

Squirt Minor 'AAA' win 1-0, gain rivalry

A rivalry was born on Dec. 11 on Rink No. 1 of the Amherst Pepsi Center.

After two tough early season losses, a tie and no wins against a dynamic Depew Saints squad, the Amherst Knights Squirt Minor "AAA" hockey team ended the winless streak, defeating the Saints 1-0.

The Knights rotated five defensemen. Danny Brodzik, Mitchell Spring, John Hazelet, Luke Eberhard and Ellis Smith moved swiftly on and off the ice, giving nothing less than a 100 percent effort. Each player on multiple occasions smothered his or her opponent at the top of the circle or forced him or her wide around the net.

The Saints changed it up and went cross ice with a number of passes in the Knights zone but

goalie Max Battistoni brought his "A" game. His lateral movement was silky smooth, making crease sliding saves look routine.

The Knights wore down the Saints and had the advantage in play as the first period ended in a scoreless tie.

Depew went immediately on the attack in the second period with an aggressive wrap-around to Battistoni's left side. Battistoni walled off the post-side, draining the adrenaline from his opponent's stick and crushing the attempt. Throughout the second and third periods, the Knights answered with some good transition play. Hazelet wedged a pass through center ice for a clean break out. Knight forward Danny Tyczynski quickly reversed direction for a clean breakaway that forced the Saints goaltender to

stretch for a superlative skate save. Spring took a determined solo rush down the left side boards, went around the defense but was tripped up at the top of the crease. Eberhard broke up a break-out pass just outside the Saints blue line then went far-side to his defensive partner to turn the play the other way. Although taking the play to the Saints, the Knights could not get on the board.

Depew changed up their tactics again, this time working a pyramid with two forwards behind the Knights net while a third roamed at the top of Battistoni's crease. The tactic had some initial success until Brodzik started using superb positioning and anticipation to intercept the Saints passes just inside the corner boards. Brodzik earned a strong advantage for

his team as he quickly moved the puck up ice, leaving the Depew forwards deep in the Knights zone.

The Knights finally got on the board when forward Dylan Lock sent a pass into the Saints crease. Matthew Ruggiero followed the puck in and jammed it past the Saints goaltender to give the Knights a 1-0 lead.

The game ended as a battle of endurance. Knights defenseman Smith played her last shift as hard as her first. As the game neared its end, Smith consistently beat her opponents to the puck easing her team's ability to clear their zone. Hazelet finished the game by winning a hard fought corner board battle to ward off a final Saints surge and preserve the Knights shutout.

Gray Sabres overpower Sharks on Feature Rink

The Squirt Gray Sabres faced the Sharks on the Feature Rink on Sunday. When the game ended, the Gray Sabres had skated their way to an 11-2 victory.

The Gray Sabres were aggressive from the drop of the puck. Having learned from their defeat a week earlier, they played with ferocious intensity, scoring just 36 seconds into the game.

The goal by Katelyn Koester was a result of an aggressive forecheck by Angelo Derossi and Joe Arias, who assisted.

Approximately two minutes later, Antonio Zendano, feeding off the energy from the previous goal, found the back of the net with assists to Jack Cooper and Connor Koester.

For a while it seemed like the Sharks had found their equilibrium. Ben Wald, Cameron Czora, Nasir Dara, Nick Peters, and Girard Marotto peppered shots on Gray Sabre goalie Joe Burke but he was up to the task. As the period neared the end, Koester again found the scoring touch on the power play, finishing off a

rebound with assists to Derossi and Peter Gossels.

The crowd had hardly touched their seats before Benjamin Lackner scored his first goal with assists to Justin Beck and Marc Giangreco.

The second period began like the first. Gabe Jewula scored, with assists to Benjamin Lackner and JB Beck, on a rush 1:17 into the period. About a minute later, Austin Maciok stick-handled his way into the Sharks zone and fired a shot into the top corner. He was assisted by Zendano and Brian Kowalski.

The Sharks broke up the shutout when Tim Kreuz scored an unassisted goal on a fantastic individual effort.

Less than a minute later, Giangreco collected the puck in his own defensive zone, skated through the entire Sharks team and beat goalie Alex Bender, on a deke.

The crowd was still buzzing when Arias scored off some fantastic passing between himself, Koester and Derossi. Less than a minute later, Lackner scored his second of the game as he

parked himself in perfect position near the goal post to redirect a perfect pass from Jewula. JB Beck also recorded an assist.

