

HOCKEY PANTHERS START SEASON STRONGLY

By Darrell Cole, Sports Editor

The UPEI Hockey Panthers finished their first weekend of AUAA Hockey play with a split against a very stubborn St. Thomas Thommies team coached by Morrell-native Alan MacAdam.

On Saturday night the Thommies suprised the Panthers with three third period goals en route to a 4-3 victory. Thommies goaltender Alan Andrews was the story of this game as he continuously stymied Panther shooters stopping 39 of 41 Panther shots. Andrews also got some help from the goalposts as numerous Panther shots dinged off the post. Thommie defenseman Roger MacInnis scored the only goal in the first period as he banged a shot off the crossbar, off Panther goalie Haladuick and across the line at 9:19.

The Panthers finally got the puck behind Andrews scoring goals 0:50 apart. Darren Murphy scored at 15:42 assisted by Kevin Skilliter, and Captain Steve Fulton scored at 16:32 with Skilliter picking up his second assist. The Panthers controlled the tempo throughout the second period but couldn't put the game out of reach because of the strong goaltending of Alan Andrews.

St. Thomas exploded in the third period scoring three goals on a suprised Panther team. Kevin MacDonald tied the score on a powerplay goal at 8:05 before Bobby Brown scored a fluke goal off the leg of a Panther defenseman on a 2-on-1 break with a little over two minutes remaining. Coach Vince Muligan pulled Haladuick to the bench for an extra attacker but a Roger MacInnis slapshot found its way into the Panthers' net for the winner. John Copple scored with 0:23 remaining but it was a little late as Andrews was able to turn away the Panther rush in the closing seconds.

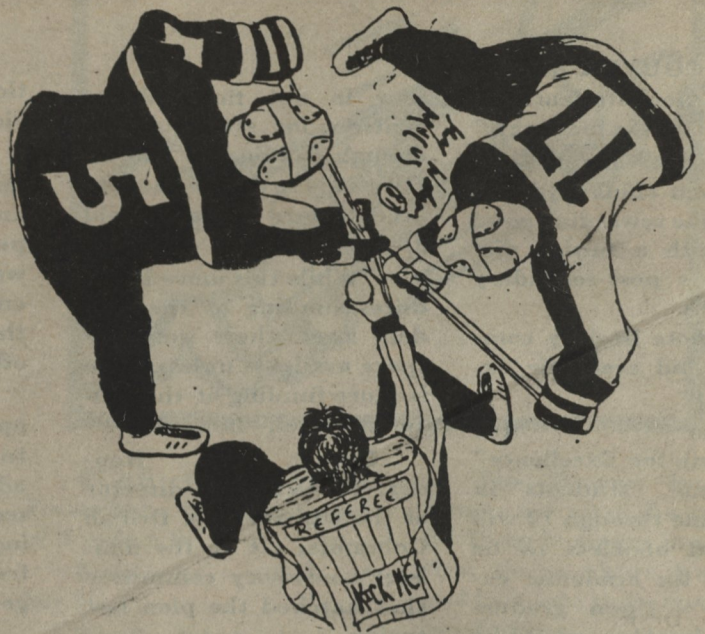
The game was a penalty-filled affair as referee Wade Lawlor was kept busy calling 20 minors, a match and game misconduct to the Thommies and 20 minors, a match and game misconduct to the Panthers. As a result of a spearing incident between Thommies Kevin MacDonald and Panthers' Jerry Fleming at the close of the game the Panthers will have to do with out the services of Jerry Fleming as he received a three-game suspension for his part in the incident.

Sunday was pretty well a much-win game for the Panthers as they could not afford to lose a pair of games at the first of the year to St. Thomas. Unlike the night before the Panthers were on the scoreboard first as Rich Little scored three minutes into the game. Unfortunately for St. Thomas star-goaltender Alan Andrews was forced to leave the game during the first period after a collision with Rich Little. It was later discovered that Andrews suffered a pinched cartilage in his knee and could be lost to the Thommies for a little while. Marty Abrams replaced Andrews in the St. Thomas net and proved to be no slouch either as he turned away a number of good Panther scoring attempts. Kevin Skilliter and Don Clow scored second period goals to give the Panthers a 3-0 lead. Skilliter's goal was a powerplay goal scored at 15:20 with assists going to Dar-

ren Murphy and Rich Little, while Clow's goal came with 0:40 remaining in the period assisted by Wayne MacPhee and Jeff Steffen.

St. Thomas came out flying in the third period determined to come back from a three-goal deficit. They got a quick goal when Marco Thorne picked up the puck in his own zone and weaved up ice beating Tony Haladuick with a wrist shot. That was all that St. Thomas could muster as Haladuick and the Panther defense shut down the St. Thomas offense the rest of the way. Todd Steffen iced the game for the Panthers when he scored into an empty-net with 0:21 remaining.

Many people will look at the results and say that the Panthers must have played bad to be defeated by St. Thomas. After watching last weekend's games St. Thomas has proved to me that they a team that is going to be in contention the whole year.



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