

Whalers lose to Spits in OT

A weakness has been found in the Plymouth Whalers game. Just get them to overtime.

On Sunday at Windsor Arena against the second-place team in the West Division, the Spitfires, the first-place Whalers went into OT for the third time in four games — and lost for the third time, 4-3.

Jason Spezza's second goal of the game and 24th of the season gave Windsor the win at 1:05 of the extra period. Spezza took possession of the puck behind the Whaler net; he shot it in front, but it hit Plymouth goalie Rob Zepp's leg and went into the net for the game-winner.

Plymouth still got a point, and it still has a 15-point advantage

in the standings over the Spits. Indeed, the Whalers were tied for first overall in the Ontario Hockey League with the Erie Otters going into last night's game between the two.

And the Whalers got two points the night before, romping past the Kitchener Rangers 6-1 at Plymouth's Computware Arena.

Against Windsor, the Whalers let an early 3-1 lead escape. The Spitfires' Sal Peralta scored the game's first goal, on the power play at 9:12 of the opening period.

Plymouth responded with first-period goals by Stacey Britstone, on the power play, from Stephen Weiss and Damian

Surma, and from Stephen Weiss, from Britstone and Surma. The latter came with 42 seconds left in the period.

The Whalers increased their lead to 3-1 when Weiss found the net again, scoring his 30th of the season from Chad Larose and Ryan O'Keefe at 4:39 of the second period. The rest of the game, however, belonged to Windsor.

Spezza's first goal, on the power play at 12:01 of the second, narrowed the gap to 3-2. Robin Boucher tied it at 3-2 with 4:06 left in the second. The third period was scoreless.

Rob Zepp stopped 25 shots in goal for Plymouth. Windsor's Mike L'Arrondeau made 29 saves. In the win over Kitchener Saturday, the Whalers scored the game's first three goals and coasted to the triumph.

Larose accounted for two of the goals as Plymouth pelted Kitchener goalie Jeff Johnston with 43 shots. Whaler goalie Paul Drew faced just 18 shots, making 17 saves.

Surma had a goal and an assist for Plymouth, with Chad Wiseman, Britstone and O'Keefe also getting goals.

CC beats another No. 1 team

Brett John's three-goal burst helped keep Catholic Central ahead of another one of the state's best teams as the Shamrocks stopped Grosse Pointe North, 6-2, at Redford Arena on Saturday.

CC, which has tied Cranbrook (No. 1 in Division 3) and beaten Tiverton (No. 2 in Division 1) in the last two weeks, stopped the Norsemont (No. 1 in Division 2) in no small part thanks to John.

After Jim Spiewak gave CC a 1-0 lead, North countered with a goal from Mike Barger. John scored an unassisted goal for a 2-1 lead, then Roger Horzie tied it for North in the second period.

John made it 3-2 with a goal from Spiewak and Eric Gloe, then 4-2 in the third when he scored from Brian Genrich and Jared Ross. Genrich (from John) and Ross (from Eggert and Genrich) capped the scoring for CC, now 14-0-2 overall and 6-0-1 in the Michigan Interscholastic Hockey League.

NORTHVILLE 3, CHURCHILL 2: Livonia Churchill's hockey team suffered a major blow Monday when host Northville upended the Chargers at Nor Ice Arena, 3-2.

The loss opened the door for rival Livonia Franklin to win the Western Division of the Western Lakes Activities Association. All the Patriots need is a victory Feb. 9 over Plymouth Central to clinch the title outright.

Churchill is now 10-4-4 overall and finishes 4-1-3 in the division. Northville improved to 7-9-1 and 2-4-1.

Churchill didn't convert on a pair of five-on-three situa-

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tions, while outshooting the Mustangs, 29-16.

But Northville earned the victory with a goal in each period — Tim Hillsbrand from Rob Ryan and Scott Schuler at 0:38 of the first; Jason Engstrom at 2:37 of the second; and Schuler, the game-winner on a power-play effort from Aaron Salwood and Hillsbrand with 3:50 to go.

Ryan Vandette scored for Churchill at 4:35 of the opening period and Mike Andes tied it at 2-2 with 9:51 in the third on an assist from Tom McKee.

FRANKLIN 6, W.L. WESTERN 3: Josh Garbutt's hat trick lifted Livonia Franklin (9-1-5, 4-0-3) to a WLLA-Western Division victory Saturday over host Walled Lake Western (5-8-1, 1-5) at the Lakeland Ice Arena.

"This was a must-win game, but we played our worst game of the season," Franklin coach Terry Jobbitt said. "The good news is that we played bad, but still won."

Franklin scored the first four games — two each in the first and second periods — to build a 4-0 lead.

Robert led off with a goal at 6:38 from Jason Robinson and Andy Garbutt followed by Josh Garbutt's goal from Anders Wendell and John Nichol at 7:04.

In the second period, Robert tallied a power-play goal from Ryan Tracy and Scott Sparks at 2:37 followed by Josh Garbutt's unassisted goal at 4:39.

But Western's Kyle Davis broke Franklin netminder Chris Garbutt's shutout string with a goal at 10:29 of the same period.

Adam Jones and Allen Shamoun scored at 1:43 and 8:29, respectively, to cut the deficit to 4-3 before Josh Garbutt's empty netter with 58 seconds.

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Rockers follow big victory with bad loss

It's difficult to tell what the Detroit Rockers are going to do, from game to game.

On Friday, they rebounded from a four-point loss to the NPSL's National Conference-leading Toronto Thunder Hawks to beat them 12-9 at Plymouth's Computware Arena.

Big win against a first-place team.

But then on Sunday, the Rockers hosted the Buffalo Blizzard, last in the NPSL's American Conference, with former Rocker stand-out Brian "Goose" Finnelly

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in goal for the Blizzard. The result: an 11-8 loss at the Palace of Auburn Hills.

The split left Detroit still in last in the National Conference with a 5-18 record. Toronto was 12-9 through the weekend; Buffalo was 9-13.

Against the Blizzard Sunday, the Rockers trailed 7-2 at the half but narrowed that to 11-8 after three quarters. However, they were scoreless in the fourth.

Marcelo Boumann led Detroit with two two-pointers and Nash and Shawn Boney scored one two-pointer apiece.

Matt Little led Buffalo with three twos and one assist for seven points. Andrew Crawford and Chris Handson added one two-pointer apiece.

Finnelly turned away 19 shots to earn the win in goal for Buffalo. Placek had 14 saves.

In the win over Toronto Friday, the Rockers bounced back from a 7-5 deficit after three quarters to outscore the Thunder

Hawks 7-2 in the fourth. Five different players scored goals for Detroit, with Neil Gilbert and Matt Knowles each getting a three-pointer.

Boney, Paul Daily and Dennis Brose added a two-pointer apiece, and Joel Shanker got two assists.

Toronto was led by Mauro Biello with a three-point goal and two two-pointers. Jocelyn Roy also had a two-pointer.

Placek made 11 saves to pick up his third win. Theo Zagar had 12 saves for Toronto.

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