



# HOCKEY HIGHLIGHTS

## Sharks and Lakers hold 73's to a point

BY KEVIN E. NEELS



As the playoffs get set to begin the Essex 73's find themselves in the midst of a huge downward spiral. Having just one win in the past six outings has the team feeling a bit down on themselves at the moment. Can they get things turned around? Well, there is no tomorrow as the playoffs are set to begin.

Tuesday, in perhaps the 73's best game of the season, they came out fast and hard, embarrassing the Wheatley Sharks 7-1. The Essex power play was non-stoppable in this game, scoring six times. R.J. Hotts was the game's first star, notching five assists. The locals led 3-0 after one period on goals by Chris Warren, Mike Roach and Tanner Gallant.

In period two, Wheatley notched their only goal sandwiched between a pair of Essex goals by Dan Croft and Tanner Gallant.

Essex rounded out the scoring in the final frame with another pair of goals. Tyler Gallant and Mike Lepelaars did the damage.

"We were puck hungry tonight, and our power play was super tonight," said Jeremy Venables. "It was nice to have a full lineup tonight also. We were getting tired playing with a short bench."

"I'll be the first to say it's hard getting these guys motivated when there's nothing to play for," said Assistant Coach Jamie McDermott. "With playoffs starting next week, that should be enough motivation right there."

How tough has it been

being the main man behind the bench in Coach Tony Piroski's absence?

"Not that tough at all," McDermott said. "Besides, Tony is not that far away, and Jordy is doing a great job. He knows the game well, and I am sure that he gets some tips from his father. The veterans help do some coaching as well, which helps out a great deal."

Lethargic, disinterested and lackadaisical are some of the words that could have been used to describe Saturday night's game in Kingsville. From the goal-tending out, Essex did not show up for this game. Kingsville took it to the 73's in every aspect of the game.

"It's hard to win when you don't do anything right," stated AJay Sweet.

Kingsville jumped into a 2-0 lead after one period and never looked back.

The Comets led 3-0 before Essex finally got on the board, but any momentum the 73's may have gotten died shortly afterwards when goaltender Eddie Wheeler misplayed the puck and it ended up in the empty cage behind him.

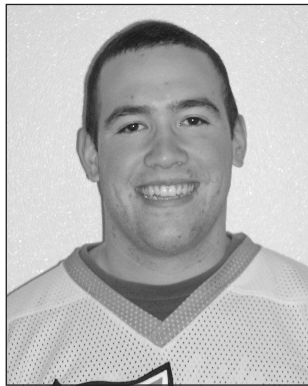
In the final period the home team completed the

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- Assistant Coach Jamie McDermott

scoring with a power play goal for a final score of 5-1 Kingsville.

"We had no intensity tonight," said Sweet. "We were embarrassed. We have to realize that first place does not mean anything.



for a 3-3 tie.

It took just 11 seconds to get on the scoreboard, with Evan Stibbard doing the scoring. Wes Tan increased the lead at 3:08, and it looked like the 73's were off and running. The

*"We seem to have lost our focus, our whole team is struggling right now."*

- Dan Croft

We have to play well now, when it counts."

"We don't seem to have our heads on straight right now," said Chris Barr. "I can't explain why we have been playing so poor of late, but we better figure it out soon or we will be done playing hockey sooner than we thought. Give Kingsville credit tonight, however, they were a desperate team, they did all the little things right."

The regular season ended Sunday in Blenheim where the 73's started strong but faded fast and had to settle

Blades got one back late in the period, but Essex regained the two-goal edge less than a minute later on a Dan Croft power play goal. Period two was score-



less.

Blenheim fought back to even the score in the third period with a pair of goals to send this one into extra time.

Neither team could find the back of the net in the

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- AJay Sweet

### Mooretown Flags versus Essex 73's

Fri. Feb 16 - Mooretown at Essex 7:30pm

Sat. Feb 17 - Essex at Mooretown 7:30pm

Tue. Feb 20 - Mooretown at Essex 7:30pm

Wed. Feb 21 - Essex at Mooretown 8:00pm

*If necessary:*

Tue. Feb 27 - Mooretown at Essex 7:30pm

Wed. Feb 28 - Essex at Mooretown 8:00pm

Fri. Mar 2 - Mooretown at Essex 7:30pm

was behind netminder Ryan Barnett, but was cleared by his defense before going over the goal line.

"We seem to have lost our focus, our whole team is struggling right now," said Croft. "I don't know if we are not taking it serious or what, but the playoffs are here. The other teams have been in playoff mode for a couple of weeks now, fighting for playoff positioning, and are at the top of their game. (We), on the other hand, are one of the weakest teams in the league."

"We are not feeling real good about the playoffs," said Ryan Breault. "We are not playing as a team, too many individual efforts, which happens when a team is not playing well. We have to get this out of our heads, get back to our game, and soon."

extra period, but the Blades sure gave it their best shot, as they came close on numerous opportunities, including one puck that



### Cottam Minor Baseball

BASEBALL REGISTRATION  
SATURDAY MARCH 17th & 24th  
11:00 - 1:00  
RIDGEVIEW PARK - COTTAM

**HOUSE LEAGUE: AGES 4-16**  
**ADULT RECREATIONAL CO-ED**  
25 AND OLDER

MORE INFO CALL: RICK (519) 839-4317  
**TRAVEL**  
ROOKIE, MOSQUITO, PEEWEE  
MORE INFO CALL: RAY (519) 975-1035  
REGISTRATION FORMS AVAILABLE  
[www.c-m-b.org](http://www.c-m-b.org)  
EMAIL: [registration@c-m-b.org](mailto:registration@c-m-b.org)

**GENERAL MEETING FOR BOARD CREATION**  
ALL WELCOME  
SATURDAY FEBRUARY 24th  
2:00 - 4:00 RIDGEVIEW PARK

### Essex Minor Hockey Association

#### ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

**Wednesday March 7th, 2007 • 7:00 PM**  
**Essex Civic Centre Council Chambers**

These items will be on the agenda:

- Reports on 2006/2007 Season
- Election of the 2007/2008 Executive
- New Business brought before the meeting for discussion

The EMHA Executive has proposed several changes to the Constitution & By-Laws, to be voted on at the Annual General Meeting. Please review these changes by visiting the EMHA website at: [www.essexhockey.ca](http://www.essexhockey.ca)

Please submit any proposed changes to the Constitution & By-Laws in writing by February 21st, 2007.  
Please mail your proposed changes to:  
**Essex Minor Hockey Association**  
Box 111, Essex ON, N8M 2Y2

### Essex Optimist BASKETBALL TRI-STAR

*Friday,*  
**February 23, 2007**

*Registration*  
**6:30-7:00 PM**

**Essex Community Centre Gymnasium**