



# HOCKEY HIGHLIGHTS

## EMHA bails Essex out of short bench predicament

BY KEVIN E. NEELS

The Essex 73's had a very busy week, hitting the ice for three games on top of practice time. Each and every game out had the club shy of a full complement of personnel, and Saturday's contest in Mooretown had the team using four players from EMHA —Mark Dennis, Derek Battersby, Brandon Beneteau and Justin Dickson. The shortage of players did not slow the club down at all as they went 3-0 for the week.

In a very close, entertaining contest, the 73's first opponent was the Kingsville Comets. Essex played a strong first period, but came out of the period deadlocked at 1-1. R.J. Hotts had the Essex goal.

The home team picked up a break late in period two to get the edge on the visitors. Defenceman Chad Slade's slap shot turned into a slow roller, and Tanner Gallant returned and fired the puck past a surprised Dustin Reeves in the Comets' goal. This turned out to be the game winner.

Essex added some insurance in the final frame, compliments of Mike Roach for a 3-1 final.

"We need to continue finding a way to win," said Tanner Gallant. "We don't want to slide now. We still have some tough games ahead of us."

Cory Hamilton added, "I find it a bit hard to focus right now. We are so far ahead, and that makes it tough. Now that we are in the stretch run the goals are

not coming as easy as they were earlier in the season. Everybody is still fighting for a playoff position. We can't sit back now. If anything, we need to pick it up a notch. We need to be playing our best hockey when the playoffs roll around."

Wednesday the 73's hit the highway for a game against Wallaceburg, the last team to beat the club way back in November. This game started off like it was going to be all Essex, as the team jumped into a 2-0 lead after one period of play. R.J. Hotts and Vince Santia did the damage.

Period two was evenly played with only one goal scored by Wallaceburg while on one of the few powerplay opportunities in the game.

Just over six minutes into period three the Lakers evened it up with another powerplay marker, but a short three minutes later the 73's went to the power play themselves, and AJay Sweet broke the home team's heart on a scramble. Neither team could find the net the rest of the way.

"We went flat the last half of the game," said Chris Warren after the game. "I thought we took it to them in the first half, then we took a penalty and we went flat. This is playoff hockey now."

"That was a big win for us, after they beat us in Essex last time," said veteran defenceman Matt Fuerth. "With playoffs coming we need to hit our stride in the next few games."

Mooretown was the site for the last game of the week. Essex was short

numerous regulars for a variety of reasons. On top of the short bench, starting goaltender Ryan Barnett was feeling under the weather, but stood on his head on several occasions. Sharpshooter R.J. Hotts was unstoppable, scoring three goals and adding an assist.

Hotts had the only two goals in period one as Essex held a 2-0 edge.

The Flags inched closer with an early marker in period two, before the floodgates opened in the final three-and-a-half minutes of the period. Essex scored two powerplay goals to Mooretown's one for a 4-2 Essex lead. Ryan Breault and Chris Barr handled the 73's scoring.

Hotts completed his hat trick with the only score of period three, giving Essex a 5-2 victory.

"Our fate may have been different tonight if not for the EMHA players contributions, and Barney played a wail of a game for us tonight," said Breault.

First star Hotts said, "The AP's did a great job for us, we kept it simple, short shifts, and stayed out of the box. Ryan played real well tonight as well."

The team has a pair of tough games coming up. Monday Essex will be in Wheatley to face-off against the Sharks before returning home for a rematch against the Wallaceburg Lakers Tuesday evening.



### Bantam A Essex Source for Sports

On Jan. 19 the Ravens started the first game of the playdown series against Amherstburg, in Essex. Unfortunately the boys had an off night and took a loss with a score of 5-3.

On Saturday, Jan. 20 there was no doubt about it, the Ravens were in Amherstburg. From the moment the boys stepped out onto the ice they were determined.

The first period ended scoreless. Both defense and offense played strong and we had a lot of great saves from Evan Howson.

In the second period Alex Thomson put us on the board with a beauty shot past the Amherstburg goalie assisted by Travis Henricks and Ty

# Wood, Landrum lead undefeated Sandwich past Essex

BY JAY FAWLER  
SPECIAL TO THE FREE PRESS

Just when Essex had figured out how to stop Sandwich's leading scorer, there was Ryan Wood.

The seven footer dominated the senior boys' basketball game Jan. 18 with 27 points on offense. Vashon Landrum added 21 to keep Sandwich unbeaten as they defeated Essex 78-71 Thursday night. Essex forward Jeremy Butler continued his all-star season with 24 points and guard Jeff Reed added 15 to go along with his five assists.

