



# HOCKEY HIGHLIGHTS

## Roach propels Essex to 2-0 series lead

BY KEVIN E. NEELS

Mike Roach has been a big reason why the Essex 73's hold a 2-0 series lead against the Wallaceburg Lakers, having been in on six of the nine goals Essex has scored so far in the two games played. His linemates, R.J. Hotts and Britt Ouellette, have also helped the cause with a combined six points. For Ouellette, this has been a better than expected return to the line up, since he's been out with an injury since the start of the season.

In the opening game Friday, Essex dominated every aspect of the game but the scoreboard. The first period was arguably the best Essex has had all season long, out-shooting Wallaceburg 19-6, and out-chancing the visitors by an even wider margin. Solid goaltending by Matt Berglund was the only thing keeping the green and white in the game. Jeremy Venables' shot from the blue-

line changed direction and found the back of the net for the only score of the opening period.

Essex came out on fire once again to start period two, and increased their margin to 3-0 before the four-minute mark. Roach scored the first at the 0:23 mark, and Venables his second of the night at 3:47 while on a power play. Wallaceburg crept back into the game with a pair of fluke goals late in the period to set up an interesting finish in period three.

Period three was much tighter than the first two periods but Essex managed to get the only goal mid-period, coming off the stick of Tyler Gallant and ending the Lakers chance of stealing a road win to start the series. The final score was Essex 4, Wallaceburg 2.

"I think this was our best game all year," said Britt Ouellette. "The physical play got me into the game early, as I am a bit out of shape. These guys are a tough oppo-

nent, but if we play our best every night out we will be okay."

"This is going to be a physical series until the very end," added Chris Warren. "Britt is right, if we play our best every night out we will be hard to beat."

The second game in the series went Sunday afternoon in Wallaceburg and, as predicted, it was another physical one. Essex got the early jump in the game as Dan Croft roofed a shot at 1:47 to open the scoring. Evan Stibbard upped the lead to 2-0 with a pretty deflection goal from a point shot. The Lakers got that one back two minutes later with a power play goal to leave the score at 2-1 after one period of play.

Wallaceburg took the 73's and the fans by surprise early

in period two with a pair of goals just over a minute apart. Both goals looked stoppable but handcuffed Eddie Wheeler. The visiting 73's fought back and scored a couple of weak goals themselves, with Mike Roach notching both, one a short-handed effort.

Ahead 4-3 entering the third period, the last thing Essex wanted to do was sit on the lead, but sometimes it's easier said than done. Wallaceburg tied the game mid-period to get some momentum back and make for a barnburner finish. Essex broke the deadlock just a few minutes later as Roach took a perfect feed from Hotts and his backhand beat Berglund to complete his hat trick and give the 73's a hard fought 5-4 win.



GUIDING THE LITTLE GUYS – During a recent Saturday morning practice, Essex Timbits hockey players received a few pointers from the Essex 73's. The Great Lakes Junior 'C' club helped the tykes develop their skating skills and puck handling. From left: Dan Croft, unidentified Timbit player, Chase Cosgrove, Blake Harnadek, and Chad Wolters.

"This was not the prettiest win but we will take it," said Mike Roach. "This was another hard-hitting, physical game. The key to my success tonight was easy – just shoot on net, you never know what will happen. We need to come out strong again Tuesday back in Essex and really put this team behind the eight ball. We do not want to give them any life."

### Essex 73's vs. Wallaceburg Lakers (Essex leads 2-0)

- Tues. March 6 – Wallaceburg at Essex
  - Wed. March 7 – Essex at Wallaceburg
  - Tue. March 13 – Wallaceburg at Essex
  - Wed. March 14 – Essex at Wallaceburg
  - Fri. March 16 – Wallaceburg at Essex
- Game time: 7:30 p.m.



### Bantam A Essex Source for Sports

Late night Friday under the dome in Riverside the Bantam A's hit the ice for Game 3 of playoffs. With a short bench and not much hockey being played in the last week, the boys came out a little sluggish allowing Riverside to grab a one-goal lead early in the first.

But, as the saying goes, never wake a sleeping giant! Essex roared back in the second with five unanswered goals, three of them coming off the stick of Colin Delaet with some help from his friends – Tony, Lyle, Blain, Alex, Kyle, and Tyler R. Tony also scored from Tyler R. and Blain,

while Travis displayed his sharp shooting skills with a bullet over the shoulder of the goalie from Tony and Jessie.

Going into the third up 5-2, our goalie Wes decided to get in on the action as he and Tyler assisted Tony on a beautiful short-handed goal. With our grinders Chad and Ryan keeping constant pressure on their "D", Jessie finished our scoring from Alex and Kyle for a 7-4 win and a 3-0 playoff record.

Thanks again to the coaching staff and our manager Michelle for everything you do for these kids.

## Ice rental rates to increase

BY ANDY COMBER

Essex Town Council voted to increase ice rental rates 3 to 5 per cent for the 2007-2008 season, during a budget meeting Feb. 26.

"Over the past two years, ice rates have been raised 3 per cent each year to account for the increased costs to operate the rinks," said Doug Sweet, the town's director of parks and recreation who presented a report on ice rates to council.

Sweet recommended no more than the three per cent increase for the 2007-08 season to keep the town's rates in line with surrounding municipalities. An original motion by Coun. Morley Bowman supporting that recommendation was amended however, making the increase 5 per cent for non-prime and preferred rates and 3 per cent for

prime rates.

Effective August 1, 2007, ice rates for the 2007-08 season, including GST, will be \$154.50 for prime and \$141.50 for non-prime and preferred.

Councillors said the greater increase to the preferred rate, used exclusively by minor and youth organizations, would not seriously increase costs to minor hockey and figure skating groups, because the cost would be spread among members.

Michele Bradt, president of the Essex Minor Hockey Association, said the organization was prepared for the increases.

"We were forewarned that there would be increases," said Bradt, who praised Doug Sweet's efforts to

keep the Essex ice rates at competitive levels with other municipalities, and for keeping users informed on possible ice rate increases.

"Essex still has comparable ice rates," said Bradt, referring to Sweet's report that shows prime ice rates ranging from a low \$145 in LaSalle to a high of \$158 in Windsor. For preferred ice rates, Leamington rates were lowest at \$138.96 compared to a high of \$157 in Amherstburg.

Despite the higher 5 per cent increase to the preferred rate, Bradt agreed that the cost would be spread among the organization's members, lessening the impact. In addition, rates charged to members of minor hockey are based on how much ice time they use.

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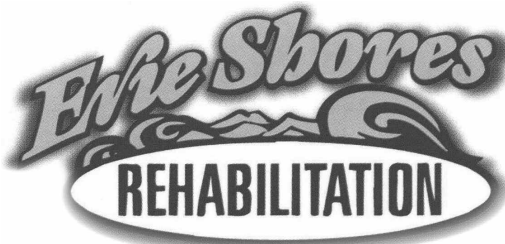
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## Essex Minor Hockey Association

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING  
 Wednesday March 7<sup>th</sup>, 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