

# Shero studies Soviet techniques wants series against Philly

by Denis Gibbons  
Written exclusively for the Canadian Champion, Georgetown Independent and Acton Free Press

"Coaching is only for those who would be miserable without it." — "One should not become a coach because 'he can', but because 'he must' — words made famous by UCLA basketball coach John Wooden, who produced seven straight NCAA champions and is generally regarded as the dean of North American coaches in any sport.

Wooden's words, I found out, are inscribed on the heart of Philadelphia Flyer coach Fred Shero. Just one week after his greatest hockey success, coaching an expansion team to the Stanley Cup championship for the first time in history, Fred Shero travelled to Moscow along with 99 other North American coaches and students when he could have been basking in the Bermuda sun or deep-sea fishing off the Florida coast.

Why? "Because I needed to know more about hockey and I believe the Russians know more about hockey than anyone else in the world," replied the coach of the Stanley Cup champs when the question was posed by a Moscow Radio reporter during a special press conference at the Moscow Journalists' Club last Wednesday.

The Flyer mentor was also on a personal mission. "I hope that if we win the Stanley Cup again next year," he told the group of Soviet journalists "your best club team would be interested in playing a series against my team."

Earlier, Fred had told many of us that he could not consider the Flyers true world champions until they had beaten the Soviet's best club team.

The possibility of a six-game series matching the Flyers and Number 1 in the Soviet Union (This year it would have been the Wings of the Soviet, who upset the Central Army Sports Club) had been the subject of a discussion between Fred and high officials of the Soviet Ice Hockey Federation a few days after we arrived in Moscow.

I was sitting in the lobby of the Hotel Neptune, residence of the best junior swimmers in Moscow and our home for three weeks, when I first learned about Shero's meeting with the Russians' top ice hockey brass.

Fred and Dr. Ed Enos of Montreal's Loyola University were still feeling the effects of the famous Russian team bath-vodka welcome they had been treated to earlier in the evening, when they arrived back at the Neptune with one of our tour guides.

"I've never gone through anything like it before," Fred told me. "First there was a steam bath, then a dip in a cold pool, then they started feeding us vodka, after that more steam. Then they brought out the cognac. I thought we were finished so I started to put my clothes on when two guys grabbed me by the arms and took me over to a massage table. There they were pounding hell out of my back and asking how it felt. Well it hurt like hell, but I didn't have the nerve to tell 'em'!"

The treatment did not, however, keep the Flyer leader from getting across his request for a series between the top club teams of both countries or from suggesting that the hosts consider allowing some of their top players to play in North America for a year or two.

"They indicated they might let players like Alexandrov and Ragulin, whose playing days with the National team are over take a whirl at playing in the NHL," Fred told me.

The previous afternoon Fred was sitting high in the seats of the Sokolniki Ice Palace and among other thoughts dreaming about how he could get the UCKA (Central Army Sports Club) crest off the sweater Alexandrov was wearing and replace it with a winged "P" and orange and black trim. Alexandrov, you see, even at the age of 40-plus was still handling the puck like few NHL players can, in the opinion of the Flyer coach.

Shero spoke further of his admiration for Russian hockey tactics and how they had helped the Flyers go all the way, in lectures he delivered at the Institute at the request of the Russians who were every bit as anxious to learn about NHL training systems as we were about to learn theirs. While the other 15 NHL clubs were following the old "take the puck behind your net" system, the Flyers, he explained, adopted the Russian system of quick counter-attack, moving the puck quickly to a man in the open instead of wasting valuable time.

Other Russian drills, although they benefited the team in the long run were much more difficult to introduce, Fred explained with a bit of humor. A shooting

drill he had seen the Soviet National team using during a tour of the U.S. drew only complaints when first announced at a Flyer practice.

"Finally I decided to put up a cash prize for the players to get them to do it," he said. "The winner gets the money, then goes against the goalie at the end of the practice. If he beats him 1 out of 2 he keeps the money, if not it's the goalie's."

The instance was just one of many Shero used to explain that although the Soviet hockey methods are excellent, applying them to professional hockey in North America where players are hauling home money in wheelbarrows is quite a different question.

"What is included in a typical Philadelphia practice?" asked one Soviet Ice Hockey Federation official during a question and answer period.

"The first thing I do," replied Shero "is call them all to one corner of the ice where we kid each other a bit and tell a few jokes to loosen up. Then I ask them if they'd like to do some work. If they say yes, we start."

