

## Focus on figure skating

# Local skating pair looking

By MARK SCHADENBERG  
of The Sentinel-Review

Embro's Paul Matheson is a Canadian figure skating champion.

He, along with Montreal's Sophie Dore, won the Canadian Novice Dance competition this past January, but they can't rest on their laurels quite yet. The next step is to become the best junior dance pair in the country.

Matheson, 18, is a member of the Kitchener-Waterloo Skating Club and because of the many hours coaching and practising he does each week he resides in Waterloo and attends Bluevale High School.

Dore, 15, is from Montreal, but moved to Ontario at the beginning of last season when she and Matheson became skating partners.

"I don't get home sick. I'm too busy to think about my family. I'll be going to Montreal at Christmas for a few days," said Dore.

The duo's coaches are Paul McIntosh and Michelle MacDonald. MacDonald, along with Woodstock's Martin Smith, were Canadian senior pairs champions a couple of years ago.

"This year we are aiming to be in the top five at the Canadians. Our long-term goal is to make it to the Olympics, but in figure skating it is better to set short-term goals and reach them, than to set too many long-term goals," said Matheson.

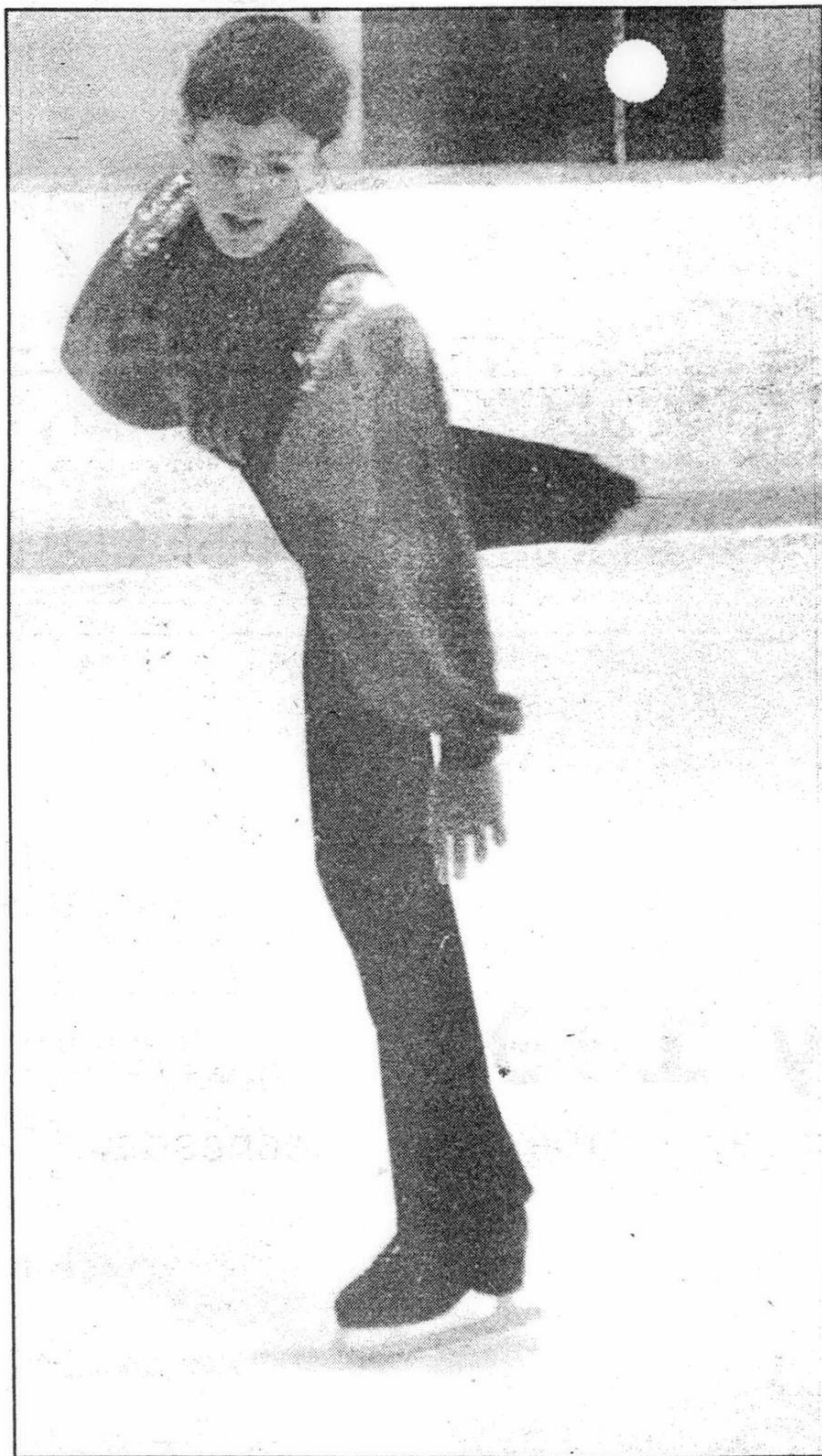
The duo's road to the nationals has already reached the first hurdle. On the weekend of Nov. 20-22, they finished first in the Western Ontario Sectionals held in Waterloo. The next step is to finish in the top four at the Central Canada Divisionals scheduled for Jan. 4-8 in Brandon, Manitoba. From there it will be off to Hamilton's Copps Coliseum for the Canadian

Championships set for early February.

In figure skating, the maximum age to compete as a novice is 17. The next level is junior, where there is no age limit, but one can only compete as a junior for three years before they have to move up to senior. Therefore, the Matheson-Dore duo could remain as juniors for three seasons, but they certainly hope to reach senior before then.

"We don't like to lose so we have to be prepared for every competition, both mentally and physically. We're on the ice at least 15 hours every week. We also take ballroom dancing lessons and do some weight training," explained Matheson.

Interestingly, Matheson also spends at least seven more hours every week at the arena as an instructor. He works with three dif-



Gavin Landreth performs his routine in the preliminary men's division at the Zorra Figure Skating Club's Christmas pop concert for competitive skaters at the Embro Arena Monday night. (Liz Dadson photo)

## ahead to Olympics

ferent skating clubs —Woodstock, New Hamburg and St. Clements.

Matheson still likes to play soccer and baseball in the summer, but gave up hockey a couple of years ago.

Naturally, Paul's parents, Robert and Helen, are behind their son 100 per cent.

"We're really pleased to see what he has accomplished. We spent a lot of years following him and it's nice to see him achieve. His commitment to figure skating is phenomenal," said Helen Matheson.



EMBRO'S PAUL MATHESON, along with partner Sophie Dore of Montreal, recently finished first in the Western Ontario Sectional Championships. They competed in the Junior Dance event and have now qualified for the Central Canadian Divisional Championships to be held Jan 4-8 in Brandon, Manitoba.