Whalers defeat Colts in OT

Defense? Did somebody say something about defense?

It want in total absence when the Ontario Hockey League Championship Final, between the Plymouth Whalers and the Barrie (Ontario) Colts, opened Thursday in Barrie. But defense definitely want the rule in this nail-biter.

Comebacks from both teams added to the excitement, but it was the Whalers who got the final statement when Randy Fitzgorald scored his second goal of the game 59 seconds into the first overtime to propel Plymouth to a 54 triumph in front of 4,081 Colt fans.

The best-of-seven-games series now comes to Plymouth for Gemes Two (7 p.m. today) and Three (7:20 p.rs. Monday).

For Fitzgorald, a fourth-year, player who serves as team captain, this session's playoffs have served as redemption. He secred 18 regular-season goals; in 17 playoff games, he has 11.

Indeed, the wasn't the only Whaler veteran to come through when needed most. Plymouth fook the early lead with a sec-

HOCKEY

ond-period onslaught, going up 3-1 entering the final period. Not that it came without warning. The Wholers jumped on the Colts from the start, out-shooting the home team 12-2 in a scoreleas opening period. Eric Goldy, one of the afore-mentioned veterans, opened the scoring for Flymouth with a goal at 7:11 of the second period. Kris Vernarsky and Fitzgerald assist-ed.

ed. Jamio Lalonde doubled the Whalers' lead 68 seconds later with his first playoff goal, assisted by defenseman Cole Jarrett, who kept a Colta' clearing attempt in the zone and then found Lalonde at the edge of the rease.

Barrie's Blaine Down nar-Barrio's Blaine Down nar-rowed Plymouth's load to 2-1 at the 9:41 mark as the defense that had ruled the first 25 min-utes of the game began to melt away. Fitzgerald's first goal at 13:06 restored the Whalers' two-goal advantage; Gooldy assisted.

Three goals scored in the first 7½ minutes of the third period, two of them by Barrie, made it a one-goal contest. Mike Jofferson accounted for both of the Colts' goals, the first at the 2:27 mark and the second on the rewest

play marker assisted by Fitzger-ald and Damian Surma at 5:33.

Barrie knotted it with 6:40 left in regulation, Mike Christian getting the key goal. The Colta continued to apply pressure around Whalers' goalle Rob Zepp and very nearly scored in the final seconds of the third period, but Zepp stopped Sheldon Keefe, the OHL's regular-season scor-ing chame.

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Fitzgerald's game-winner was act up by Goorge Nistas, who dropped a pass back to him for a wrist shot that beat Barrie goalle Brian Finley, Gooldy also assisted.
Fitzgerald and Gooldy both had two goals and two assists. Zepp made 29 saves; Finley had 26 for the Colts.

W.B. race has hometown winner

STATY WHITE EmayerCochomecomm.net

Conditions were right for Mara Laser to make history April 30 in the annual West Bloomfield Half-Marathon.

On a day where runners were greeted with sunny skies and warm temperatures, Isser com-pleted the challenging 13.1-mile race in just over 90 minutes and, in the process, became the first West Bloomfield resident to win the women's half-marathon.

"I'm very excited and very happy," Isser, 27, said moments after crossing the finishing line in a time of 1 hour, 30 minutes, 23 seconds. 'It was perfect today.

The sun was out and I was run-ning good. I love this kind of weather and it makes it much easier me."

easier for me."
Participating in just her sec-ond West Bloomfield Half-Marathon, isser assumed the lead in the womon's race just past the midway point. The nforementioned West Bloomfield High School graduate placed

alth (1:37:48) in the women's division last year, but Sunday was a different story. I want't really trying to win last year because I just don't think about those things," said Isser, whose time Sunday left ber 29th overall. I't hought about winning this year only because someone said during the race that I was the third woman and I should run faster. I was like, 'Oh, OK.' Evarybody kept encouraging me and I think that encouragement helped me go faster."

Billy Jack, 21, of Shelby Towarll title.

encouragement neighbor in we of faster."

Ann Arbor's Deanna Asbury, who happens to be a West Bloomfield High grad, was the second woman to finish as she clocked a time of 1:34:01 (50th overall). Amy Bares of Ann Arbor came in third at 1:34:27 and Fran Everin of Bloomfield Hills was fourth in 1:36:12.

"I went out really fast and felt good in the beginning," said Asbury, who last year took seventh in the women's division in 1:32:53. "The heat got to me a little bit in the middle miles, but

the last four miles I felt pretty good."

The absence of four-time champion Kaith Stopen — he's scheduled to compete in the U.S. Men's Clympic Marathon Trials in Pittaburgh this weekend— and 1997 winner David Chomet created a wide open race for the overall title.

Billy Jack, 21, of Shelby Township, emerged as the overall champion with a time of 1:16:48. Jack, who first ran the West Bloomfield Half-Marathon two years ago, attends Macomb Community College and said he used the half-marathon as a training tool for an junior college national marathon in Lansing. "Actually, the only thing I wanted to do was run under a six-minute pace," Jack said. "I liked the course and it was a perfect day, and besides getting a little sunburn, I felt pretty good." Timothy Emmett of Royal Oak earned runner-up honors with a time of 1:19:47.

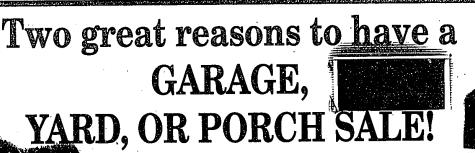
earned runner-up honors time of 1:19:47.



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