Essex trailed early but a late rally had them leading by five with just under a

minute to go in the first quarter. A Sandwich turnover gave Essex an opportunity for the last shot of the quarter. The Raiders capitalized on this opportunity when guard Dane Robinson quickly gave the ball to Jeremy Butler for the buzzer-beating three-point shot to give the Raiders an eight-point advantage after one quarter.

Ryan Wood led the Sabres on a rally of their own to start the second half. Every Essex player on the court knew they needed to stop Wood. However, this was easier said than done.

The player who had the most success guarding Ryan Wood was 6'4" centre Kyle

Flood. Flood stopped Wood on numerous occasions in the third quarter, including a blocked shot that would later become a questionable foul call.

The fourth quarter began with Essex trailing by a single point. The Raiders played tight defense the entire quarter which put them in foul trouble early. Sandwich took advantage of their free throw opportunities and found themselves with a three-point lead with only two minutes remaining. The Raiders could not find the basket, nor could they rebound against Wood the rest of the game and eventually were defeated 78-71.



### Atom AE Ram Contract Carriers

The Atom AE team has started their round robin series for playdowns. They will have to play St. Thomas and Belle River before they will advance.

Saturday afternoon they faced the Belle River Rink Rats. It was a very exciting game for the Ravens. They played with all their heart to prove to Belle River that they want the title.

In the first period Matthew Zelko kept the puck out of our zone, passing it off to Carter Sherk who took it into their zone and gave it to Eric Rawlins who made no mistake and dumped it in the net for our first goal.

Second period opened up with hard work in front of the net by Eric, Zack Prentice and Tyler St. Pierre who slid

the puck past the goalie for no. 2. Danielle Dent and Matthew denied the Rink Rats the opportunity to enter our zone and gave a hard pass to Tyler St. Pierre who once again found the back of the net.

Starting the third period with a 3-0 lead, the Ravens could smell victory and were not letting down their guard. The defence continued with their skills, leaving Belle River with little chance to get to Kane, our goalie. The Busko-St. Pierre-Prentice

line gave the crowd a nice show of passes and Busko buried the puck on the goalie, ending the game with a 4-0 win. Another shutout for Kane Gagnon. Special thanks to AP Alex Smith for playing for Cooper.

The Ravens will play Belle River again on Wednesday at home at 7 p.m. Friday they will travel to St. Thomas, who will come back to Essex on Saturday for a 6 p.m. game. Good luck Ravens!

## ESSEX OPTIMIST RECREATIONAL SOCCER LEAGUE 2007 REGISTRATION

**Dates:** Saturday - January 27, February 3, February 24  
March 3 (Final Registration) - After this date NO applications will be accepted at any location.  
**Place:** Essex Memorial Arena - in the meeting room  
**Time:** 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

### REGISTRATION FEE

\*One Child - \$60.00  
(\$40.00 Registration Fee, \$20.00 Raffle Tickets)

\*Two Children - \$120.00  
(\$80.00 Registration Fee, \$40.00 Raffle Tickets)

\*Three Children - \$160.00  
(\$120.00 Registration Fee, \$40.00 Raffle Tickets)

\*Four Children & over - \$160.00  
(\$120.00 Registration Fee, \$40.00 Raffle Tickets)

If you register on the last registration date, March 3/07, a \$20.00 late fee will apply. For example it will be \$60.00 for registration instead of \$40.00, plus \$20.00 raffle tickets for a total of \$80.00.

- Cheques for Registration should be made out to E.O.R.S.L.
- Cheques for Raffle Tickets should be made out to E.S.F.D.A

NSF CHEQUES WILL BE CHARGED \$50.00

NCBS is now available for qualified participants who receive national child benefit supplement. For more info or to receive your form go to Essex Town Hall.



**VOLUNTEERS ARE IMPERATIVE TO THE RUNNING OF THIS YEAR'S LEAGUE!**

- COACHES
- CONVENORS
- FIELD SET-UP
- REFEREES FOR ALL DIVISIONS
- ASST. COACHES
- BOARD MEMBERS
- GAATEEN HELPERS

For more information or to print off your registration form visit our website at [www.eorsl.piczo.com](http://www.eorsl.piczo.com)

**ESSEX MINOR BASEBALL ASSOCIATION**

**NOW ACCEPTING TRAVEL COACH APPLICATIONS FOR THE 2007 SEASON: Deadline: February 3, 2007**

• ROOKIE	(Born 2000-1998)
• MOSQUITO	(Born 1997-1996)
• PEE WEE	(Born 1995-1994)
• BANTAM	(Born 1993-1992)
• MIDGET	(Born 1991-1989)
• JUNIOR	(Born 1988-1987)

Applications for interested parties are available at the **Essex Source for Sports**

Or Contact for further information

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