

Former Marlies move uptown from Gardens to York Ice Palace

By EDO VAN BELKOM

Of all the new faces on this year's edition of the hockey Yeomen, two players have made the trip uptown to play in the OUAA. Last season, both George Spezza and Greg Rolston played on Maple Leaf Garden's ice in the blue and white of the Toronto Marlboros of the OHL. Both men ended up at the Ice Palace, competing in Yeomen red and white. Their recent history is somewhat similar, but that's where the similarities end.

Spezza is in his third year of a Physical Education program at York, spending his first two years at York while playing hockey for the Marlies, last year as an average (21 year old) player.

He joined the Yeomen after missing the first two weeks of training camp while deciding

whether or not he wanted to continue his hockey career at the collegiate level. "I wanted to get my school work set first but I found that I couldn't stay away from the game for too long."

Spezza, who was captain of the Marlboros last year, was picked up by the Toronto Maple Leafs as a free agent and was asked to join the Toronto farm club in St. Catharines but choose not to join in order to keep his collegiate eligibility. Any player who signs a professional contract must sit out one full year to regain eligibility.

After a slow start this season, Spezza has developed into an on ice leader and his physical style of play has made him a valuable asset on the power play, in penalty killing situations as well as on a regular shift.



FAMILY PORTRAIT: Seated to the left of Harold Ballard in the front row is Yeoman George Spezza, former captain of the 1984-85 Toronto Marlboros. Fourth from the left in the second row is Yeomen winger Greg Rolston.

"I've just begun playing in this league. I hope to have a better second part of the season and show how I'm capable of playing," Spezza said.

One man who has been watching Spezza's development closely is Yeomen head coach, Dave Chambers. "He's always had excellent offensive abilities and his defensive play has greatly improved. He has become a good

all round defenceman."

Rolston, who is a native of Fenton, Michigan and a product of the famous Detroit Compuware hockey system, passed up a full baseball scholarship at the University of Michigan to play junior hockey in Toronto.

Rolston made the decision that hockey is the sport that he enjoyed most and joined the Marlies at the age of 19. After one year with that team he was no longer eligible for a scholarship at a U.S. college and decided to stay in the city to go to school and play hockey.

"York is the only team I had any contact with. Dave (Chambers) talked to me a couple of times," Rolston said. "I like Toronto a lot. It's the only place I'd like to play in."

Rolston's diligent corner work and great shot have made him the Yeomen's leading goal scorer. "He's turning out to be an offensive threat," Chambers said. "He's aggressive, he cuts for the net and he has one of the hardest shots in the league. He's our number one goal scorer."

Evidence of his offensive punch came in the recent York Tournament as he was named the tournament MVP and his three goals in the final game were instrumental

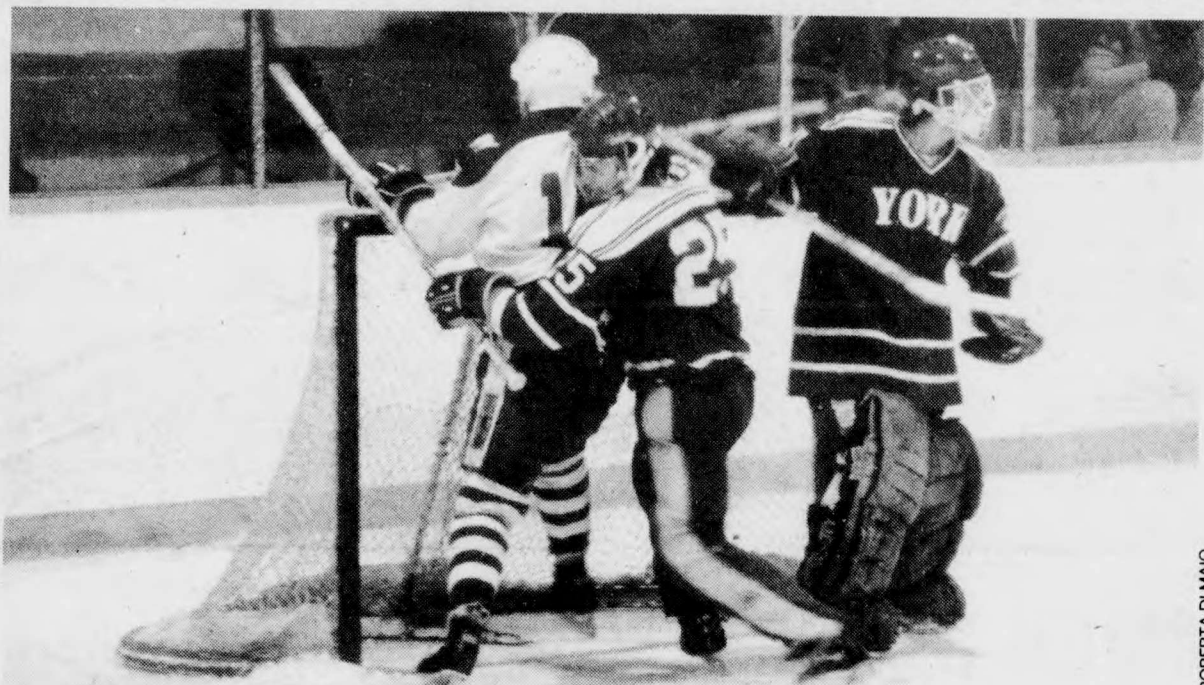
in York's 4-1 win over the Western Mustangs to take the title.

