

WHALERS

FROM PAGE D1

13th goal of the playoffs, with assists from Andre Benoit and Roy, to cement the victory.

The Rangers had 35 shots to Plymouth's 34, with Dickie making 33 saves for Kitchener and Drew 32 for the Whalers.

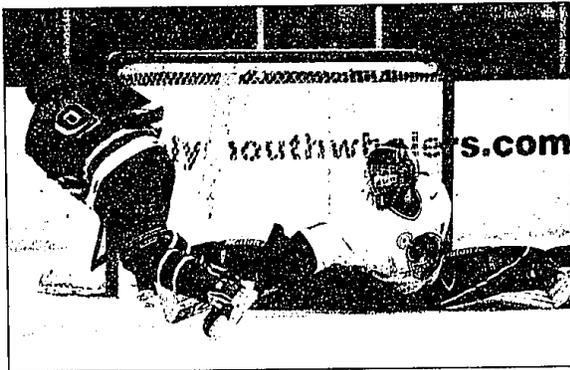
"It was great hockey," said Vellucci. Asked if there was anything he might have done differently, something that could have changed the outcome of the series, he replied, "If you'd asked me that question last year, I would have said yes."

"But this year, no. Give our guys credit, they fought all season long, and they proved a lot of people wrong. We had to make a lot of changes and fill a lot of holes."

For a team that experienced a major turnover in personnel during the off-season, the Whalers did well to reach the conference finals. Indeed, they had a 3-2 lead in games going into last Saturday's contest at Compuware, but a four-goal second period doomed them.

"Our guys were too nervous," said Vellucci. "They were too up, just too wound up."

Playing in front of an overflow crowd of more than 4,000 was certainly daunting, but the Rangers adapted. In the end, the defense that carried the Rangers to the conference finals got them through it, too; they surrendered five goals in the last two games while scoring 10. And now DeBoer, who



PAUL HANCOCK/STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER

Plymouth goalie Paul Drew gets beat by Kitchener's Petr Kanko (9) for one of his three goals against the Whalers Saturday night in game six.

guided the Whalers to the OHL Finals twice before leaving for Kitchener, is going back while Plymouth prepares for Saturday's OHL Entry Draft. Eliminate those 16 seconds and the outcome might have been different.

RANGERS 7, WHALERS 4: Until the Western Conference Finals, Kitchener had been the best defensive team in the OHL playoffs. With the Whalers scoring four goals in Saturday's Game Six, one might think that would have been good enough to put Plymouth into the championship series. But seven goals by the Rangers ensured there would be a Game Seven.

Thanks to a hat trick from forward Petr Kanko, Kitchener defeated the Whalers in front of a sellout crowd of 4,037 at Plymouth's Compuware Arena. Kanko has been a thorn in the Whalers' side all series, between his playmaking ability and his abrasive play in the corners. His goals were timely in this game. His first tied the game 1-1 less than two minutes after Plymouth's Ryan Ramsey gave the home team the early advantage.

His second tally gave the Rangers a 3-2 lead as part of their four-goal second-period outburst. His third goal proved to be a back-breaker for the Whalers, putting Kitchener ahead 6-3 with 7:59 left in the contest.

With 4:43 remaining, Plymouth coach Mike Vellucci rolled the dice and pulled goaltender Paul Drew to give his team an extra attacker. This tactic is rarely used with so much time

left in the game, but Plymouth had held the momentum throughout the third period.

The gamble paid off to some extent when center Chris Thorburn scored on a quick shot on the short side with 2:27 left to cut the lead to 6-4. Although the Whalers generated more than 20 shots on goal in the third period, it wasn't enough, especially after Kitchener's Mike Richards sealed the win with an empty-net goal with 1:3 seconds left.

Colt Jarrett and John Mitchell also scored for Plymouth, with Jonas Fiedler picking up two assists. Kitchener's Greg Campbell had a goal and two assists, while Derek Roy scored once and set up another goal.

Staff writer Brad Monastiere contributed to this story.

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Madonna has new logo

Since Madonna University has fielded sports teams, the school's nickname has been Crusaders (for a variation thereof). But in all that time, the school has never had an official sports logo. Until now.

Madonna has unveiled its first official sports logo, that of a knight wielding a shield positioned over the school's name.

"We've always been the Crusaders," athletic director Bryan Rizzo said. "I tried to change the logo when I first got here. We never had an athletic logo; we just used 'Madonna U' with a flame next to it." Political correctness had something to do with the logos



design. In fact, the "Fighting" part of the team's nickname (they were the Fighting Crusaders) was dropped earlier this year. Madonna sports information director Matt Fanecki took the challenge. He contacted Team Works of Art, a design firm out of Columbus, Ohio, and they came up with the logo.

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Spartans release coach of boys track

BY BRAD EMONS
STAFF WRITER

Despite getting off to one of its best boys track starts in years, administrators at Livonia Stevenson High School have decided to make a coaching change.

Assistant Scott Shaw will assume duties for the remainder of the season, replacing John Gores, who coached both the varsity boys cross country and boys track teams the past 17 years.

Stevenson, expected to challenge for the Western Lakes

Activities Association crown after capturing the Lakes Division title last season, has captured its first three dual meets this season against Livonia Franklin, Westland John Glenn and Salem.

Both athletic administrator Lori Hyman and principal Steve Archibald did not divulge details or elaborate regarding the situation surrounding Gores, who is a physical education instructor at Stevenson.

When contacted by the Observer Thursday night, Gores issued a "no comment."

In wake of the coaching change, volunteer assistant Eric Cassie also resigned.

"John Gores is no longer coaching at Stevenson High School in cross country and track effective April 17," Hyman said.

"He didn't coach yesterday (April 16 vs. Salem)," Archibald said he has talked with some parents of the track athletes, who have been informed of the change.

"It was my decision," Archibald said. It's permanent. John won't be returning in cross country and track. This is

unrelated to his teaching position.

"Lori informed the kids yesterday (Wednesday) and I'll also make myself available. I'm sure this is a blow, especially to some of the distance kids. Our major emphasis is to help them continue." Shaw, who has coached the sprinters and jumpers the past five years, will take over the varsity squad through the state meet (May 31) along with another track assistant, Tim Gabel, who is the varsity head football coach.

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