

## Blades keep pace with division-leading Raiders

The Oakville Blades stayed within striking distance of the division-leading Georgetown Raiders by winning a pair of games last weekend in Ontario Junior Hockey League action.

Oakville defeated the Milton IceHawks 6-2 Friday in Milton, then shaded the Port Hope Predators 3-2 the following evening at Joshua's Creek Arenas, improving to 32-6 on the season.

The Blades entered last night's (Tuesday's) game at the Buffalo Jr. Sabres three points back of the Raiders for top spot in the MacKinnon Division. The game against Buffalo was a game Oakville had in hand on Georgetown.

The Blades and Raiders are scheduled to meet one more time this season (Jan. 30 in Oakville), a game that could

very well decide who would have home ice advantage through the upcoming divisional playoffs.

Oakville's 48-game regular-season schedule concludes Feb. 7.

Tyler Leimbrock, Matt Ribeiro, Jeremy Welsh, Dustin Alcock, Chris Muise and Lindsay Sparks scored for the Blades against Milton. Kellan Lain, Braden Birch and Ribeiro provided Oakville's offence versus Port Hope.

Matt Hache was in goal for both games, stopping 47 of 51 shots to record the victories.

Oakville is scheduled to play two more games this weekend. The Blades will visit the Bramalea Blues Friday, then host the Burlington Cougars Saturday at Joshua's Creek Arenas (an 8:30 p.m. start).

## Forever rivals



MICHAEL IVANIN/ SPECIAL TO THE OAKVILLE BEAVER

Nick Kordic of the Hamilton Tiger-Cats (right) contends with the defence of Toronto Argonauts player Chuck Winters Saturday at Sheridan College. Players from the CFL rivals participated in an exhibition basketball game during the Sultan Prospects junior girls' basketball tournament to raise money for breast cancer research. The Argos prevailed, 63-54.

## Mason named a Young Star



Steve Mason

The honours keep coming for Oakville's Steve Mason.

Mason, who posted his league-leading sixth shutout for the Columbus Blue Jackets on Friday, will play in the YoungStars game Jan. 24, the day before the NHL all-star game in Montreal. It will be the sixth year for the YoungStars game, but the first with a rookies versus sophomores format.

Former world junior teammates Luke Schenn and Drew Doughty will be among the rookie players helping Mason fend off the likes of San Jose's Devin Setoguchi and Atlanta's Bryan Little, who will suit up for the sophomore team.



CHANTAL AYOTTE / OAKVILLE BEAVER

**TAKE YOUR BEST SHOT:** St. Thomas Aquinas goaltender Justin Bailey (left) readies himself for a shot from T.A. Blakelock's Taylor Kirton (with puck) during Monday's high school boys' hockey contest at Oakville Arena. Bailey backstopped Aquinas to a 5-2 win.

## Hockey Tigers falling back to rest of the pack

■ By Jon Kuiperij  
 BEAVER SPORTS EDITOR

When the Halton high school boys' hockey league tiered its teams at the Christmas break, the T.A. Blakelock Tigers appeared to be the clear-cut favourite to win the Richardson Tier 1 Division.

Not so anymore.

Blakelock enters the exam break having lost both its games since the Christmas layoff, including a 5-2 defeat at the hands of the St. Thomas Aquinas Raiders Monday at Oakville Arena. The Tigers still lead their division with an 8-3 mark, but head coach Ken Butler is not happy with the direction of his squad.

"We completely underachieved. Our defensive zone was a disaster. We left guys open in the slot all game... we weren't clearing the guys in front of the net... we're a hell of a lot better than we showed today," Butler said following Monday's loss. "It's okay to make mistakes, but we made so many mistakes it cost us the game."

Those mistakes included the Tigers scoring in their own net in the first period, then allowing a shorthanded goal by Aquinas' Zach Ruys in the second frame. Still, Blakelock might have won the game had it not been for the goaltending work of the Raiders' Justin

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