

Season of second chances for Memorial Cup-bound Wise

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While a cat has nine lives, hockey players can at least have two.

In the case of Jamie Wise, the Mississauga-St. Michael's Majors presented him a second chance to play in the Ontario Hockey League this season after being released in the early going by the Peterborough Petes.

Since joining the Majors, after receiving a telephone call out of the blue from head coach Dave Cameron, the 20-year-old Stouffville resident has made the most of his time.

At the same time, the six-foot, 180-pound forward would like nothing more than to pay back the opportunity presented to him.

For Wise, that chance will come soon enough when the Majors participate in the MasterCard Memorial Cup starting tomorrow at the Hershey Centre.

MEET SEA DOGS TOMORROW

Serving as the host club in the four-team event that concludes May 29, the Majors are scheduled to commence the round-robin festivities against the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League champion Saint John Sea Dogs at 7:30 p.m.

"It's definitely exciting to be in it, no question," said Wise, the son of Ryerson University men's coach Graham Wise. "It's the highest level of hockey that I've played and I've never gotten this far.

"It's sure nice to get a second chance."

While the Majors are focusing their attention on the upcoming tournament, they enter it on a bit of a down note after suffering a dramatic 3-2 overtime loss in the seventh and deciding game to the Owen Sound Attack

3-2 in the OHL final at the Hershey Centre Sunday.

"I thought we had the better team, but we just didn't pull it off," Wise said. "I don't think we showed up to play. We didn't have our best game. I still feel we're the better team. But give Owen Sound credit. They deserved to win."

Acknowledging there might have been a bit of pressure from the start of the season in terms of trying to enter the Memorial Cup as true OHL champions rather than as at-large hosts, Wise feels his veteran team will erase that stinging setback in quick fashion.

At the same time, Wise thinks that could work in their favour. That is, as long as they continue to do what they did all regular season en route to finishing atop the Eastern Conference standings.

"I think we're more of an underdog now. We have nothing to lose. We just have to play our game," he said.

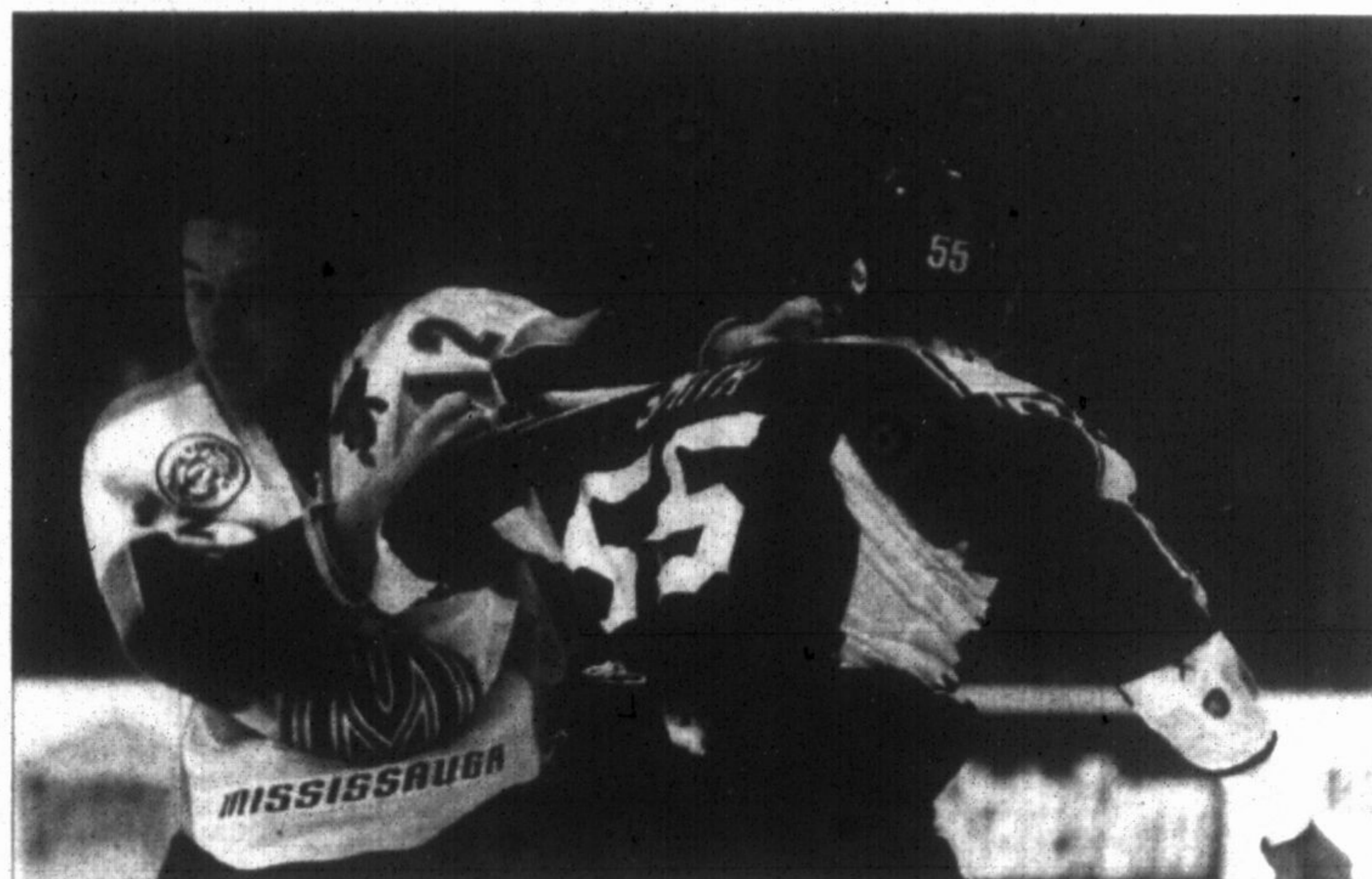
Wise, who amassed four goals and eight assists in 38 regular season tilts, said he's a blue collar worker skating on the fourth line.

