

Waxers lose scoring touch

Rangers take 2-1 lead in junior series;
Game 5 tonight at Markham Centennial

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Sports Editor

During the regular season, scoring goals wasn't that difficult a task for the Markham Waxers.

But at the same time they had a penchant for surrendering a few more than what head coach Russ Herrington would have preferred.

With the Provincial Junior A Hockey League playoff series now in full swing, the Waxers have reduced their goals against in their first-round, best-of-seven series against the North York Rangers, allowing just seven goals in the first three games.

At the other end, the Waxers also picked a bad time to go into a goal-scoring famine as they dropped a 3-1 decision to the Rangers in the third game at North York on Wednesday and trail the series two games to one.

Steve Nobili scored the lone goal for the Waxers just 19 seconds after the Rangers took a 1-0 lead in the second period. The Rangers scored the eventual winning goal before the period concluded and added an insurance marker in the third.

If the scoring drought continues this weekend after hosting yesterday's fourth game, and tonight's fifth game at Centennial Arena starting at 8:30 p.m., the Waxers might be taking an earlier-than-expected summer vacation.

"During the regular season we paid the price to get those goals. We're not doing that now," said a dejected Herrington after Wednesday's loss.

Among the sacrifices not being made was the lack of traffic placed in front of Rangers' goalie Kenny Grad, who has been good when called upon.

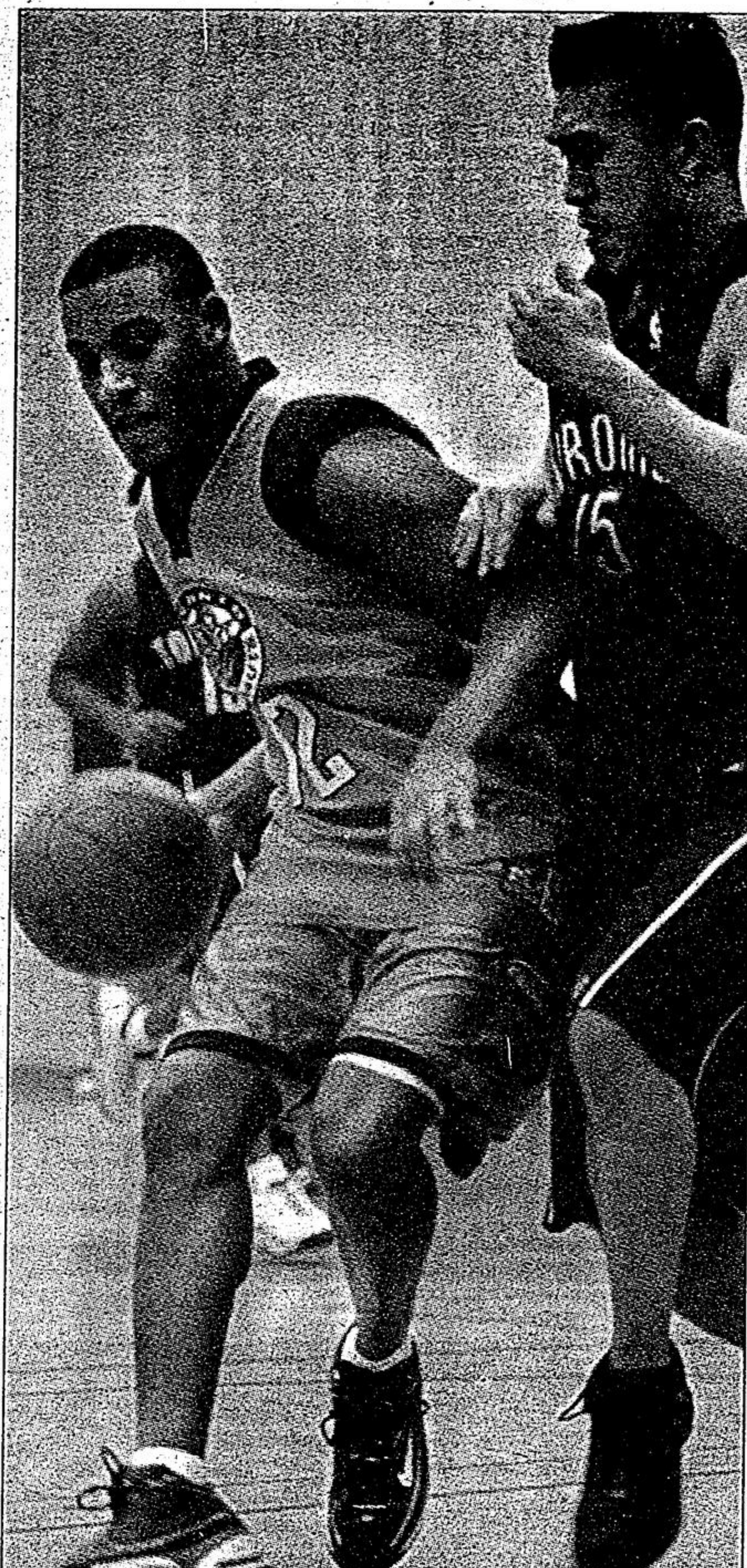
The Waxers' power play has also been inconspicuously absent as they've scored just once in the first three games.