The Sharks continued to skate hard as Joe Kramer, Jeff Terragnoli, and Brendan Quagliana kept the pressure on the Sabres.

The final goal of the period was scored by Zendano, his second, as he curled out from the corner and lifted a backhand inside the near post. He was assisted by Austin Maciok and Kowalski.

In the third period, the Sharks defense of Colin Lawrence, Nick Vermilye, Chris Horton, Nick Bucello, and Mathias Williams made play after play to foil the Gray Sabres. It also saw the first ice time for Jacob Mogerman, a recent call-up.

The Sharks once again relied on Kreuz for their scoring tallying another unassisted goal. The final Gray Sabres goal was scored by Derossi on a pretty breakaway pass from Gossels. Jack Cooper also assisted on the play. Emma Hubert played a solid game, shifting from defense to forward as needed.

Raimondi nets four, Rangers record first victory

Led by a four-goal performance by Jason Raimondi, the Squirt Rangers scored their first victory of the season.

Raimondi broke the tie with an unassisted tally that beat the Bruins goaltender on the stick side. The Bruins showed their grit as Joe Durkin scored from Luke Rehbaum to tie the score less than two minutes later.

Rangers defenseman John Tomczak put his team back in the lead

with a spectacular end to end rush. The Bruins tied the score when Adam Arsenault buried a pass from Thomas Heyden. The teams traded goals by Raimondi (his second, unassisted) and Heyden (Frankie Bodami) as the Bruins battled to tie the score for the third time.

After Bruins goaltender Jeremy Schwab stopped Raimondi on a breakaway, the Rangers' Matthew Soos scored what proved to be the game winner on a rebound after

another rush by Tomczak.

In the third period, Raimondi added two more goals, the first assisted by linemates David Hnat and Nick Molnar, to close out the scoring. Bradley Hemanjowski was solid in goal for the Rangers, shutting the Bruins down in the third period de-

spite pressure by Peter Muffaletto, Bill Christ, Tyler Lesicki, Giani Bordonaro and Matt Lesinski and great chances from Sarah Scolnick, Drew Goss, Steve Vukelic and Ricky Bruno.

The Rangers' defense was anchored by Michael Battaglia, Mickey

Evans, Alex Touma and Tomczak. The Rangers kept offensive pressure throughout this thriller with the help of forwards Jake Fuzak, Darin Geska, Ryan Mikulec, Steven Swiantek and Tim Fremming.

This game was much closer than the 6-3 score would indicate.

Dirrigl lifts White Sabres over Bruins

Dan Dirrigl scored the game-winning goal late in the third period as the White Sabres defeated the Bruins 2-1 in a tight-checking Squirt Division game on Saturday.

The win upped the White Sabres' record to 4-1. James Bassett, making his goaltending debut, was outstanding as he kicked out every Bruin shot but one, a late second period goal on a pretty two-way passing play between Frank Bodami and Tyler Lisicki with Bodami scoring.

Bassett was aided by outstanding defensive play from Jamey Irish-Ryan, Joe Philipps, Ethan Evenson, Samantha Johnson and Jacob DiStasio. Alex Jackson the White Sabres' normal goaltender was also impressive in his debut as a forward, scoring the game's first goal unassisted as he followed his own rebound and tipped it past Jeremy Schwab. Schwab was stellar in goal as he stopped numerous White Sabre scoring opportunities, including breakaways by Jon Utech and Jim Roberto and Dirrigl.

Also chipping in on the offensive end for the Sabres were George Korn, Dan Carosi, Justin LaMonto, Chris Comtois and Alley Lillis.

For the Bruins, William Christ had some excellent opportunities along with Richard Bruno, Thomas Hayden, Sarah Scolnick and Andrew Gross. On the defensive side, Schwab was helped by Peter Muffoletto, Gianni Bordonaro, Luke Rehbaum, Stephen Vukelic, Adam Arsenault, and Joe Durkin.

Sports briefs

University at Albany's Jessica and Jenna Ortman, both Williamsville South High School graduates, finished atop the 800-meter run to highlight team's performance at the Yale Season Opener on Saturday, Dec. 9 at Coxe Cage. In the women's competition, Jessica and Jenna Ortman went one-two in the 800, with Jessica qualifying for ECACs by covering the distance in 2:11.22. She also was a member of the winning 4x400 relay that crossed the line in 3:55.44.

The Canisius College Hockey Showcase 2006 will be held Dec. 28-30 at the Amherst Pepsi Center.