All guts and little glory.

"When I joined the club, coach (Dave Cameron) told me to play physical, get under the opponents' skin, but don't take penalties," said Wise, who played Jr. A for the Newmarket Hurricanes during parts of the last three seasons.

Having played an integral role in helping Stouffville District Secondary School Spartans win back-to-back Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations A/AA boys' ice hockey titles in 2006-07 and 2007-08, Wise hopes some of that winning pedigree will rub off on the team.

Most of all though, he's just glad to be playing competitive hockey well into the



TORSTAR PHOTO/STEVEN DER GARABEDJIAN

Mississauga St. Michael's Majors' Jamie Wise (left) of Stouffville tangles with Barron Smith of the Peterborough Petes during regular season OHL action in Mississauga this year.

spring months.

More important - vying for a national junior title.

"The hockey gods were on my side. I couldn't ask for anything better," Wise said. "I still feel we can win the Memorial Cup."

Nine York players vying for cup

There are nine York Region residents preparing for the Memorial Cup in Missis-

sauga.

They include Stouffville's Wise, Markham's Joseph Cramarossa, Newmarket's Gregg Sutch and Richmond Hill's Michael D'Orazio, all with Mississauga.

Markham's Cameron Brace, Newmarket's Kurtis Gabriel and Richmond Hill's Rob Mignardi, Brayden Rose and Jordan Binnington are with Owen Sound.

All games will be broadcast on Rogers Sportsnet (channel 32 in York Region).

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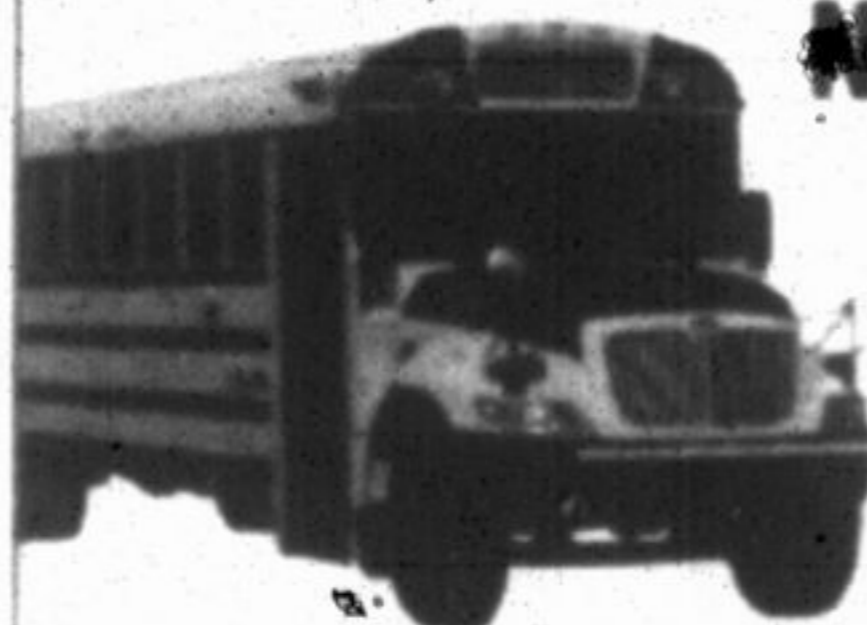
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