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AHS Junior volleyballers 'thinking they can win'

BY DOUG HARRISON
 The Acton Tanner

No, motivational speaker Anthony Robbins wasn't spotted boarding the Acton Redmen Junior Boys' volleyball team's bus to Oakville-Trafalgar last Wednesday, but the locals sure came home with a different outlook heading into their fifth game of the season played here on Monday against Blakelock. "You could see it at practice on Thursday morning," Redmen skipper Ken Ellis said on Friday after his team's 16-14, 15-1 victory. "They started thinking they could win."

Even Ellis could have been accused of having a chin-wag with a Robbins-type as he freely admitted - something he hasn't boasted about often - to being confident to go to his bench. A bench that now possesses some depth.

He was pleased with his team's ability to stay focussed in Game 1 in front of a strong throng of Red Devils supporters.

The first game, he said, was a good character builder as the Redmen were taken extra innings for a 16-14 decision.

Their momentum into the next match as it was the Red Devils who were guilty of panicking and losing composure with frequent looks to the lopsided scoreboard.

"This time they were guilty of

inward thinking and wondering what was happening to them," said Ellis, whose charges dropped two exhibition games to the Red Devils by two or three points in late September. "They got rattled. It just shows you what a mental game volleyball is."

"We only had one serve hit the net in all three games."

The Redmen completed the evening sweep with a 15-1 cincher in Game 2.

Two players stood out in Ellis's mind last week - second-year Junior Todd Schonnop and André

Savard.

Schonnop could be, Ellis revealed, a dominant force at the net on defence with his other middle, Rob Turpin.

"That's the best game I've seen him play," said Ellis. "He learned to anticipate the play. I was really pleased for him."

Savard, on the other hand, was aggressive both on offence and defensively. "He's a two-way player and played well at the net."

The Redmen travel to Q.E. Park in Oakville today (Wednesday) for a 5:10 start against the Eagles.

Robert Little Bants win Halton title

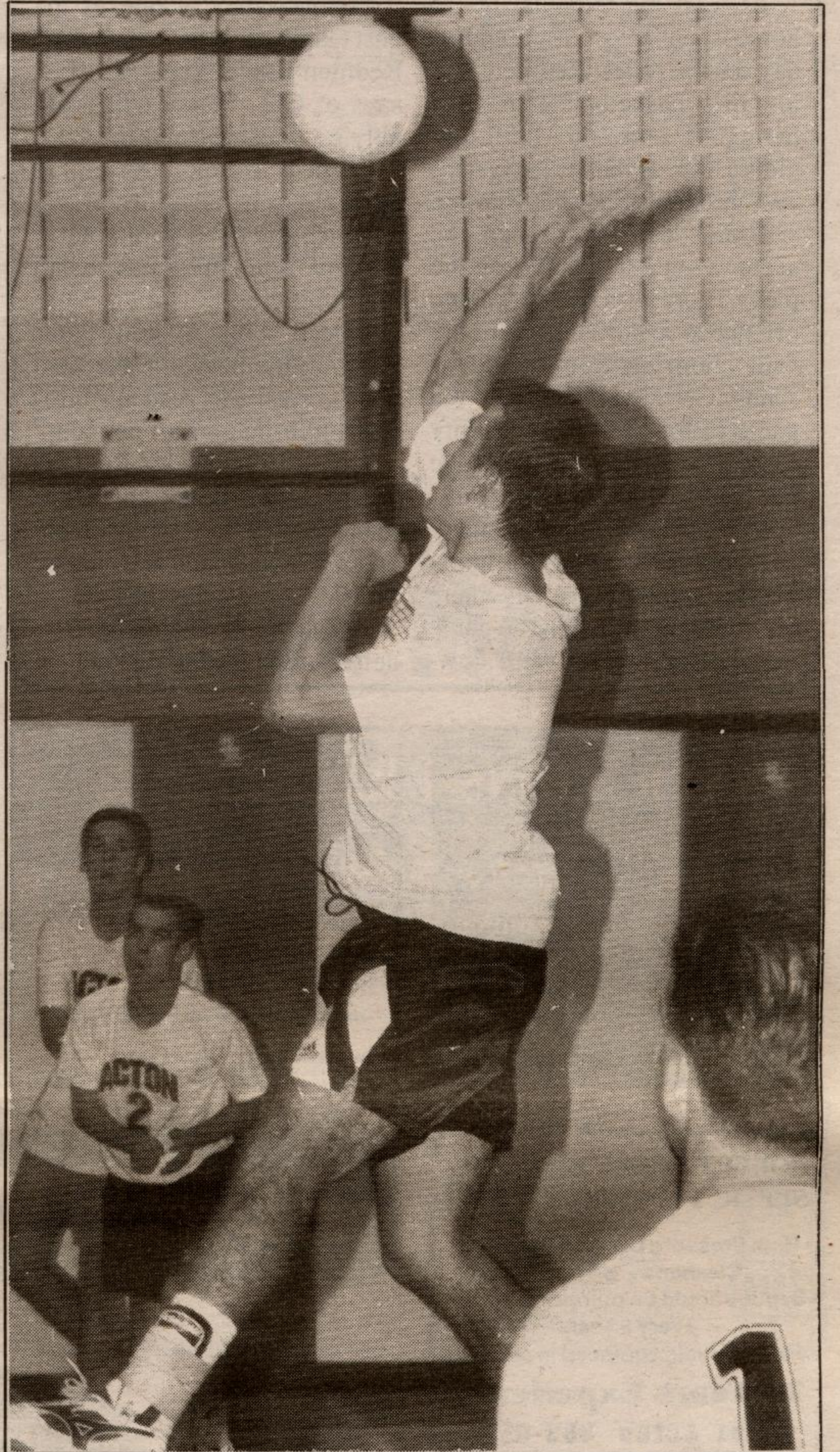
Robert Little captured its first Halton Junior cross-country title in 11 years last Wednesday, as the Bantam girls trimmed Pine Grove at Sherwood Forest Park in Burlington.