The Waxers must also find a way to get their top scorer, Jesse Boucher, back in sync. A 51-goal scorer during the regular season, Boucher has been held in close check by the Rangers in the first three games.

"What we need is some accountability and some pride," assessed Herrington. "We're playing without both of these things right now."

About the only bright spot so far in the series has been the work of goalies B.J. VanMierlo, who played well in Wednesday's loss, and Chris Lawrence.

"I feel sorry for our goalies," said Herrington. "They've been showing up and maybe about three other guys. North York has 23 guys showing up to play and that's been the difference."



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

ARGONAUT TRIES HOOPS

Toronto Argonauts' football-turned-basketball player Adrien Smith (left), tries to squeeze by Raptor Ambassador Ron Yeung during action in last Saturday's Markham Unionville Minor Basketball Association's annual All Star Day at Markville Secondary School. The exhibition game ended in a 92-92 overtime tie.

Blues take home ice advantage away from Spirit

Late comeback by Stouffville falls short
in a 5-4 loss to Collingwood;
Game 5 goes Sunday afternoon

There wasn't much spirit in the Stouffville Spirit on Thursday night at the Stouffville Arena.

The Collingwood Blues dominated the Spirit for most of the Provincial Junior A Hockey League playoff game and held on for a 5-4 win.

Heading into last night's game in Collingwood, the Blues led the best-of-seven North Conference quarterfinal two games to one.

Game 5 will be played Sunday at 3:30 p.m. in Stouffville. If needed, Game 6 goes Tuesday in Collingwood and the seventh game Thursday in Stouffville.

The Spirit was listless for most of Thursday's game, allowing the Blues to score four straight goals and open a 5-2 lead in the third period.

Curtis Cribbie faced 34 shots and made several big saves in the Spirit net. The Spirit managed 24 shots.

The Spirit did come back in front of 400 fans, netting two late goals and threatening to tie the score in the last minute. But Anthony Minicucci hit a post and Kevin Jarman was robbed by Blues' goalie Dan Baxter.

Minicucci, the North Conference scoring champion and MVP, had two goals and assisted on the Spirit's other two. Mark Mitchell, who also had two assists, and Mike Forgie scored the others.

Spirit head coach Brian Perrin loudly challenged his players, especially the team's defence, in the post-game dressing room.

"You have to have the will to win," he said later. "And right now we don't have that."

Minicucci was named Brimell Toyota/KIA of Agincourt player of the game. The Spirit was without the injured or ill Bill Brothers, Ian Dowhos and Cam Black.

In the other North Conference series: Newmarket leads Huntsville 3-0; Aurora is up 2-0 on Parry Sound and Couchiching leads Vaughan 2-1.



BRIAN PERRIN

Spirit coach says players don't have "the will to win."

Markham competitors are in sync in Hamilton pool

SPORTS DIGEST

Several Markham swimmers representing the Synchron Optima club made their presence felt in the pool at a recent synchronized competition in Hamilton.

Carly Grimshaw won the senior solo category and Courtney Brown, the 14-and-under solo division.

Erin Wilson was fifth in the 14 and under and Meghan Uhlman, seventh.

The 15-to-18 team of Jasmine Balazs, Morgan Clarke, Leigh Ann Coady, Colleen Daly, Katie Dudar, Stacey Grimshaw, Frances Halloran, Alissa Sadler and Julie Scanlan, swam their way to a second-place finish.

Accompanied by Jen Bell and Carly Grimshaw, the 15-18 team swam to another second-place finish in a new team category, the combo.

In duets, Daly and Halloran were third in the 15-18 division.

In the 14 and under team category, Brown, Catherine Cramer, Sheelagh Daly, Lauren Jankowski, Laura Killey,

Britanny Linton, Uhlman, and Wilson finished second.

Another 14-and-under team, coached by Debra Thomson and consisting of swimmers Kristen Bell, Lisa Kricfalusi, Miriam Fernandes, Jennifer Lee, Jessica Sung, Hilary Thomson and Sarah Thomson, finished fifth.

The 14-and-under duet swam by Linton and Killey placed fourth.

All routines now qualify for provincial championships to be held at the Etobicoke Olympium later this month.

Atom Waxers ice tournament title in Levis

The Markham Brandon Group/ Canadian Asphalt Industries/ CMC Excavation Co AAA atom Waxers skated

home with the hardware from the recent 33rd annual Levis International Atom Tournament in Levis, Quebec with a 3-2 win over the Toronto Red Wings in the title tilt.

In reaching the final, the Waxers defeated Assabet Valley (Massachusetts) 10-3, Chomutov (Czech Republic) 5-1 and the Worcester Crusaders (Massachusetts) 12-0 in its round-robin games. Facing Basse Laurentides (Montreal) in their semi-final encounter, the Waxers prevailed 7-2.

Team members included Daniel Marchione, Kevin Carr, Mathew Maione, Peter Rodrigues, David Titanic, Cody Hodgson, Jack Caradonna, Gary Teskey, Clayton McCaw, Matthew Tipoff, Steven Stamkos, Cameron Gaunce, Jonathon Simone, Kelly Geoffrey and Jeffrey Vanderlugt. Stamkos was the top scorer and named the Most Promising Player of the Tournament. Gaunce was named the tournament's best defenceman of the tournament.



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