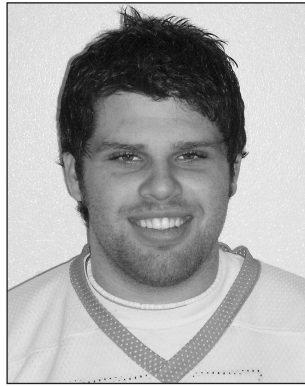




HOCKEY HIGHLIGHTS

Canadiens embarrass 73's at home

BY KEVIN E. NEELS



Chad Wolters



Rob Shepley

If you are a Belle River Canadiens fan, you probably felt delight in last Tuesday's game at Essex Memorial Arena, as the visiting Canadiens handed the Essex 73's some of their own medicine – defeat. Belle River showed no mercy as they soundly beat Essex by a 5-0 score.

"We knew this has been coming for a while," veteran player Chad Wolters said.

Captain Rob Shepley summed it up best. "We knew we have not been playing well as well as we should be the last four or five outings, and we certainly didn't need to lose to prove it."

The first period was all Canadiens, as they continually beat the 73's to the puck, and out-hustled them throughout the period. The hard work paid off for the visitors as they jumped out to a 3-0 lead.

The locals must have received a tongue lashing between periods as they

came out strong in period two, but ran into a problem named Dan Eichel. The Belle River goaltender played solid in keeping the 73's off the score sheet.

The visitors added a bit of salt to the wound by cashing in on a power play late in the period.

But the Canadiens were

not done quite yet. They added a shorthanded marker late in period three for the shutout.

"Belle River out-battled us, and they deserved to win," said Wolters. "I hope this is an eye opener for us, especially the first year players. This is reminiscent of a couple of years ago when we could not put the puck in the net, and were eliminated by Dresden. We have to find a way to put the puck in the net."

"I hope a game like this will build character for the team," Shepley said.

With only two weeks remaining in the regular season, Essex will play just once this week when the Wheatley Sharks invade the Essex Arena on Tuesday.

Zero-tolerance policy enforced in 73's decision

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Rather, he feels the OHA is emphasizing its "zero tolerance" policy for coaches who verbally confront an official.

"It's perplexing," Byrne said. "There were no threats or physical conduct. This was simply a disagreement."

Byrne said a shorter suspension term would have been acceptable, but one that spills over into the next season and causes Pirotski to miss a 73's playoffs run is "very heavy."

"My interpretation is that they've thrown everything into a pot and painted over it with a broad brush," Byrne said. "I think there are altercations every day in hockey... This moves us to a whole new level that even a referee can result in a punishment this severe. This is groundbreaking stuff."

Byrne said the appeals committee is suggesting that coaches register any com-

plaints they may have to the OHA office in Cambridge.

"It seems curious that for every little issue that arises they expect people to take it to Cambridge," Byrne said. "Whatever happened to local decision making?"

Byrne said he is concerned that the appeal committee's decision will dampen some people's enthusiasm about volunteering to coach and work with young athletes.

Karen Phibbs, a member of the appeal board, refused to comment when asked about the board's reasons behind handing down the one-year suspension, saying "it is inappropriate" to make public the information because it could affect any future appeal.

Pirotski and Jones have worked together for five seasons and led the 73's to four Great Lakes Junior 'C' Hockey League titles and two All-Ontario championships.



Atom A Forest Machine

The boys played the third game of their first round of play downs in LaSalle on Thursday night. With each team having one win, the boys were looking for that go-ahead game.

The Ravens took the lead in the first period with Brett Rickeard finding the back of

the net with a pass from Jordan Hooker and William Wuerch. The Sabres came back within four minutes to tie it, leaving a score of 1-1 after the first period.

The Sabres came on strong in the second period with three goals. Essex answered with one of their own goals

by Hooker passing to Rickeard who found Wuerch open and he scored making it 4-2.

The third period started with LaSalle scoring two quick goals. With a score of 6-2 Essex would not give up. Rickeard picked up the puck at his own goal line and went end to end to score his second of the game.

Within one minute the pumped up line of Jonah Fuerth, Mitchael Salter and Mitchell Hudvagner came out with Huddy seeing the top corner, with great passing from Salty and Fuerth. LaSalle once again answered with another goal but the Ravens kept fighting. Rickeard was able to get his hat trick with assists going to A.J. Market and Hooker. Both goaltenders Kyle Hill and Josh Myers had several shots and gave it a great effort. Great hustle to Sean Santarossa, Dalton Langlois, Adam Zanier and Dillon Jarvis.

Being down by a game the

boys knew they had to win on Saturday night. The boys played a tight first period. LaSalle got on the board first but the Ravens were able to tie it on a goal by Dave Stafford. The boys had lots of chances to score but couldn't capitalize.

LaSalle took the lead in the second period with two more goals. Rickeard took a great pass from Hooker and fired a shot to the short side of the net, bringing them within one goal. Derek Morris and Jeff Miller had to stay strong on defense to keep the score close. Stafford was able to find the back of the net again for his second and tie the game 3-3. Just when overtime loomed LaSalle took a quick backhand shot that found the net with only 39 seconds left. The final score was 4-3 for LaSalle and they took the series 3 games to 1.

The boys will have to wait to see who they play in the play-offs. Good luck Ravens!

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