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National experience worthwhile for Green

Curtis Green won't be surprised if the American Olympic baseball team leaves Barcelona with a medal.

But he's basing that notion on more than just blind speculation. The 21-year-old Georgetown native got up close and personal with the Americans, playing them in three pre-Olympic exhibition games as a member of the Canadian national team. The U.S. won the contests 5-2, 8-3 and 11-3.

"It was like playing a AAA team or a major-league team because they've got 10 first-rounders (from this year's major-league draft) and a lot of their younger players are eligible this year and next," said Green, a long-time member of Georgetown's minor baseball program. "They've certainly got a lot of talent.

"Cuba is supposed to be strong (at Olympics), but I'd say the Americans are definite medal contenders."

The Canadian team was scheduled to play four games, but the first contest at the American club's Olympic training site at Millington, Tenn., was rained out. The six-foot-four, 205-pound Green was Canada's designated hitter in the opening game, then saw action as a

pinch hitter in the second, which was played in Louisville, Ky., at the Class AAA facility of the St. Louis Cardinals.

The third contest was played at Veterans Stadium, home of the National League's Philadelphia Phillies, and Green got the starting nod at first base.

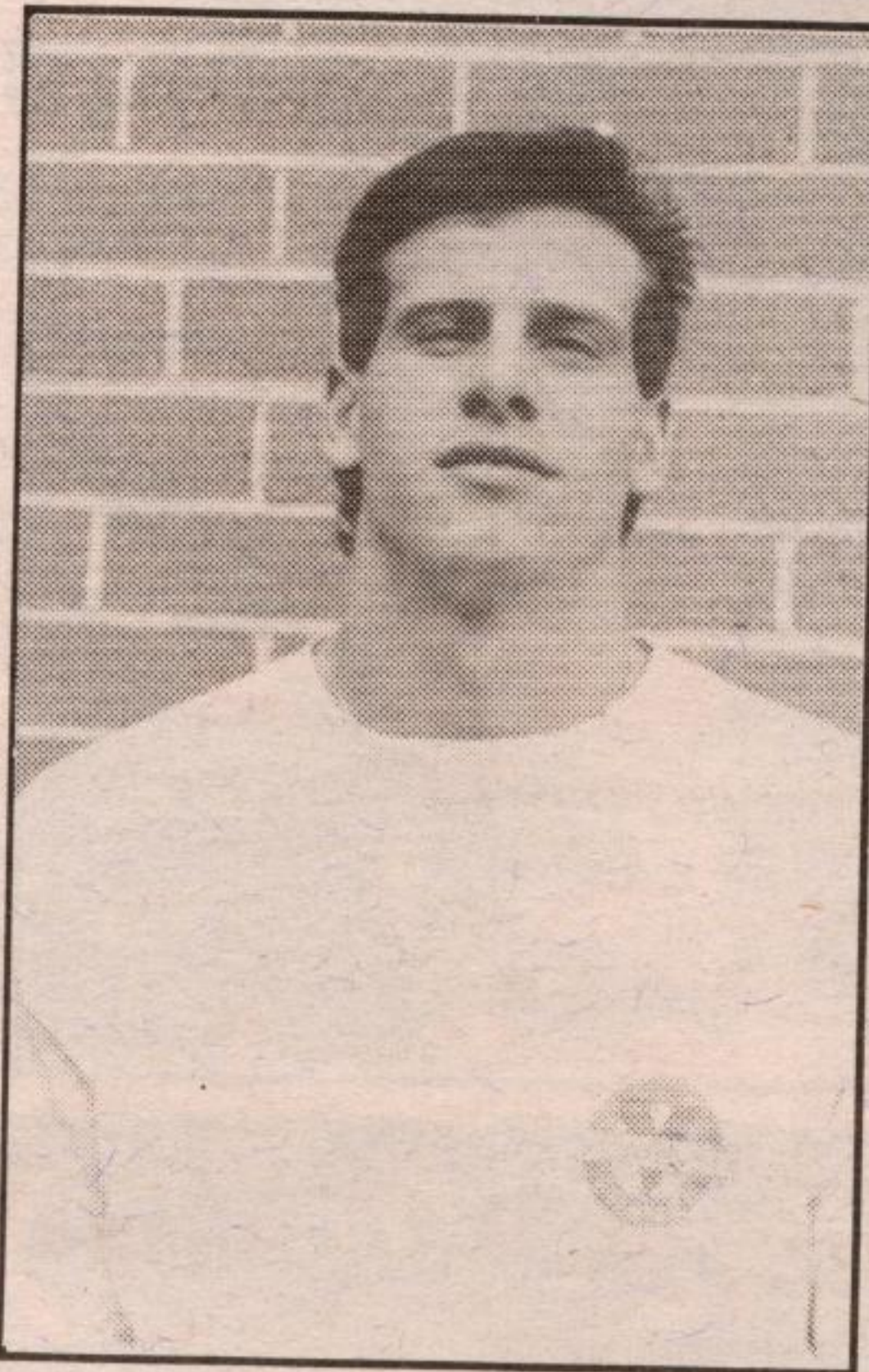
The Canada-U.S. game was billed as a doubleheader of sorts, as following the contest, the Phillies and Los Angeles Dodgers took to the field for a major-league baseball contest, which the Canadian and American amateur players watched from the comfort of an executive lounge.

