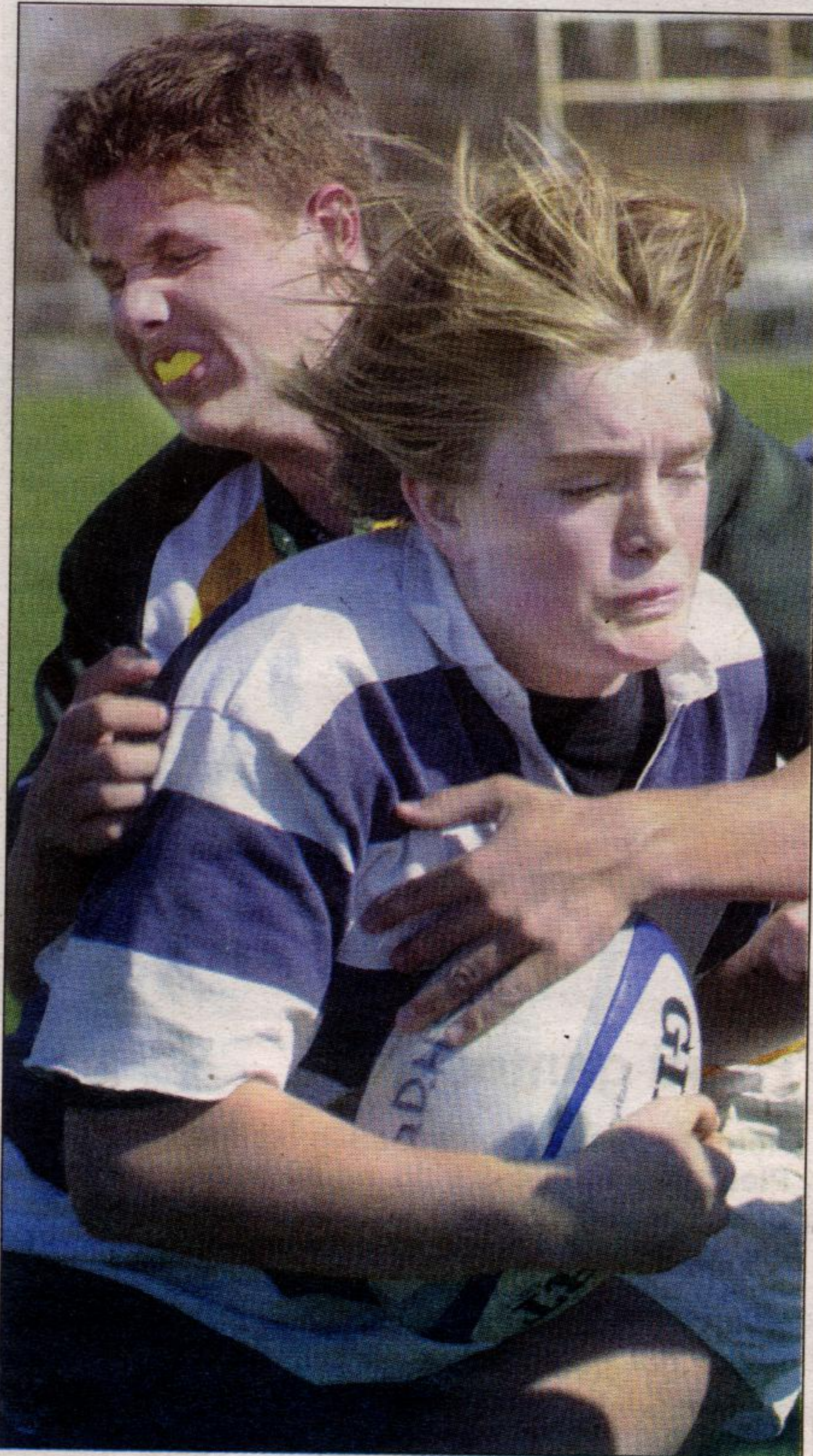


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Wednesday, May 5, 2004



Getting a grip

Georgetown's Donnie McKenzie slips free from the grip of Aldershot's Jay Baumgartl in Thursday's Halton junior boys rugby game. Anthony Van Kooten's penalty kick accounted for the Rebels' only points in a 39-3 loss to Aldershot in the season opener. Photo by Herb Garbutt

Fall 9-8 to Akwesasne

Late tally spoils Bulldogs' opener

A one-goal loss in the third game of the season shouldn't be cause for panic. But for a team who had a habit of letting close games slip away last season, it was the continuation of a disturbing trend.

