

## Jan. 17 Ice Hockey



*Making his first appearance on the ice since the passing of his mom, David Osnato made an immediate impact for Hamilton in its win over Lawrence today (Photo by John Blaine/purchase photos by e-mailing [jbsportphoto@aol.com](mailto:jbsportphoto@aol.com)).*

### **With Steinert looming, Hornets take care of business against Lawrence**

**By Tony Piscotta  
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**Jan. 17:** Hamilton senior Sean Tohill admits that the Steinert-Hamilton game is one "you circle when the schedule comes out."

Couple that with the fact that Hamilton West was facing Lawrence in a rare 2:45 start one day before meeting the Spartans, and the Hornets game today had all the makings of the proverbial "trap" game.

While Hamilton coach Matt Hamilton felt the Hornets were a bit "lackadaisical" during their matinee contest, they scored three goals in just over a minute (1:03) in a first period outburst and then cruised to a 6-2 win. With the win Hamilton raised its record to 6-7-1 (3-6 CVC) and kept hopes alive for a state playoff berth.

"We got the job done that's the bottom line," said Hamilton. "We got off to a slow start but then got a couple of quick goals. Then we got lackadaisical in the second period but then got a couple of more goals. Like we told them (after the game) a win is a win is a win."

That three-goal outburst began with a point shot on a Hornet power play with 7:48 remaining in the first. Senior Dave Osnato, in his first game back since the passing of his mother two weeks ago, sent a shot from the point that went through a screen and glanced off Lawrence goalie Alex Finan before slipping inside the right post.

The goal was special not only because of Osnato's return but also because it was something the Hornets had drilled on in their practice Sunday night.

It was good to get out there and get the first one," said Osnato. "It's something we work on a lot, taking shots and looking to get deflections."

Tohill felt Osnato's presence in the Hornets' lineup was a big boost.

He's a huge leader for our team," said Tohill. "He's a distributor on the rush and having him back is awesome."

While the second goal was not a deflection, it was another one of the so-called "garbage" goals that senior Kyle Rogers has been making a habit of scoring as of late.

Rogers, coming off a hat trick performance in the Hornets' game at St. Joseph's-Hammonton on Friday, made it 2-0 just 36 seconds after Osnato's goal; pouncing on a rebound of a shot by Tohill that got away from Finan.

"He always seems to be in the right place at the right time and he's good with the puck on his stick," said Tohill.

The Hornets' third goal was another shot from the point - this time from sophomore defenseman Gerry Gomez off a feed from junior Thomas Tramontana.

Gomez seemed to benefit the most from the return of Osnato as the two are a solid tandem on the Hornets blue line.

"We go way back. We've been playing together since peewees and mites," said Osnato.

After allowing the Cardinals to get on the board early in the second period - and then giving Lawrence some prime chances due to the complacency that Hamilton addressed with the team in his post-game comments, the Hornets responded with a pair of second-period goals to put the game out of reach.

Tohill stretched the lead to 4-1 with an outstanding individual effort - skating in one-on-one against a Cardinals defender and then using that defender as a screen to put the puck past Finan before he could react. Rogers added his second goal of the game - getting a puck in his "office" in front of the net and then chipping a shot over Finan's shoulder.

The two teams traded goals early in the third but despite some sloppy play the Hornets were able to hold off Lawrence and walk away with the win.

And turn their attention to the Spartans.

"They weren't at full strength when we beat them (in the Hornets Holiday Tournament)," said Hamilton, of tomorrow's match with Steinert. "I just told them if we come with the same effort as today it could be a different story."

Osnato and Tohill, though, were confident that would not be the case.

"You don't have to say anymore," said Osnato when asked about getting ready for playing the Spartans. "We have to come out flying because it's Steinert. That's all you need to say."

For Tohill, the key to the game is following the same formula that has led to their recent success.

"If we come out hard and forecheck and get the puck out of our end I think we'll win," said the senior captain.

One key matchup for the game will be the two junior goalies - Hamilton's Evan Morris and Steinert's PJ Alexiadis.

Like the rest of his team against Lawrence, Morris did not seem to be his sharpest - allowing a few rebound opportunities that are uncharacteristic of his play and stopping 19 of 21 shots.

No doubt he and the rest of the Hornets will be far sharper tomorrow.

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The Hornets travelled to Hollydell Arena to take on St. Joseph's-Hammonton in a late game on Friday - coming away with a 3-3 tie. Hamilton trailed 3-1 late in the game before Rogers scored a pair of goals with just over two minutes left. Tohill assisted on both late goals and Morris recorded 13 saves in net.