

# CC rallies to defeat Light & Life

BY PAUL BEAUDRY  
STAFF WRITER

If there was any baseball team that felt the effects of last week's sloppy weather, it was Redford-Detroit Catholic Central. CC had a Saturday doubleheader scheduled with Brother Rice and a Monday single game with Taylor Light and Life as it was. But poor weather forced the Shamrocks into a Sunday doubleheader with Brother Rice, giving them five games in three days. The Shamrocks came out of it in decent shape, dropping both games to Rice on Saturday, but winning their next three games to improve to 5-2 overall and 3-2 in the Catholic League's Central Division.

"That's a lot of games and a lot of innings on a pitching staff early in the year," CC coach John Salter said. "It's not always easy."

Actually, CC was getting thumped on Monday by Light and Life, trailing 9-2 heading into the bottom of the sixth inning. But the Shamrocks exploded for nine runs - helped by Ryan Gallagher's grand slam - in the bottom of the frame to earn the win. "It was another case of us coming from behind," Salter said. "Our hitting has been good other than Saturday, but even when we were shut out twice by Rice, we still hit the ball hard."

Greg Marone (1-0) earned the win for CC, while Jason Gingell got the save. Coley Ranney took the loss for Light and Life - a Division 4 finalist last year. The bats were going strong on Sunday for the Shamrocks as they swept the Cubs - 11-1 in the opener and 20-5 in the nightcap after a 13-run fourth inning. Kyle Crepeau was 6-for-6 in the doubleheader with two doubles and two RBI. Jeff Schulz was 3-for-6 with an RBI double. Gallagher had a pair of hits, a walk, was hit by a pitch and scored three times, and Eric Vojtkofsky was 2-for-2 with a pair of runs scored.

# Knights stymie Whalers in Game 6

A day after playing perhaps their best game of the Ontario Hockey League playoff season, the Plymouth Whalers seemingly lost their focus, their composure - and with it - the game.

Saturday's 5-1 loss to the host London Knights at John Labatt Centre in Game No. 6, however, was soon to be forgotten (see related story).

Mike Stathopoulos led the Knights with a goal and two assists. Daniel Bois contributed a goal and an assist and Corey Perry had two assists.

London struck for four first-period goals, two of them on the power play. Ryan Hunter opened the scoring at 3:55 of the first; power-play goals by Bois and Kyle Quincey followed at 7:29 and 12:38. Rick Steadman's score at 19:12 made it 4-0 and put Whaler goalie Paul Drew on the bench.

Jeff Weber replaced him for the second and third periods.

He gave up Stathopoulos' goal at 5:55 of the second period.

Jonas Fiedler scored Plymouth's only goal, on the power play with 0:47 left in the second period. David Liffitt assisted.

The Whalers were called for 22 penalties in the game, which included three 10-minute misconducts, three five-minute fighting penalties, three unsportsmanlike conduct minors and a two-minute penalty for instigating.

London was whistled for 19 penalties, with one game misconduct, three five-minute fighting penalties and a five-minute slashing penalty.

Chris Houle stopped 27 of 28 shots on goal for the Knights. Drew and Weber combined for 20 saves on 25 shots.

London was 2-of-8 on the power play, while Plymouth was 1-of-7.

# Whalers advance to conference final, 4-2

BY C.J. RISAK  
STAFF WRITER

## HOCKEY

Gotta make the playoffs. It's the only path to a championship. When the situation presents itself, a player has to find a way. On Monday in Game Seven of their Ontario Hockey League series against the London Knights, the Plymouth Whalers found their way, beating a team that was a borderline nemesis, 4-2, in front of 3,115 fans at Plymouth's Compuware Arena.

The victory ended a 10-day journey for the Whalers against a London team that possessed less talent and a worse record during the Ontario Hockey League's regular season, a team that has belied them in recent seasons.

In two previous playoff losses to the Knights, in 1999 and 2002, it seemed it was more a matter of the Whalers finding ways to lose than making the necessary plays to win. On Monday at Compuware, the chance to reverse that before it could be labeled a trend was there.

The erupting cheers could be clearly heard down the hall from the Whalers' lockerroom afterward. "That," explained Whaler Karl Stewart, "is just two years of frustration coming."

"It had all come down to this, a one-game showdown, the winner advancing to play Kitchener for the OHL's Western Conference title. It proved to be a game very similar to the first four games of the series, all decided by one goal.

The first two periods decided nothing; the teams were knotted at 2-2. Ten minutes of the third period went by - no change. After 12, it was still the same.

With less than eight minutes remaining the Whalers' Chris Thornburn got a good chance. He got a couple of them, but they missed.

Then with under seven minutes to go, on an innocuous-looking play from just inside the Knights' blue line, John Vigilante drifted from right to left until he was positioned right in front of the London net. He fired a long, hard, low shot through a gathering crowd in front.

And London goalie Chris Houle missed it. It went past him on his right. Vigilante's unassisted goal gave Plymouth a 3-2 lead.

More big-play opportunities became available. Whaler goalie Paul Drew drew a

mysterious roughing minor penalty with 1:49 left; when the Knights pulled Houle for another attacker, they had a two-man advantage.

On a face-off outside the Whaler zone, Stewart lost the draw but did not give up on the play. He lunged at the loose puck, just trying to get his stick on it.

"All I was thinking was pressure, pressure," he said. His effort was rewarded; he nudged the puck, tipping it past the London defenseman and into the Knights' net. No one could stop him; Stewart put the game away with his empty-net, unassisted goal, scored with :35 left.

"These guys were motivated from the get-go," said Whalers coach Mike Vellucci. "One thing London taught us: You've got to work every shift. Talent won't (win) it for you."

In the first six games of the series, the team that scored first won. In Game Seven, the Knights' Kyle Quincey slid a shot toward goal that Danny Bois tipped past Drew, allowing London to draw first blood 8:57 into the first period.

The Whalers showed they would not be outworked, however. Playing abhorred, Sean Thompson and Chad LaRose disrupted the Knights' play at center-ice. LaRose

gaining possession and carrying the puck into the London zone. His initial shot was wide of the net, but the rebound came off the boards back in front. He shoveled it past Houle and, with 2:03 left in the first period, the game was tied at 1-1.

However, the Whalers' character would be tested again when their play broke down in the closing seconds of the period, allowing Dylan Hunter to score as the buzzer sounded for a 2-1 London lead. Corey Perry and Ryan Hare assisted.

LaRose, who missed three games in the series on a suspension from a high-stick penalty, proved just how valuable he was when took a pass from Cole Jarrett to the left of the Knights' net and dished it to Stewart coming down the slot. Stewart scored with 16:26 left in the second period and the game was tied at 2-2.

Setting the stage for a third period that would decide the series, "Both teams worked hard," said London coach Dale Hunter. "That's all I ask, that they work hard. They did their best."

"We had our chances. That's the way it goes sometimes." And this time fate favored Plymouth.

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