Eight teams are slated to participate - Sarnia Blast, Thorold Blackhawks, Stoney Creek Warriors, Wheatfield Blades, Buffalo Jr. Sabres, Philadelphia Little Flyers, Boston Bulldogs, and Walpole Express. The eight teams play in the Western Ontario Hockey Junior B League, Golden Horseshoe Junior B League, Ontario Provincial Junior A Hockey League and the Atlantic Junior Hockey B League.

Four games are scheduled for each day. The first game on Dec. 28 and Dec. 29 is at 10 a.m. with the first game in Dec. 30 set for 8 a.m. An all-tournament pass is available for \$15 while an individual one-day pass costs \$10. A ticket for one game is \$5. Tickets are available at the Pepsi Center the day of the game.

Flyers register second shutout of season

The Squirt Flyers faced the Red Sabres early Sunday morning and proved that their winning steak is no accident. The game ended with a Flyers' 4-0 over the Red Sabres.

Flyers' goalie, Bryan Cowing showed nerves of steel during numerous blitzes from the Red Sabres' offense.

The game truly belonged though to the Flyers, who came alive in the second period, when Conor Mulvey scored his first goal of the season. It was a sweet rebound shot. Mulvey's assist came from lightning quick Gregory Sibick.

The Flyers' Nicholas Schiappa scored the next goal for

his team with a wrist shot that flew past the Red Sabres' goalie and dropped perfectly in the net.

The Flyers' determination continued into the third period when Trevor Shaw put one in between the pipes. JP Williams lined up Shaw's goal with a key assist. The Flyers' final goal came from Eric Bailey in the last seconds of the game. He simply would not take no for an answer and sliced his way through for an outstanding goal.

Notable defensive plays were made by Austin Ballard, who also assisted on two goals, and Bailey, who stopped countless Red Sabres' plays.

St. Benedict's girls hoops wins opening game

The St. Benedict's girls varsity basketball team kicked off its season on Dec. 11 with a 27-20 win against St. Gregory the Great at Nativity of the Blessed Virgin Mary Church.

Guard Kristy Luce scored St Benedict's first four points from the foul line, allowing them to take an early first quarter lead.

Forwards Katie Trabert and Kristie Nasr and Center Alexis Hall added another six points and were tough on the boards throughout the first half.

With center Skyler Sweeney and forward Lauren Pristach and Clara Wu's help off the bench, St. Benedict's defense was very stingy underneath.

Despite this, St. Gregory played hard and made a run in the last few minutes to pull to a 12-10 lead at the end of the first half.

St. Benedict's defense picked up their aggressive play to start the second half and guards Alex Saleh and Mary O'Rourke had several steals which resulted in points on the offen-

sive end.

The third quarter saw St. Benedict's take the lead for good after a fast-break layup by guard Gaelynn Ryan put them up 14-12. Guards Nina Anders and Claire Wincott, and forward Shannon Okonczak came off the bench throughout the game to provide much needed help and fought hard for the Tigers while in the game.

Ryan finished with nine points. Hall and Luce had six points each. Nasr added four. Trabert chipped in two.

SS. Peter and Paul girls basketball defeats St. Aloysius, 31-6

SS. Peter and Paul's girls' varsity basketball team opened its season on a winning note, defeating St. Aloysius, 31-6, on Dec. 11.

St. Aloysius fought a very hard first quarter, holding the SSPP Knights to five points while scoring four points themselves.

In the second quarter, the Knights exploded for 10 points with Julia Collins scoring six of them for a 15-4 lead. Collins finished the game with eight points to lead all scorers.

Samantha Basile and Marla Calabro did an outstanding job at guard, causing multiple turnovers and shutting down St. Aloysius' fast break attempts. Basile finished the game with six points while Calabro added four more.

Alyssa Bellus and Claire Haumesser shared the center

position for the Knights and dominated, pulling down almost all of the defensive rebounds while adding one and two points, respectively, on the offensive side.

Paige Hanley was played double duty at forward and center while adding two points to the score. Alexis Parry and Michele Haumesser added to the forward scoring punch with two points each.

Not to be outdone, guards Victoria Mendiola and Jessica Lynett also added two points each. Maury Fields and Olivia Jakson had solid play at the forward positions with multiple rebounds and assisting on several scoring plays. Kathleen Ruggero, Hope Genco, and Jessica Clark had excellent games at the guard positions, keeping a strong St. Aloysius team from getting any organized offense started in the last quarter.