Akwesasne's Kirby Diabo scored with 27 seconds left to hand Halton Hills a 9-8 in its Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B home opener Sunday. Last season five of the Bulldogs' nine losses were either by one goal or in overtime. And last year's 10-9-1 season is not one the Dogs hope to repeat.

After taking an early 4-2 lead, Akwesasne took advantage of Halton Hills penalties, scoring five straight goals—three of them on the power play—to take a 7-4 lead. The Bulldogs' Todd Hollinshead scored to cut the advantage to 7-5 heading into the third.

The Dogs' then charged out of the gate in the final period, with Jordan Armstrong scoring a shorthanded goal 22 seconds into the period and Travis Bland tying the game 92 seconds later.

"I thought we were going to take it from them," said Bland, who had a goal and four assists. "They were losing their composure and scrambling. But they played strong D and didn't let us cut to the net. They weren't even trying to play offence."

With the tighter checking, it wasn't surprising that the teams only exchanged a power play goal each. Then with three minutes left and the game tied 8-8, the Bulldogs got a power play and a chance to put the



Halton Hills' Todd Hollinshead spins away the ball from Akwesasne's Kirby Diabo during Sunday's Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B game. Hollinshead had a goal and an assist but Diabo spoiled the Bulldogs home opener by scoring with 27 seconds left to give Akwesasne a 9-8 win. Photo by Herb Garbutt

game away. But Hollinshead rang a shot off the post and Mike Dube, who had the first three Bulldog goals, was stopped on a breakaway.

In the final minute, Diabo broke free from a check to fire home the winner.

"We've got to smarten up and play disciplined," Bland said. "We

can't be taking dumb penalties."

Despite the loss, Bland showed the Bulldogs will have many sources of offence this season. After scoring just four points in 15 games in his rookie season, Bland emerged with some strong play during that year's Founders Cup. He built on that, finishing second in team scoring last season with 45 points. With three goals and six assists in three games, he's headed for another career high.

"The Founders Cup really helped. I got a lot of floor time and we had a lot of guys like Daryl (Veltman), (Richard) Haan and Dube to look up to."

Dube continues to be a guy to look up to. He had six points Sunday, giving him a team-leading 17 points.

DOG BITES: The Bulldogs will host Wallaceburg Sunday at 6 p.m. at the Alcott Arena.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

Raiders' Alphonso taken by Ottawa in OHL draft

It's likely the Georgetown Raiders will be saying goodbye to one of their most energetic players.

Arron Alphonso was selected in the second round, 30th overall, by the Ottawa 67s in the Ontario Hockey League draft Saturday.

Playing on a veteran-laden Raider squad, Alphonso had six goals and 21 points in 43 games this season. Alphonso admits he was a little ner-

vous stepping on to a team filled with players returning from the league he aspired to play in.

"I always thought I'd be on the fourth line," he said. "I didn't expect to do as good as I did."

Just 15 when the season began, Alphonso didn't look out of place. The 6', 170-pound right winger wasn't shy about throwing his body around, particularly in the playoffs when he often

set the physical tone for the Raiders.

The Orangeville native had been told he would likely go in the first round, but when it passed he had no idea where he would be going. As it turned out Ottawa had Alphonso rated as a first-round pick but opted for Matt Lahey with their first selection.

"We were very happy and surprised to be able to select to players that we

See OTTAWA, pg. 18

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