Present at the tournament was the entire Rolston clan, who made the trek from Michigan in the Yuletide season not only for son Greg, but for brothers Ron Jr. and Brian who were in the Metro area competing in Tier II junior and major peewee tournaments.

Joyce Rolston said her son's tournament performance was "a nice Christmas gift," and added, "York is a great school and Greg is really enjoying it."

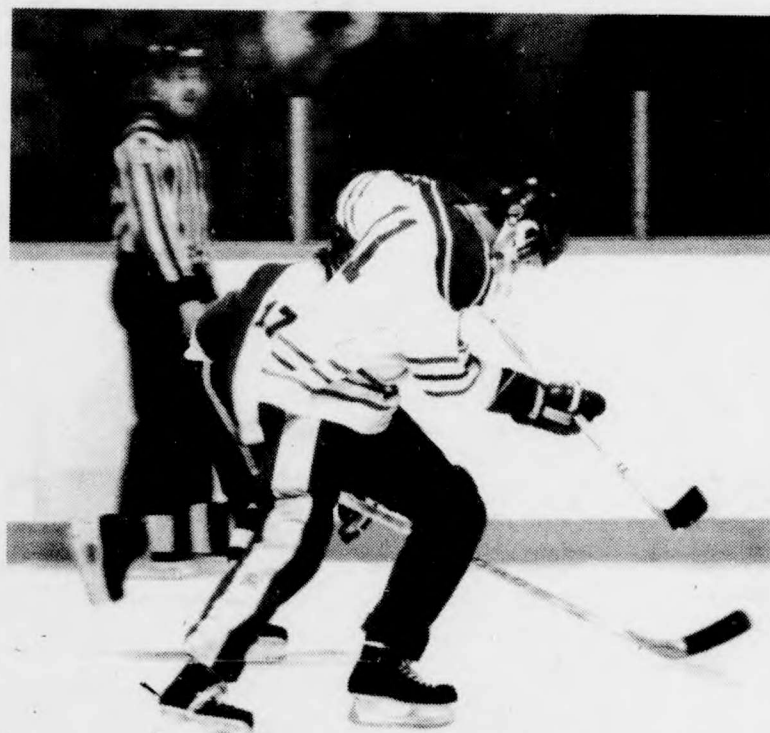
Rolston, like Spezza, enjoys the game of hockey, and puts a high value on school work. Evidence of this dedication is the fact that Rolston passed up the opportunity to play in the OUAA all-star game because of an exam on the following day, taking the night off to study. The top priority put on school work is still the one thing that sets the OUAA apart from most other amateur leagues across the province.

Of all the new faces on the Yeomen this season, the two men who made the trip uptown to the Ice Palace are making contributions to the team that makes the York Yeomen a good bet to repeat as champions in 1986.



OUT OF THE WAY: Spezza keeps the front of the net clear for goaltender Scott Mosey.

ROBERTA DI MAIO



HARD AT WORK: Rolston's hard work and great shot has made him the Yeomen's number one goal scorer this season.

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