

Baton twirlers tough it out to win bronze at world meet

With a broken nose and a gash above the eye, the athlete, not wanting to miss the chance to compete in the season's biggest event, gets a quick patch job to stop the bleeding and later returns for stitches—without the benefit of freezing—before going back out and competing again.

A scene from the Stanley Cup playoffs? The NBA? A heavyweight title fight? Try the World Baton Twirling Championships.

The kind of storyline that makes legends out of hockey players and athletes from other contact sports, played itself out for Kennedy King. But it didn't stop her and sister Sheridan from winning a bronze medal in duet at the world championships in Marseille, France.

"She's the poster child for baton not being a wussy sport," Sheridan said.

It was just ten minutes before the 14-year-old sisters were to hit the floor for the duet competition—their best chance for a medal at the competition for which they had been training for three years. Running through their routine one last time in the practice area, Kennedy fired the baton 45 feet into the air for a double illusion—the most difficult move of the routine in which the competitor takes their eyes off the baton. When Kennedy looked up to catch the baton, it struck her in the face.

"She had her hand over her eye and I think she was OK until I pulled her hand away to look at it and she felt the blood running down her face," said the twins' mom and coach Darlene King.

Doctors said they would have to stitch the cut immediately.

"How long will it take?" Kennedy asked.

The answer—20 minutes—wasn't what either sister wanted to here.

"I was thinking there goes three years of training down the drain," Sheridan said.

But Kennedy wanted, no part of stitches under those conditions.

"There was no way we weren't going on," she said.

Doctors bandaged her eye and they hit the floor to perform. After an early drop, they regained their composure for a strong performance. Though the removal of the double illusion from the routine hurt their chances of winning gold, they were thrilled with the

bronze under the circumstances.

An hour later, after having her eye stitched, Kennedy performed in the final event of the worlds, the twirling corps. Kennedy, Sheridan and Krystal Orchard of Georgetown helped the team win Canada's first medal in the event by taking the bronze.

The two bronze medals were just the tip of the iceberg for the Grade 8 Centennial Middle School students. Kennedy was a member of the silver-medal winning senior twirling team and placed fourth in two-baton, the best finish ever by a Canadian.

Sheridan surprised even herself by placing fifth in strut, an event that is very ballet-oriented.

"That was unbelievable. That's usually not one of my strong events."

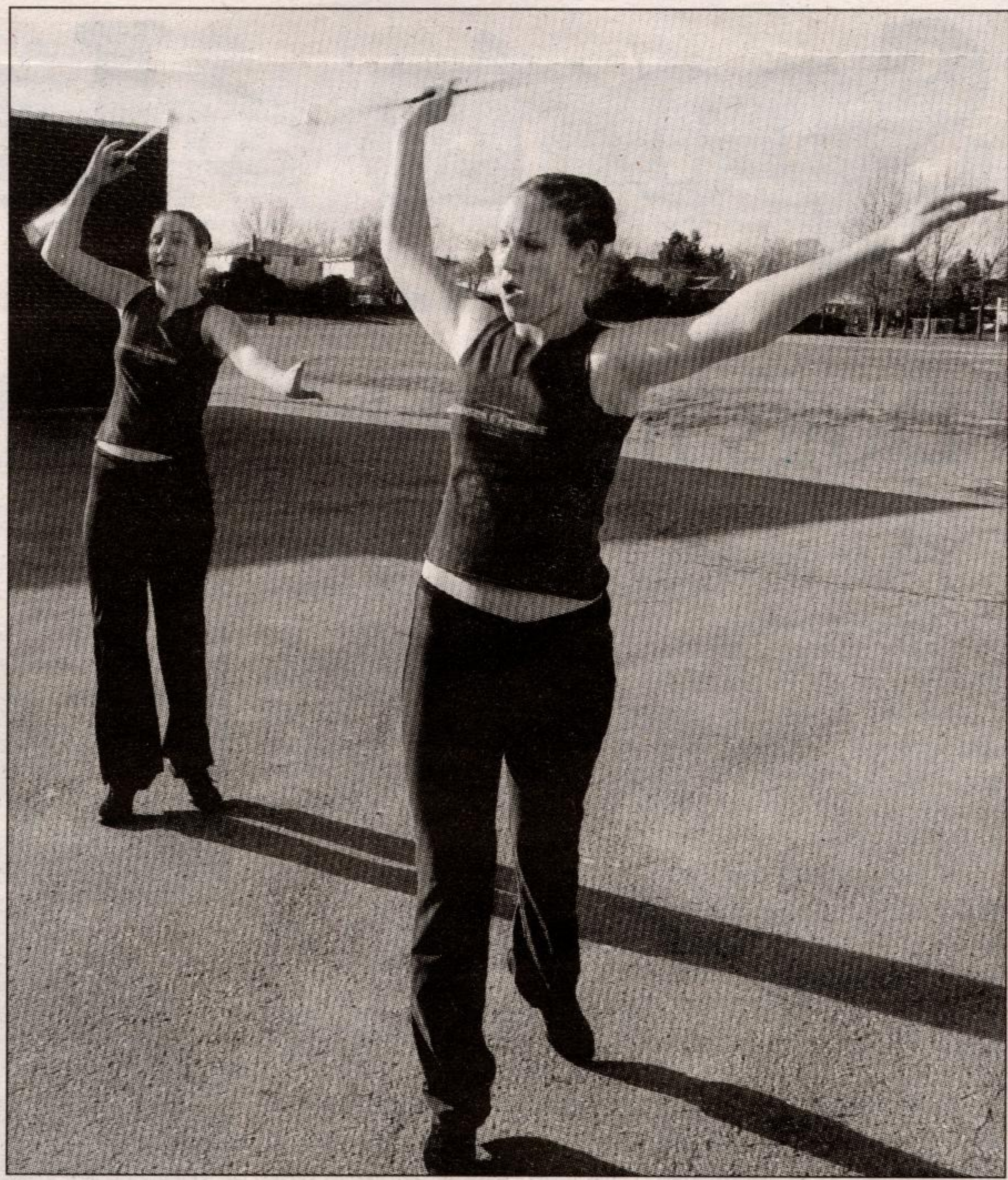
Sheridan also earned a fifth in the solo twirl with two flawless performances. Again, it was the best result by a Canadian at the worlds.

