

# 73's HOCKEY HIGHLIGHTS

## Barnett solid between pipes in Essex victories

BY KEVIN E. NEELS

higher.

The 73's took a 2-0 lead after one period of play. Cory Hamilton opened the scoring on a miscue from Dow while Essex was shorthanded. Wes Tan added a goal late in the period.

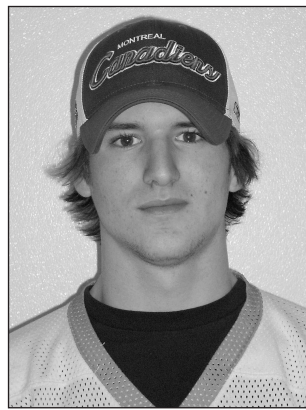
In the second the Sharks finally beat Barnett, but it was not easy. Barnett made two good saves, but could not stop the third effort, as Essex was guilty of standing around watching the play unfold. This was the only scoring in period two.

Period three was scoreless, as Essex was content to play defense and Wheatley did not muster much of a threat.

"Nobody seemed like they wanted to play

Backup goaltender Ryan Barnett was solid in net this past week allowing just four goals on 81 shots faced over a three-game span. Barnett has taken over the number one duties while starter Eddie Wheeler gets over a minor lower body injury.

Monday, Essex made their second visit to Wheatley a victorious one, but it was not what you would call "pretty." Both teams struggled all night. Maintaining control of the puck was difficult, and mistakes were plentiful. If Barnett and his Wheatley counterpart, John Dow, had not played well the score could have been much



RYAN BARNETT

tonight," said Jeremy Venables. "But we continue to find ways to win."

"Once again the hype for this game was there, but the action did not meet the hype," said Vince Santia. "Even though we are winning our execution is not where it should be."

Tuesday, the Alvington Flyers were in Essex and the game was much closer than many thought it would be. This game was very tame with only eight minor penalties being called.

The first ten minutes of the opening period were quiet, but the floodgates opened in the last half of the period with the bulk of the game's scoring being done. Jeremy Venables cashed in on a power play to open things up. Less than 30 seconds later the Flyers were on even terms scoring on a breakaway. The 73's added three more markers before the buzzer sounded to jump to a 4-1 lead, with Evan Stibbard, Vince Santia and R.J. Hotts doing the damage.

Wes Tan added to the cushion with the only goal of period two.

The Flyers had the lone third period goal for a 5-2 Essex win.

Returning to the Essex

line-up after an injury, Anthony Iaquina said, "It was hard to sit out and watch these guys play. My game was off a bit tonight, but I felt I still got the job done. With the injuries we have had, it shows that our depth is incredible."

Saturday, the Kingsville Comets hosted the 73's and were hoping to do something that nobody has done to Essex this season, beat them away from Essex. It was not to be as Essex played another solid game, pounding the home team 6-1.

The 73's held a slim 1-0 lead after the first period, compliments of a Dan Croft power play goal.

Period two was all 73's, largely due to the fact that Kingsville could not stay out of the penalty box. Essex scored three power play goals in a span of 3:18, and added another even-strength tally just over a minute later for a 5-0 edge

after two. Rob Shepley, Jeremy Venables, Mike Lepelaars and R.J. Hotts were the marksmen.

The Comets broke the shutout bid early in the final frame, but could not score again. Wes Tan added one more goal mid-period to round out the scoring.

"We are a team that seems to be able to stay focused for the most part," said Mike Lepelaars. "Everyone is playing their positions well, and our special teams are exceptional."

Mike Roach added, "We have a positive attitude every game out. Tonight, Kingsville was out of character with all the penalties they took, but more importantly, we capitalized on our opportunities."

Essex's schedule is slow for the remainder of this month. They will play one game next week against Mooretown in Essex at 7:30 p.m. Tuesday.

# OMHA looking to give Ravens hockey closer competition

BY FREE PRESS STAFF

centre. After looking at enrollment and performance levels of Essex's travel teams, the OMHA felt the centre would do better competing against clubs in the Southwest division during playdowns, the EMHA board said.

Essex currently plays in the Bluewater division, which includes centres such as LaSalle and Belle River who have more than 1,000 players, said Shawn Carswell, second vice-presi-

dent of the EMHA board.

Essex hockey, Carswell said, enrolls a little under 500 players.

The board told parents they have the chance to appeal the decision by Dec. 31.

However, the OMHA will ultimately have the final decision.

But most parents were satisfied with the proposal and voted not to appeal.

Parents were told that with being designated a 'BB' centre, travel teams would remain in the Bluewater

league during the regular season and face teams in the Southwest league in play-downs.

Southwest teams such as Mooretown and Petrolia may be a farther drive, but would provide closer competition, the EMHA board said.

If no appeal is made, the Essex centre will be given a 'BB' designation at the start of the 2007-2008 season. The change does not affect house league teams.

The EMHA board will formally make a decision at their next meeting Dec. 11.



## Atom A Forest Machine

Coming off of two heart-breaking one-goal losses to Chatham, the Essex Atom A's were ready to travel to Amherstburg to take out some frustration. With Coach Dave Morris absent the boys were ready to step up and not let him down.

Flying out of the gates we were hammering the Amherstburg net with a steady barrage of shots and, at the six-minute mark of the first period it paid off, with Sean Santarossa making a nice pass to Dave

Stafford who blistered a slap shot past the Amherstburg goalie to get the flood gates open. With continuous pressure from the Ravens, Stafford made a great rush and dished it off to Dylan Jarvis who jammed it home to make it 2-0.

Rolling into the second period we didn't miss a beat. Wuerchy to Hooker top shelf made the high-light reel for a 3-0 lead.

SEE ATOM A, PAGE 20

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