That "if" caused the group of First Division coaches in the lecture room, including Merited Master of Sport for the Soviet Union Stanislav Petukhov, now a coach with Dynamo Sports Club to break up laughing. Our conclusion from this was that in Russian hockey and that when Anatoli Tarasov wrote of players being suspended for a year for smoking, he wasn't kidding.

"What are conditions like for Canadian pro players," asked another Russian coach. "Well they're beautiful," replied Shero. "They're making so much money they don't know what to do with it. Complete health coverage is paid by the NHL, they can go to university in the off-season and they've got such a strong players' association that you can't fine them!"

Soviet officials in a counter question period, on the other hand explained that all of their players also have other occupations and although they receive some material benefits, these are for their achievements at their place of work and not for playing hockey. The answer didn't quite digest with all of us, but it apparently has been good enough for the International Olympic Committee over the years.

Coaches from the Central Army Sports Club, Dynamo and Spartak were also surprised to learn most NHLers do little but relax and play golf during the off-season. "Some guys start to run about August 15," Shero added, "but most of them arrive in camp about 10 to 12 pounds overweight."

The Soviet National team in contrast will return from the Black Sea resort area where they are now vacationing on July 1 to begin dry land training in preparation for their series against the WHA all-stars in September and October. After six weeks of weight training and off the ice conditioning, they will take to the ice about the second week of August and it is also believed, although not confirmed play some warmup games in the Soviet Union before coming to Canada, September 15.

Shero admitted that Canadians could also learn from the Soviet system of training coaches which calls for candidates to attend schools and write examinations before becoming qualified.

"Coaches in our country are not considered masters of anything," he said. "In fact they're considered dummies in a lot of cases. If I wanted my son to get some coaching back home I'd send him to a high school or college coach, not to a pro."

What Fred saw in Moscow that particularly interested him were demonstrations of off-season exercises for goal-tenders. We sat and watched Andrey Chizkov, backup goalie for Wings of the Soviet go through 60 reflex-sharpening exercises one day, most of them performed with nothing more than a tennis ball. Many of the on-the-ice drills he had already used or at least seen. Nevertheless, he observed them carefully and by the time they were completed was already suggesting ways in which they could be made even more effective. The Russians were always attentive whenever he spoke. We got the feeling they held a lot of respect for the man who was able to stop "Pheel Esposito" and "Bobby Orr" who both are almost national heroes among Soviet youngsters inclined to hockey.

On the negative side, Fred can see definite weaknesses in the Russian defensive system. Scores of games where their teams have tallied in doubled figures, but still allowed five goals would seem to support his theory. Our Russian lecturers themselves conceded that they have much to learn in the area of checking and particularly bodychecking.

It is my personal feeling that Fred Shero

did more in Moscow than just pick up information for his own use. He was an exemplary "good" will ambassador for Canada and the NHL in particular. He was available to talk hockey or answer questions either from the Russians or members of our own group anytime of the day and he did it with politeness and sincerity. There were no brushoffs or thumbing gestures. When daily programs sometimes became disorganized, he appreciated the difficulty our guides were having and was not ready to blow his top as some did. Fred's attractive wife Mariette was completely tolerant of the amount of time her husband was devoting each day to hockey talk, just a week after the close of a long season.

"This man (Shero) is the greatest guy in the NHL today," our group leader Dr. Ed Enos confided to me. "A lot of the other coaches wouldn't give you the time of day."

According to Enos, only Al Arbour of the New York Islanders among the league's 15 other coaches had even called him to ask for information on the study tour to Moscow. Arbour was forced to cancel out at the last minute because of draft meeting obligations.

And now Fred Shero is back home in Philadelphia for a rest, but you can bet it

will be a short one. The desire to have his Flyers establish themselves as true world champions in a series against Wings of the Soviet or Central Army remains with him. He is confident that with another year of preparation his team would win, yet fully aware of the potential of Russian teams. Unlike Harold Ballard, for instance, who thought he had conquered the world when his Toronto Marlboros edged the Wings, minus seven of their best players 5-4 after being outshot 48-20 at Christmas time, he realizes that in a matchup with the Wings he would have to control the likes of Anisim, Lebedev and Bodunov, a line which almost made a shambles of the Gilbert, Hadfield Ratelle unit the last time around, face the Soviets' second best goalie in Sidelnikov and be tested by four new members of the National team Kapustin, Repnev, Kusnetsov and Klimov.

December 1975 hopefully will be the date for such a series providing of course, the Flyers repeat as Stanley Cup champions. If dedication and hard work mean anything and they usually do, the Flyers likely will repeat and North American hockey fans could be treated to an international series that would rival the '72 joust for excitement.

