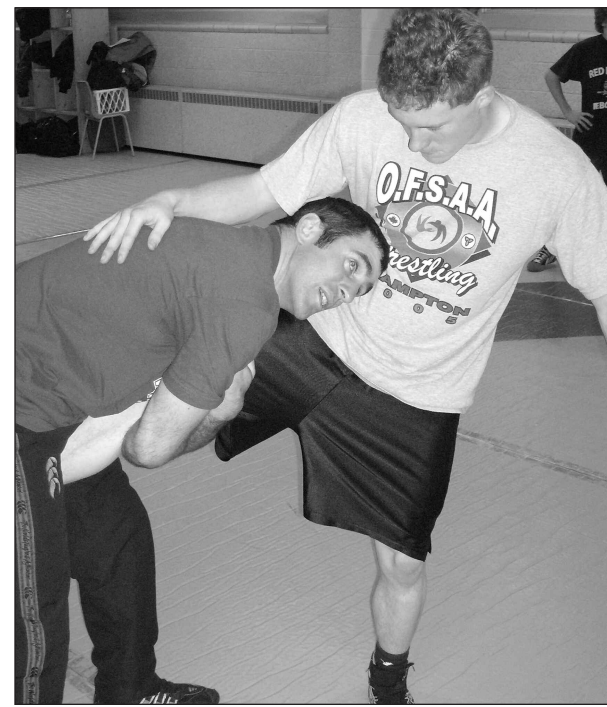
Essex had the only goal of period two as Evan Stibbard ripped a wrist shot past Flags goaltender Jeff Steadman at the 44-second mark.

The visitors put this game out of reach with a pair of goals in the final half of period three, one into an empty net.

"This week was a tough go with four games in five nights, plus the short bench," said Ryan Breault. "We are feeling it now. We're tired, we welcome a break."

Asked if there was any noticeable difference in the coaching, Cory Hamilton said, "No changes. We feel confident with any of our coaches. The pre-game speeches may be different but that is about it."

The schedule gets back to a more reasonable pace as Essex prepares for two games next week. Monday the team will travel to Wheatley to meet the always-tough Sharks, then return home Tuesday to square off against the Alvinston Flyers.



LEARNING MOVES – New Zealand Olympic Wrestling Coach Rodney Jarman, left, demonstrates a technique for taking down an opponent on Grade 12 student Derrick Sullivan. Jarman was at Essex District High School last week instructing students and learning about wrestling teams in Canada. At the end of his trip, Jarman will have spent 24 days visiting a handful of the country's high school and university wrestling teams.



Midget Major CAW Club 200

On Friday night the Essex team started off a three game weekend against Riverside. Essex started off strong when Kyle McCamon scored just 43 seconds into the game. Assists went to Josh Klein and Jordan Miller. Essex then got into some penalty trouble in the second period but were able to kill it off. Spencer "Stallion" Woltz was able to score a quick goal just before the end of the second period with the assist going to Nick Fournier. At the beginning of the third period Essex was up two goals and two men down. Riverside came out firing as they scored just 15 seconds into the period making it 2-1. Less than a minute later Bradley Quinlan scored a shorthanded goal giving Essex back its two-goal lead. The assist went to Dan Bacon. Essex left Friday's game with a 3-1 win.

On Saturday night the

Ravens travelled to Belle River to face the tough Canadiens. The first two periods were back and forth action. With Belle River having the man advantage most of the time, they were able to put two past the amazing goaltending by Chris Zelko. Essex entered the third period determined to score. Josh Klein started the period with a pass from Lucas Gallant. Two minutes later Dan Bacon found the back of the net with help from Chop. Dan Bacon scored the winning goal with assists going to Brit Garon and Nick Diemer. With no penalties in the third and Essex out shooting Belle River 19-2, the Ravens moved on to a 3-2 victory.

On Sunday Essex travelled to Leamington for a home game against LaSalle. Dan Bacon scored in the first period. In the third period Soupy continued the scoring by adding two of his own. From there Sean Bear shut the door. Final score 3-1. Great weekend boys!

Coach Wes should wear pink more often!

Need Cash Before Payday?
 Come See Barb, Mark & Gloria at
ESSEX PAYDAY ADVANCE
 Personal Service • Confidentiality
35 VICTORIA AVE., ESSEX 776-9986

PARKS AND RECREATION ADULT SOCIAL SPORTS
 The Essex Recreation Complex (next to High School) is hosting...
 Adult Recreation Sport programs for anyone over 16 years of age.
FLOOR HOCKEY
 Every Mon.: 7:30 pm - 9:30 pm
 CHOICE OF basketball, volleyball or badminton on one of our 3 courts every
 Thursday: 6:30 pm-9:30 pm &
 Sunday: 1:30 pm-3:30 pm
 Through until the end of the year!
 We've already started. Grab some friends and show up!
 This is a great way to stay in shape, get some exercise, socialize with friends, and meet new people.
 Further info call:
519-776-8992

BEAU'S
 COLLISION & AUTO SERVICE
24/7 TOWING
519-776-6481
OK TIRE & AUTO SERVICE

A&W ROOFING
FREE ESTIMATES
 Call Abe 919-0157 or 325-0733