"We were all kind of in awe at first," Green said. "I thought to myself that 'I'm playing in Philadelphia.'

"But then you realize you've got to play the game.

"The whole thing was a great experience because you got to play every day. You'd practice in the morning, then be able to put those lessons to use later that night during the games."

Green finished the three-game set with an excellent on-base percentage, reaching first five times in seven at-bats. He was 1-for-5 with a pair of walks and got on base after



Curtis Green

a pair of errors.

Despite the scores, Green figures Canadian baseball teams can compete on equal footing with the likes of the Americans.

"In the first and third games we lost it in the first inning," Green said. "In the first one, an error led to three runs and in the third game, we were down 6-0 in the first inning.

"I think we can compete. It's just a matter of playing more and devel-

oping more. We need to face better competition more often.

"Every American pitcher we faced threw a fastball more than 90 miles an hour. In two-and-a-half weeks during our training camp in Windsor we never saw anything near 90 m.p.h."

Green garnered a spot on the national team by impressing team officials at training camp, hitting two home runs and batting close to .500 in exhibition games. But his versatility didn't hurt either.

Team officials had penciled in their two catching prospects, but wanted to carry a third. Green, who has caught, played first, third and the outfield as well being a DH at differing tenures of his baseball-playing days, seemed like a natural.

"I hit the ball well and thought I did well defensively, but, yeah, I'm sure being versatile didn't hurt."

Green also made good on his second chance to make the national team. Last year he was invited to training camp, but had to pass because of a broken hand.

Having returned home last week, Green is quickly getting back into the swing of things. He will continue to play Inter-County baseball in Guelph, with that city's junior and

senior teams. In addition, he will continue preparing for his third varsity season at Troy State University in Alabama, where this year Green hopes to be the Trojans' full-time catcher. He spent his freshman season at first base before being used predominantly as a DH last year.

"The position is open," he said. "I hope to fill it."

The experience of playing with the national team will help, Green said.

"I got to play against some of the best players in the United States so I guess that counts for something," he said matter of factly. "I found out what I need to work on in order to get to their level.

"I've still got to work on my defence and my hitting. Your game is never complete."

A decent showing with the Trojans this year could help Green's stock in the 1993 major-league amateur draft.

"There were a lot of scouts at training camp and at the games, so hopefully I got a lot of exposure," Green said. "If it (being drafted) happens, fine.

"If not, maybe I'll still be around for the 1996 Olympics. That's always an option."

Millar rising through ranks at very quick pace

Jason Millar has been involved in tae kwon do for less than four years, but his trophy mantle is quickly becoming cluttered.

In the six competitions the 11-year-old Georgetown native has entered since taking up the sport, he has finished first four times and third twice. He recently returned from the Canadian junior nationals with a gold and bronze medal. He topped the pattern competition in the 11-12 year-old class and was third in the sparring event.

Two years ago Millar competed in his first national championship, finishing second in sparring in the 9-10 year-old class.