Also, Kevan Latrace, who Darlene has coached for 21 years, teamed up with Alison Winsor to win the senior pairs, breaking a 20-year domination of the event by the U.S.

As for the King sisters, they're now preparing for the Ontario Provincial Championships at Brock University on May 31, the Canadian Nationals June 28-29 in Kitchener and the U.S. International and World Open in July. But they can't help but look three years down the road.

"They'll be seeing us in Holland (site of the next worlds)," Kennedy said.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer



Kennedy, left, and Sheridan King warm up prior to the Centennial Middle School talent show. The sisters returned home from the recent World Baton Twirling Championships in Marseille with a mittful of medals and some of the best results ever posted by Canadian competitors. Photo by Herb Garbutt

At Kitchener meet

Acton's Andrews posts two first-place finishes

Kaitlyn Andrews took two firsts and a second at the Track Wars Track and Field Meet in Kitchener.

Andrews won the midget girls high jump by clearing 1.48m. She added another victory in the shot put, topping the 10m mark at 10.14m. The Grade 9 student at Acton High School also placed second in the 100m with a time of 13.77 seconds.

Andrews followed that up with a second-place finish in the shot put at the Rowland Memorial Games in Etobicoke. Andrews, competing in the junior/senior open category, had a toss of 11.15m.

In Kitchener, Acton teammate Ashton Roza placed third in the midget boys 1500m, finishing with a time of four minutes, 54 seconds.

Dan Woolford toss of 12.13m

earned him fourth-place in the midget boys shot put while Kevin Deforest was fifth in the high jump (1.50m) and sixth in the long jump (4.70m).

Junior competitors were placed in the open division at the meet. Ryan Lindo was fifth in the 100m, finishing in 12.20 seconds, followed closely by Troy Ethier in sixth in 12.25 seconds.

Dawn Brunswiler was sixth in the girls 400m with a time of 1:16.9.

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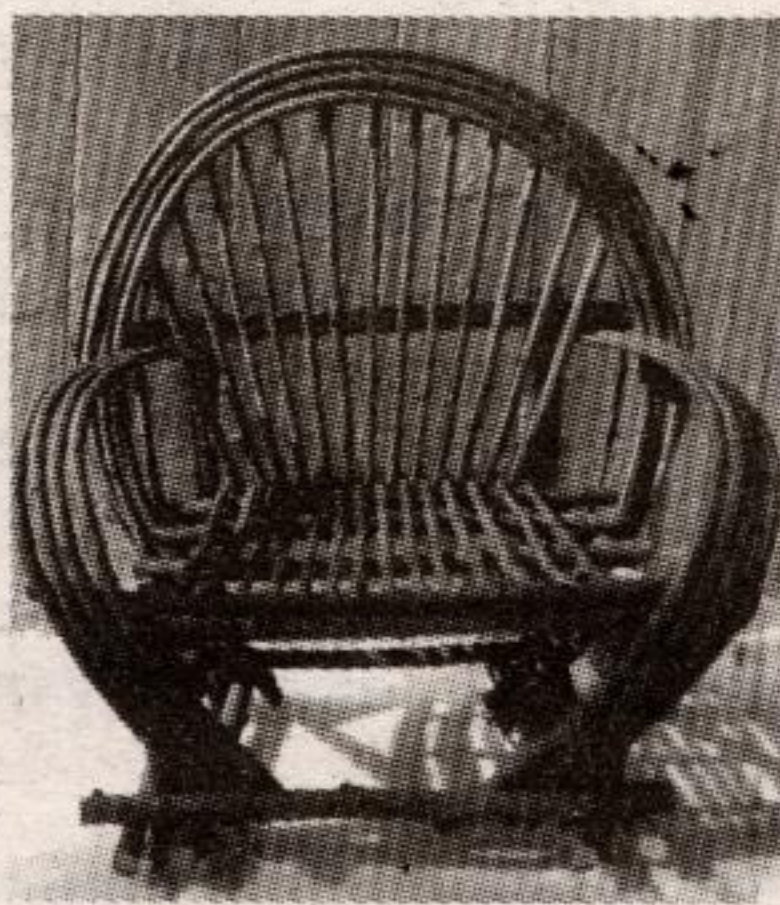
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NOTICE

Georgetown Minor Hockey
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Annual General Meeting for 2003

The meeting will be held on
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Mold Master Sports Plex in the
Upstairs Hall at the Alcott Arena.

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