

Whalers record pair of victories

The weekend couldn't have gone much better for the Plymouth Whalers.

In fact, the only thing that could have worked out better for them was a loss Saturday by the Ontario Hockey League-leading Erie Otters.

But that would have required the upset of the season, considering the Otters were playing the Mississauga Ice Dogs — winners of three games this season.

Still, the Whalers narrowed the gap between themselves and the Otters to four points (and the Whalers have played one fewer game) with a 3-1 win over Erie Friday in Erie.

That did more than narrow the deficit: It also gave Plymouth the season series, which could come in handy in a tiebreaker situation when it comes time to determine who has home-ice advantage in the playoffs.

The Whalers started quickly against the Otters, getting a goal from Rob McBride (his 14th) at 2:33 of the first period. Preston Mizzi assisted.

Bryan Thompson made it 2-0 with his ninth goal of the season at 16:16 of the first; George Nistas, who had a strong offensive weekend, and Greg Campbell assisted.

Erie narrowed the gap to 2-1 with a power-play goal at 4:46

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into the third period by Carlo Colaiacovo, but Chad LaRose's score at 4:21 of the period regained Plymouth's two-goal advantage. Damian Surma assisted.

Rob Zepp netted 25 shots in goal to get the win. J.F. Perras made 20 saves for Erie.

Saturday's game was much easier for Plymouth, but no less important — particularly since the Whalers did something they've had trouble doing the last few weeks. And that's score goals.

They got nine of them against Kitchener, routing the Rangers 9-2. Kris Vernarsky scored two goals for Plymouth and assisted on two others.

LaRose also scored twice, with Surma getting three assists. Mizzi added a goal and two assists. McBride, Tomas Kurka, Nistas and Stewart each contributing a goal and an assist, and James Wisniewski (from Canton) getting two assists.

Zepp had 20 shots in goal for Plymouth. Scott Dickie and Jeff Johnston combined to stop 31 Plymouth shots. Dickie allowing six goals and Johnston three.

Shamrocks overcome sloppy effort

A game after playing one of its better games of the year, Catholic Central played one of its sloppiest.

Oh, the Shamrocks still won as Jared Ross notched the game-winner with 14 seconds to play as CC came back to beat host Grasse Pointe North on Tuesday night, 6-4.

But having to rally in the first place didn't make CC co-coach Todd Johnson happy.

"Our guys need to remember to play a full 45-minute game," said Johnson as the top-ranked Shamrocks improved to 20-0-3.

"We only played 25 minutes tonight. In the state tourney (beginning next week) you have to do it six games in a row. The first time you don't, you lose."

The Norsemen took a 3-1 lead into the second period, with Mike Ratigan scoring CC's only goal as Ryan Lasecki assisted.

North scored for a 4-1 lead, but Brett John (from Jared Ross and Brandon Naurato) and John Perkovich (from Andrew Eggert and Jake Norwood) cut that to 4-3 after two periods.

Three minutes into the third, Ryan O'Dea tied the score from Norwood and Mike Ryan.

Then Ross got the game-winner from Derek Genrich and Jimmy Blanchard with 14 seconds left for the win. Eggert closed out the scoring with seven seconds left with an empty-net goal from Lasecki.

Blanchard made 17 saves for CC. Colin Chase 18 for North.

On Saturday, the Genrich family gave CC the only goal it would need as the Shamrocks blanked Cranbrook, 5-0.

"I thought we played one of

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our better games this year," said Johnson. "It was our first complete 45-minute game in a while. We had nice effort against a very good Cranbrook team."

Brian Genrich scored the opening goal with assists to his brother, Sean, and cousin Derek. CC made it 3-0 in the second as Ross scored from Ryan and John, then John scored 12 seconds later assisted by Ryan and Ross.

Ross added another goal in the third, from John and Naurato, then Jim Spiewak closed out the scoring with assists going to Jeff Davis and Ratigan.

Andrew McCoy made 16 saves in goal for CC, while David Goodley stopped 29 shots for Cranbrook.

DEARBORN 3, FARMINGTON 1: Host Dearborn Unified scored two goals late in the game Saturday to stave off a non-league hockey victory from Farmington United.

It was a bitter defeat for the Flyers, who outshot their opponent by a two-to-one margin, 32-16.

"Two critical breakdowns in our zone late in the third period cost us," Farmington coach Mike Harris said. "We outshot them in every period on their Senior Night, but we came up short on goals."

Dearborn's Chris Whitney scored with 3:08 remaining in the game to break a 1-1 tie, and Brett McMillin added an insurance goal with 1:03 to play.

The Flyers led 1-0 after one period on

an unassisted goal by Brad Heraghty at 8:56. Dearborn tied the score at 14:07 in the second with a goal by Trevor Assemani.

Farmington was 9-10-3 overall going into its final Western Lakes Activities Association game Wednesday against Livonia Churchill.

NOVI 6, FRANKLIN 3: Novi exploded for three unanswered goals in the final period Monday to beat Division II rival Livonia Franklin in a battle of state-ranked hockey teams, 6-3.

The loss dropped Franklin to 13-3-6 overall.

Host Novi's final four goals were all power-plays.

"Novi is a very good team with an excellent coach (Dan Phelps)," Franklin coach Terry Jobbitt said. "Their power-play was fabulous. We had only given up 11 shots in the first period prior to tonight and Novi scored four."

Brad Zarem finished with two goals and one assist, while Adam Haberman, Brian Jausi and Kyle Major also scored for the Wildcats.

Franklin jumped out to a 2-0 lead after 12 minutes on goals by Ross Robert (from Andy Garbutt and Sam Dismuke) and Josh Garbutt (from Anders Wendel and Gordie Statham).

Scott Sparks added an unassisted goal for the Patriots in the second period.

Franklin netminder Chris Garbutt made 16 saves, while Novi's Jerry Goodman turned away 17 shots.

"It was a good back-and-forth game until we started taking dumb penalties," Jobbitt said. "Our power-play was a power failure."

"Hopefully, the team learned a lesson tonight. We must learn to play three periods of hockey every game or our first two tonight."

CHURCHILL 1, P.M. NORTHERN 2: On Saturday, Division I state-ranked teams Livonia Churchill (13-4-6) and host Port Huron Northern battled to a draw (ITA non-league at McMoran Arena).

"It was a fast game, virtually no whistles," Churchill coach Pete Mazzoni said. "We had bus legs the first period. After that we were able to break a sweat and get going."

After a scoreless opening period, Northern's Tyler Laws scored at 9:54 of the second from Steve Albert and Chad Moore.

Churchill's Jim Krygowski tied it at 1:1 at 6:48 of the second from Brian Grant.

Mark Peck put Northern ahead 2-1 at 11:28 of the third from Moore, but Churchill's Rory Casars scored from Mike Andes with just 2:47 left to earn the tie.

FRANKLIN 4, MILFORD 1: Four different players scored Saturday as Livonia Franklin earned a non-league win against the host Redskins at the Lakeshore Ice Arena.

Joe Brown scored first for Milford with 4:18 to go in the first period, but Franklin's Corey Cleaman answered at 10:29 from Ross Robert and Tony Persino off an excellent breakout play.

Jason Robinson scored what proved to be the game-winner with 1:15 left in the first period from Anders Wendel and Gordie Statham.

Josh Garbutt made it 3-1 at 1:59 of the second from Gordie and Paul Statham.

Gordie Statham capped the scoring with 30 seconds left in the first period from Josh Garbutt.

Milford was missing five key players from its lineup, while Franklin had four players battling the flu.

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