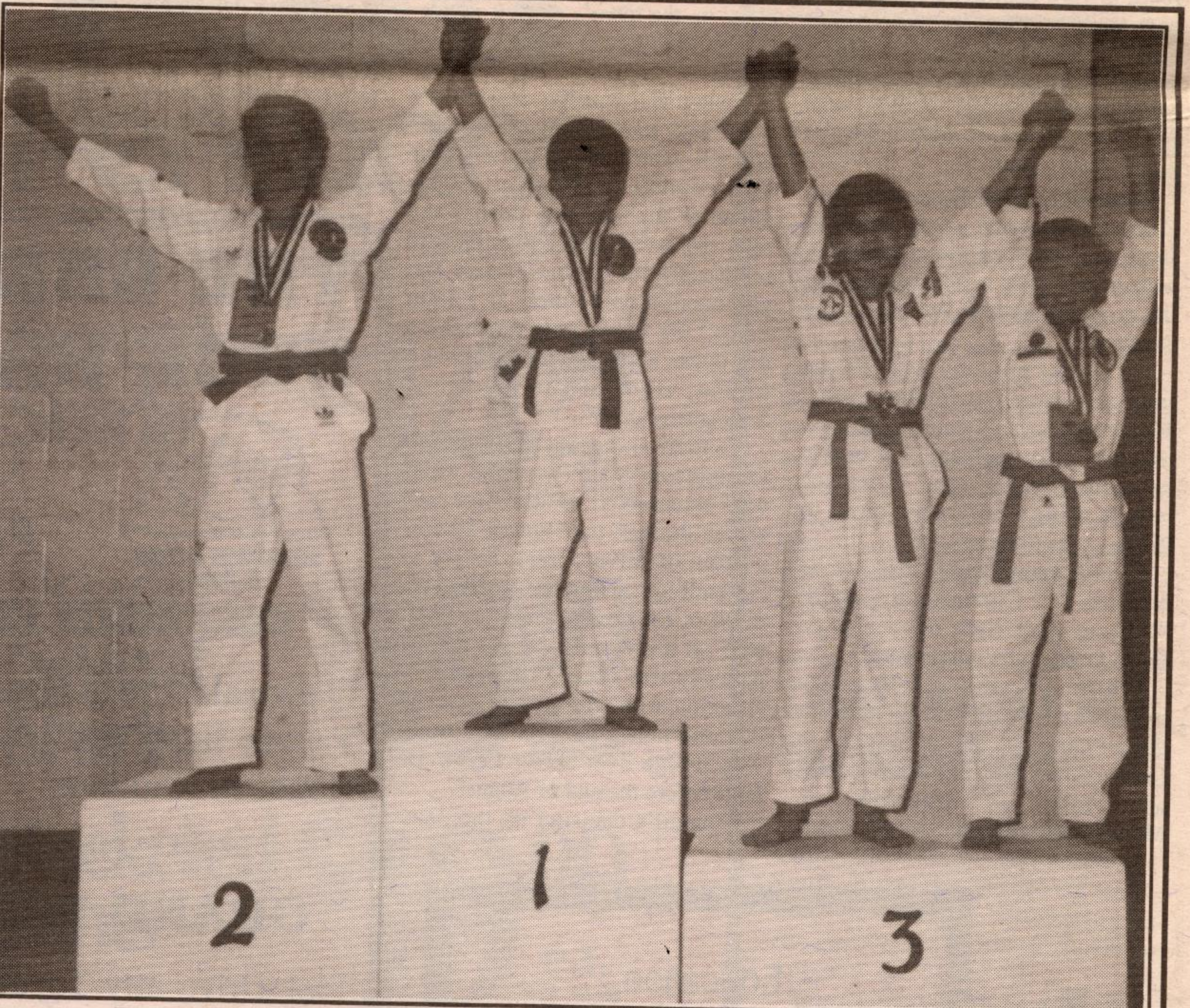
The four-foot-two, 62-pound Millar, who trains three times weekly in Brampton, currently has his red belt, which is a notch below black belt. His goals include

becoming a fully-fledged black belt before he turns 12, and someday representing Canada at the Olympics.

The Sacre Coeur student is now moved into weaponry, training with a staff and sword.

Tae kwon do competitions are divided into two categories. The pattern event has the competitors going through their motions before a panel of judges, where footwork and technique can be appraised. Sparring is the actual meeting of an opponent.

Millar finished third in sparring at his first actual competition, which was the annual Battle of Toronto in 1989, in the 7-8 year-old class. Later that year at the Pan Am Open martial arts meet he was third in pattern for 7-9 year-olds.



Georgetown's Jason Millar, 11, (in first spot on the podium) celebrates after winning a gold medal in pattern recently at the national junior tae kwon do championships. Millar, who has won four gold medals in the six competitions he has entered since taking up the sport less than four years ago, also won a bronze medal in sparring at the national event.

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