

# MARLINS FAREWELL MARKED WITH JUNIOR NATIONAL MEDALS

**'I WANTED TO DO THEM PROUD,' SAYS UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO-BOUND GRAEME AYLWARD**

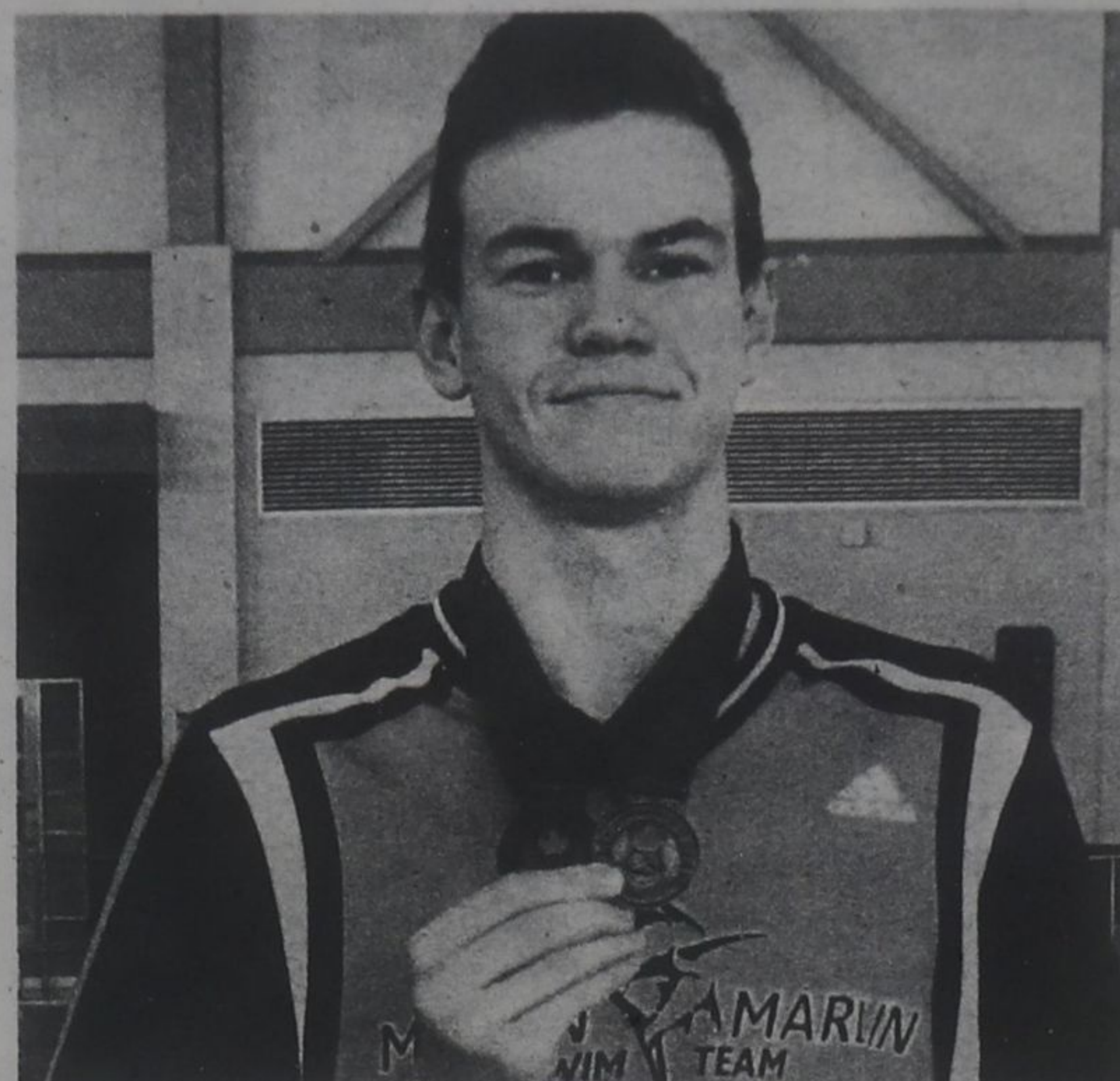
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Graeme Aylward headed to Winnipeg with a little more motivation than usual.

After six years and more than 500 races, the 18-year-old Miltonian — bound for the University of Toronto Varsity Blues next month — was about to represent his hometown Marlins for the very last time.

To say his sense of purpose was at an all-time high would be putting it mildly.

"I definitely wanted to finish strong ... for this meet to represent all the hard work I've put in," said the breaststroke specialist. "With everything the club's put into me — all the



Aylward family photo

Graeme Aylward displays his junior national medals.

time and resources — I wanted to do them proud." Aylward did just that.

Giving the Marlins their first junior national championship medals in seven years, he highlighted the

week with a silver in the 200-metre breaststroke — shedding a full two seconds off his personal-best time, with a 2:21.88 performance.

"I had a crazy energy on the block. The adrenalin

was insane," said Aylward, who'll be studying mechanical engineering at U of T and has received plenty of financial assistance in recent months — including a \$16,000 Swim Ontario Post-Secondary Scholarship and the Chris Hadfield Bursary for \$3,000.

"The plan (for 200-m race) was to go out fast, shock everyone and just try to hold on. I was really satisfied and happy with my time."

Buoyed by a solid showing one week earlier at the national trials in Edmonton — which was about gaining experience more than anything — the Marlins standout also reached the podium in his staple 100-m breaststroke. A 1:05.22 effort — more than a half-hour better than the first time he swam it in competition at age 13 — was good enough for bronze, beating out Saskatchewan's Ruishen Yu by a razor-thin .08 seconds.

Aylward also set a new

personal best in the 100-m freestyle in Winnipeg, clocking in at 53.50 seconds.

Part of Swim Canada's On Track list, the Bishop Reding high school graduate began a sort of local swansong campaign earlier this year with a three-medal performance at OF-SAA — which was highlighted by a record-break-

ing gold medal effort (57.64 seconds) in the 100-m individual medley.

Now Aylward takes his talents to the collegiate level, doing so with equal parts excitement and confidence.

"Jamie (Brough) and the other coaches have done a great job to get me ready. I feel prepared," Aylward said.

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1:00 pm Shotgun Start  
5:30 pm Awards Dinner  
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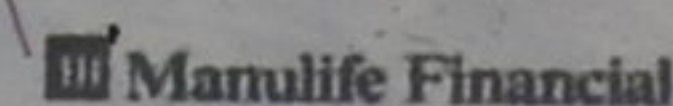


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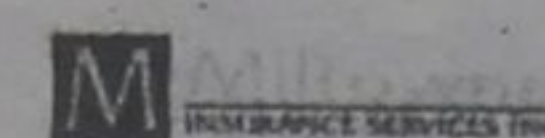
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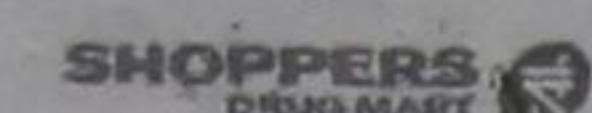
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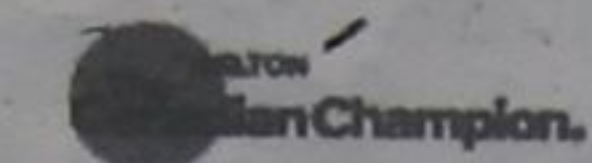
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