The winning team of Heather Moon (3rd), Holly Goddard (7th), Meghan Colvin (34th), Andrea Dingwall (80th) and Kimberly Roberts (placing only used if injury occurs) edged Pine Grove 125 to 132.

"Two weeks ago at the North Halton meet we knew we had a good team, but never thought we would be Halton champs," said coach Paul Hynds.

"We never stayed for the awards, but when I opened my mail on Monday, there was the winning pennant. I'm really proud of those girls."

On the Boys' side, they fared well at the North Halton event (3rd), but placed 30th last week.



AERIAL ATTACK! Acton High's Dave Dolliver winds up to kill the ball in an invitational tourney match against Oakville-Trafalgar at Acton High on Friday. The Redmen won the game 15-11. That's Chris Cullen in the foreground and teammates Greg Finley and Mike DeBruyn eyeing the spike. (Doug Harrison photo)



IT'S BEHIND YOU! MacKenzie-Chapman's Brandon Sheppard falls to the ice after wiring a shot toward MacMillan's netminder Aaron Chaisson during a Novice (8 and 9-year-olds) house league hockey contest at the Community Centre on Saturday morning. (Eve Martin photo)

Attitude change spells win

BY DOUG HARRISON
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"They just overpowered us."

That was Chris White's recollection of last Wednesday's uninspiring effort at Oakville-Trafalgar (7-15, 7-15, 6-15) by his Senior Redmen Boys in high school volleyball action.

Just two days later, though, the same Redmen squad knocked off the Red Devils 15-11 during an invitational tourney the locals held at the Acton High gym.

White's comment as he headed off the court to a post-game meeting with his team? "That was the best game they've played all year."

What appeared to be a magical cure wasn't that magical in the end. It was a simple change in attitude.

"O.T. is the best team in the Volpe Division so far. The guys were going (into Wednesday's

game) expecting to lose," White said. "We tied them 2-2 in the first game, they had a run to make 8-2 and we started playing as individuals."

"One of the biggest parts of this game is to play as a team. The tournament is going to be a big help to us."

White had a simple answer for the Redmen's troubles in Oakville: the power had a tendency to slip back too far in the backcourt which hurt tip and spike coverage.

What did impress the first-year coach and former Redmen player was team chemistry. "There was much more intensity on the floor. I think we have a lot of talent."

"It's tough to overpower a good team, but we did play smart in cutting down on free balls and used them when we got them," White said.