## Special

### Present look at Soviet sport system

For the past three weeks Acton Free Press sports editor Denis Gibbons and Bruce Andrews, chairman of the physical education department at Acton High School and coach of the North Halton Harriers Track Club have been studying the Soviet system of sport and physical education at Moscow's famous Institute of Sport and Physical Culture. They were part of a group of 100 post-grad students, teachers, coaches and recreation directors from across Canada and the Eastern U.S. who took advantage of the study tour offered by Loyola University's Institute of Comparative Physical Education under the direction of Dr. Ed Enos.

The study tour, the first of its kind in the area of sport and physical education was sanctioned by Soviet authorities under the terms of the Canada-USSR general exchange agreement signed by Prime Minister Trudeau and Premier Kosygin in 1972. While in Moscow, participants received lectures and practical instruction from top Soviet professors and coaches daily and were treated to a host of cultural events like the Bolshoi Ballet, Moscow Circus and Moscow Symphony as guests of the Soviet government during the evenings.

Denis was one of approximately 10 participants who concentrated their study of the Soviet scientific approach to hockey, while Bruce joined the regular study group which allowed him to visit elementary and secondary schools in Moscow, examine sports club facilities and have private interviews with top Soviet coaches and athletes in his specialty, track and field.

Fred Shero, coach of the Stanley Cup champion Philadelphia Flyers, Ron Ryan coach of the New England Whalers, and top college coaches like Bob Boucher of St. Mary's of Halifax, John McInnis of Michigan Tech and Bob Crocker of Penn were part of the hockey study group, while the regular study group included former Canadian Olympic track competitor Bruce Kidd who is presently making a comeback. Bruce took part in two city meets in Moscow, winning his first race and placing eighth in a field of 19 in a 10,000 metre run in the second at Lenin Stadium.

This week readers of the Milton Champion, Georgetown Independent and Acton Free Press may read about what Mr. Shero observed, while future editions of the three Dills publications will carry stories on education, track and field, cultural life, etc. in Moscow, with Denis and Bruce combining their observations.



ALL EYES were on the ice when ex-National team stars like Veniamin Alexandrov, Vladimir Vikulov and Aleksandr Ragulin demonstrated Russian practice drills along with Professors Golikov and Koslov and top junior players from Moscow. Flyer coach Fred Shero and scribe Denis Gibbons watch attentively.

## Kilbride winners jr. field day

Eight area schools held a track and field meet at Ontario School for the Deaf last week. Represented at the meet were W. I. Dick, J. M. Denyes, Kilbride, Fairview, Percy W. Merry, Sniders, Palermo, and Campbellville Public Schools. Kilbride was the overall points winner at the meet.

Here are the first, second and third place finishers in each event:

