

Sports

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On pace to victory

Driver Brian Sears (in lead) guides Boulder Creek through traffic to capture the \$605,000 Open Pace final of the Breeders Crown Saturday evening at Mohawk Racetrack. In other action, Trevor Richie guided Peaceful way to victory in the \$302,000 Open Mare Trot.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Senior Red Sox claim OBA 'B' title

Bats sizzle en route to championship triumph

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The Senior Red Sox had their backs to the wall all weekend long, but their hands on the championship trophy when it was all over.

Exorcising the demons of last year's title loss, Milton staved off elimination five times after dropping its first game to clinch the OBA 'B' crown in Sarnia.

In their third attempt at Ontario 'B' gold, the Bob's Auto Service-sponsored Red Sox finally got

the consistent hitting and defense necessary to pull it all together — delivering equal doses of drama and dominance on the way to victory.

"The resiliency of this team was amazing," said jubilant manager George Moore, whose seniors have now secured three provincial championships in the past five years — with 'C' and 'D' crowns claimed in 2002 and 2001 respectively. "They saved their best for last and there wasn't anyone who didn't contribute. They should all take a bow."

Surprisingly enough, Milton's title-clinching win was the most decisive of the weekend — with Adam Finkbeiner's second complete-game effort in three days fueling an 8-1 rout of the London Lakeside Lizards Monday.

Finkbeiner gave up just five hits and no walks, while his teammates put the game away with a

seven-run fourth inning. Reese Davies, Taylor Lawton and Matt McCandless drove in two runs apiece, while hits came from up and down the line-up.

However, that was hardly the case in round one, when the Red Sox fizzled at the plate against North Woodsley — losing 5-1 and putting themselves into do-or-die domain for the remainder of the tournament.

Giving Moore and their hardcore followers a few anxious moments the next morning against Courtwright, Milton eked out 4-1 extra-innings triumph — with a three-run homer in the ninth by lead-off hitter Nick Aalbers capping the heart-stopping showdown.

Courtwright had the winning run at third base in the bottom of the seventh inning before a ground

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'Hawks set for new season

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

Single-game, double-digit scoring will of course be the exception rather than the norm for this season's IceHawks.

However, last Friday's 11-2 exclamation mark to exhibition play — administered to the lowly Mississauga Chargers — offered a glimpse of what Milton's 2005-06 roster is capable of offensively.

Head coach/general manager Dupont feels he's got more depth up front this year, and judging by pre-season results it's hard to argue with that.

The IceHawks will head into tonight's season opener against Brampton sporting at least 10 forwards who played at some level of junior hockey last year. And that's not including 20-year-old Corey Konecny, a former Newmarket Hurricane power forward who finished last year with the OHL's Guelph Storm and as of this week was trying out for them again as an over-ager.

However, the Stoney Point native could be in a Milton jersey

later this month — which would add toughness and a proven scoring touch to the lineup. "Corey brings a lot to any team. He finishes every check and has some skill," remarked Dupont.

Milton's head coach has also been particularly impressed with winger Matt Read of the Western Jr. B St. Mary's Lincolns. The 19-year-old Ilderton native showed strongly with a team Dupont took down to this summer's Chowder Cup in Boston, and looks capable of putting up significant numbers at the Tier 2 Jr. A level.

Remarked Dupont, "Matt's defensively responsible as well and competes at a high level every night."

Read helped lead last Friday's onslaught with two goals and a pair of assists, while matching that point total with a goal and three helpers was former Jr. B Welland Canadiens sniper Chase Langeraap, a 6'2", 218-pounder from Cayuga.

Midland Flyers Jr. C graduate Kyle Bocek — who hails from Port Severn — also stood out with

a hat-trick, potting his second and third during Milton's six-goal third period.

The 11-2 Chargers dismantling followed a 4-4 tie with Mississauga two weeks ago and 4-1 and 6-3 wins over the neighbouring Georgetown Raiders, who still need to do a lot of work if they hope to be anywhere near the powerhouse squad of last year.

While the IceHawks aren't nearly as deep on the blueline, the recent addition of Jordan Skinner from the Jr. B Welland Canadiens should add stability to a defence that's somewhat lacking in size and physicality.

Backstopping Milton this year is Saskatoon native Zach Kleiman, a 6'3", 210 lbs. cager who recorded credible numbers with last year's Gloucester Rangers of the Central Jr. A Hockey League.

His understudy is Mississauga IceDogs draft pick Andrew Loverock, an equally sizeable puckstopper from Barrie's minor midgets.

The IceHawks close out their first week of regular-season play tomorrow night in Streetsville against the 2006 Royal Bank Cup host Derbys.



The Milton Senior Red Sox celebrate with the OBA 'B' championship.

Seniors pull it all together to clinch championship

• from SENIOR on page A24

As dramatic as round two was, the game of the weekend was yet to come against COBA rival Glanbrook Sunday afternoon — with a seesaw shoot-out ending 9-7 in Milton's favour.

Glanbrook wiped out an early 4-0 deficit and stayed within striking distance the rest of the way, but couldn't capitalize on a bases-loaded-with-no-outs situation in its last at-bat — as a huge double play from Lawton to Davies to Steve MacDonald cemented the Red Sox's win.

Mike Grabaukas delivered four big innings of relief to pick up the victory, while closer Nate Tami earned the save.

Standout performances at the plate came from Aalbers, Davies, Lawton and McCandless.

Sandwiched between these narrow wins were 6-1 and 6-2 decisions over Kendal and Lakeside respectively, with Finkbeiner and Adam Ahearn each going the distance

to keep Milton's championship hopes alive.

Ahearn struggled early on with Lakeside hitters before he and catcher Pat Mastrogiocomo made some adjustments and shut down the opposition in a major way. Meanwhile, Finkbeiner was in cruise control the entire game against Kendal, enjoying three double plays by a red-hot infield.

Back-to-back solo homers by Jeff MacLeod and Lawton highlighted the Kendal win, while MacLeod would go long again versus Lakeside with a two-run shot.

O'Shea misses Labour Day clash with injury

It was a double-whammy Labour Day for Mike O'Shea.

Not only did Milton's CFL veteran miss the annual holiday classic showdown against his former Hamilton Tigercats due to a shoulder injury, but had to watch as his Argonauts were eclipsed 33-30.

While expressing disappointment at not being part of the much-anticipated clash,

the 34-year-old linebacker and defensive leader sidestepped inquires about his shoulder both before and after Monday's loss.

"I'm really not comfortable going into it," O'Shea told The Champion Tuesday morning. "And honestly, everyone's nicked up at this time of year."

Now in his 13th year in the CFL — during which he's won three Grey Cups, the

most recent captured last fall — O'Shea said it's beneficial that his now 6-4 Argos have back-to-back games against Hamilton, allowing them to correct Monday's mistakes in a timely fashion when the heated rivals square off again tomorrow in Toronto.

"We're still in first (in the East), and I don't see us relinquishing that."



Mike O'Shea

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