

Whalers from page C1

"That's the way they play," said Plymouth coach Mike Vollucci. "We have to play more disciplined. We talked about it all week long. They're the most penalized team in the league."

When LaRose went off with teammate Damian Surma already in the box with 3:46 left in the first, it gave London a two-man advantage for :25. It took the Knights just :13 to capitalize, with Mike Stathopoulos jamming the puck past Whaler goalie Jason Bacashihua on the left side of the goal. Rick Nash and Bryan Thompson assisted.

A penalty to Nash with five seconds left in the first allowed the Whalers to open the second period with a man-advantage, and they pounced on the chance. Weiss triggered it, taking a pass from Cole Jarrett near the top of the right circle and threading the puck through to LaRose on the left side for the tap in.

By then, the Whalers' dominance was beginning to emerge. Their 11-7 shot advantage after one period had grown to 22-9 with 8:00 left in the second, which meant they had outshot London 11-2 in the period.

And worse was on route, at least for the Knights.

With 2:22 left in the second, John Mitchell got loose down the right wing and beat London goalie Chris Houle with a shot to the far side, giving the Whalers a 2-1 lead. Jonas Fiedler and James Wisniewski (from Canton) assisted.

The boost to Plymouth — and conversely, the deflating of London — was evident. When Weiss dug the puck out of a scramble in front of the net and slapped it past Houle 43 seconds later, the Whalers' lead had grown to 3-1 (Jared Newman assisted) and their shot advantage was 29-9. Indeed, in the second period they outshot the Knights, 18-3.

"We were short-handed the whole first period," said Vollucci. "The officiating was horrible. But we have to (learn to play with that)."

"We got some timely goals, and we did score on the power play when we got one. I thought their goalie played very well. And so did ours."

Entering the final period, the Knights' hopes were hardly promising. During the season,

they were 3-18-4-5 when trailing after two periods; when trailing after two periods on road games, they were 1-12-2-1.

Plymouth, on the other hand, was a perfect 32-0-0-0 when leading after two periods.

Still, strong play in goal by Houle made 36 saves in the game) allowed London to keep it close. And with 6:38 left while playing a man short, the Knights' Patrick Barbieri split the Whaler defense and broke in on Bacashihua, scoring a short-handed goal as the net came off its moorings. Dennis Wideman and Charlie Stephens assisted.

The Knights continued to press the rest of the way, but could not beat Bacashihua again. The game fit the pattern of the last four regular-season games played between the West Division rivals: Two ended in ties, with Plymouth winning one by a goal and London winning one by a goal.

It could stay that way during the series. "We just have to play our game," said Weiss. "Stay out of the (penalty) box, play 6-on-5 and keep the flow of the game going. Utilize our speed."

SPORTS ROUNDUP

POWER SKATING CLASSES

Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills will have a beginning power skating class on Fridays from 4:30 to 6:20 p.m. and an intermediate power skating class on Fridays from 4 to 4:50 p.m. for eight weeks starting April 12 as part of the Skate Great Training Program.

Skaters ages 7 and up are invited to enroll in the beginning skating class. The intermediate power skating class is open to mile travel and squirt house or travel players.

Pre-registration is required. For more information call Suburban Training Center at (248) 888-1400 or visit www.suburbanhockey.com.

SUBURBAN HOCKEY CLINICS

Suburban Hockey will offer one-day, two-hour clinics at various locations in the Detroit area during the week of April 1-5.

Suburban Training Center will host the Shoot to Score, Quick N Fast and Learn to Check clinics on April 5.

Players ages 6 and up can enroll in the Shoot to Score and

Quick N Fast clinics; the Learn to Check clinic is for players ages 11-14, and the Defense clinic is for ages 8 and up.

Players will be grouped according to age and ability. To register call (248) 478-1600 or visit www.suburbanhockey.com.

Suburban Hockey Schools will conduct its Learn to Check clinics at several locations prior to the spring hockey season, including Suburban Training Center in Farmington Hills (March 26-27), Redford Arena (March 28) and Novi Ice Arena (April 2).

The program is geared toward squirt players moving up to the pee wee level, as well as pee wee and bantam players who need instruction on the techniques of checking.

Areas of emphasis in the two-hour instructional session include proper checking technique, how to receive a check, how to avoid a check, stick checking, back checking, angling and body positioning.

Call (248) 478-1600 or visit www.suburbanhockey.com for

more information.

BLUES BASEBALL TRYOUTS

The 14-and-under South Farmington Blues travel baseball team is looking for one or two more players and will be having tryouts in early April.

The Blues play in the Midwest Super League. Players must be age 14 or under as of July 31, 2002. Call (248) 477-3623 for more information.

SKATING CLUB PLANS CLINIC

As part of National Skating Week, the Farmington Hills Skating Club will sponsor the "It's Great to Skate Clinic" 9-11:20 a.m. March 30 at the Farmington Hills Ice Arena.

The clinic is free and open to the public. There will be a \$2 charge for skate rental, however. The clinic will have an agenda of activities, so please plan to attend the whole time.

Door prizes will be awarded and instructors will be available to answer questions and assist skaters. Ages 3 and up are welcome. Participants should arrive early to sign in. The clinic is limited to the first 250 skaters.

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