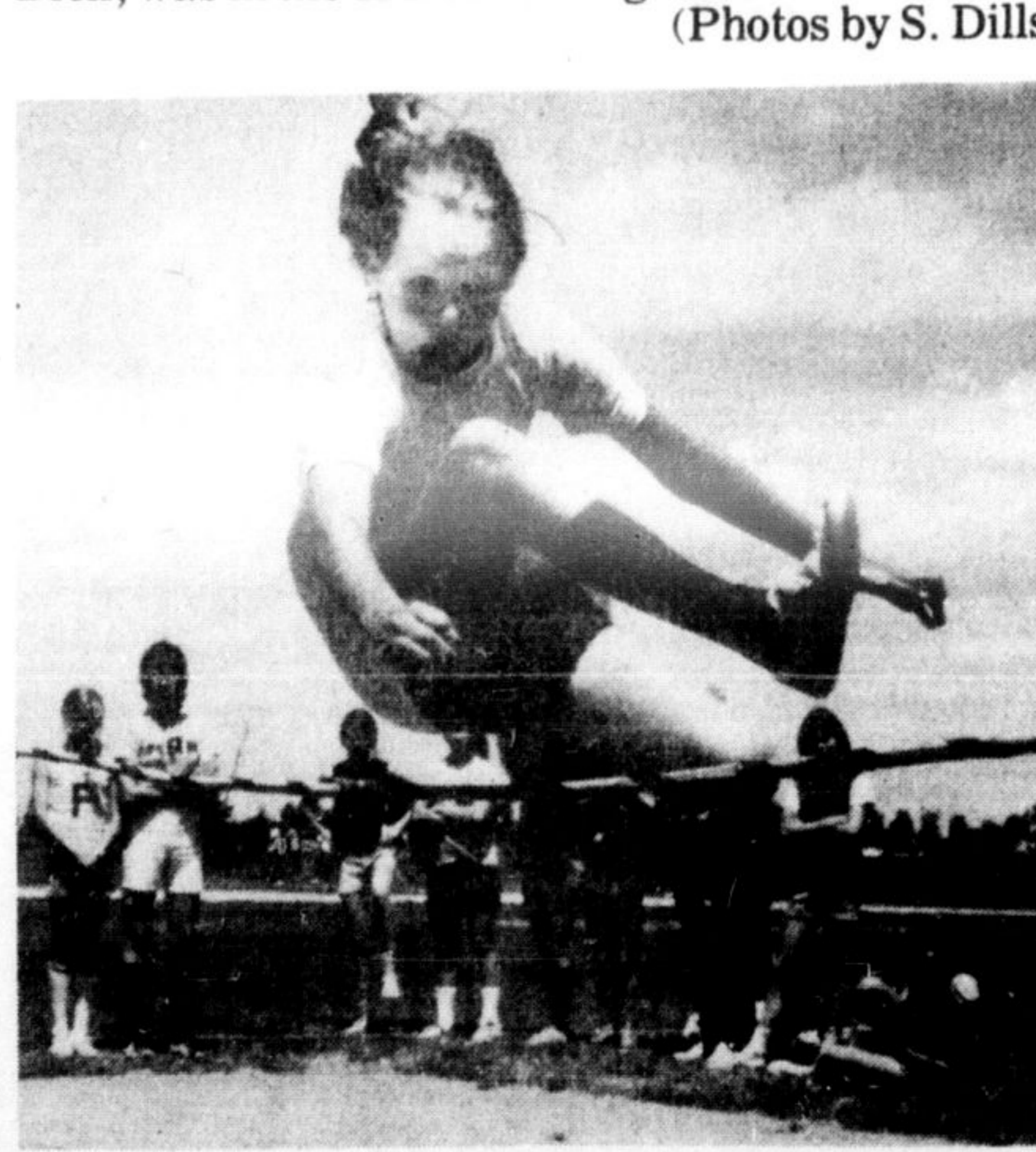
- DASHES**  
6-7 girls 50m, Janet Sum (Snid.), Joanne Jarvis (Pal.), Deanna Small (Fair.), boys 50 m, Jeff Sanford (J.M.D.), Greg Morey (W.I.D.), Bill Brush (W.I.D.) and Larry Ireland (Snid.) tied.  
8-9 girls, 50m, Patty Coulson (Kil.), Sonja Van Kleeff (Snid.), Kim Boyle (Fair.), boys 50m, Brian Kostur (Fair.), David Willats (J.M.D.), Robbie Paul (Kil.).  
10-11 girls, 75m, Debbie McCullagh (Kil.), Sandra Vivian (Kil.), Sherry King (Fair.), 10-11 boys 75 m., Bob Percy (W.I.D.), Stuart Burridge (Kil.), Don Kerr (J.M.D.).  
12-plus girls, Debbie Hutchinson (Fair.), Karen Josiak (Snid.), Pam Vivian (Kil.); 12-plus boys, Dale Tawse (Kil.), Gary Richards (Fair.), Steven Kri (Snid.); 200m girls Open, Debbie McCullagh (Kil.) and Pam Vivian (Kil.); third, Carol Martin (P.W.M.) and Karen Vosiok (Snid.).  
400 m girls Open, Georgina Beyer (Fair.), Karen Josiak (Snid.), Connie Anderson (Kil.); 400 m boys, Open, Bob Percy (W.I.D.), Scott Eves (P.W.M.), Jim Newman (Kil.).  
800 m boys Open, Jim Newman (Kil.), Jeff DeFreitas, Brian Bell (W.I.D.).  
10-11 Girls Relay—Fairview, Percy W. Merry, Kilbride; 10-11 boys—Kilbride, Fairview, Percy W. Merry; 12-plus girls—Kilbride, Fairview, Percy W. Merry; 12-plus boys—Fairview, Sniders, Kilbride.

- LONG JUMP**  
6-7 girls, Shelby Nicholson (Fair.) and Joanne Jarvis (Pal.), third Shelby Smith (W.I.D.); 6-7 boys, Greg McMurray (W.I.D.), Donald Pougnet (Snid.), Albert Bije (Camp.).  
8-9 girls, Brenda Alton (Fair.), Sonja Van Kleeff (Snid.), Carrie Eoudreau (J.M.D.); 8-9 boys, Allan Brown (W.I.D.), Steven Stokes (Kil.), Mark Sum (Snid.).  
10-11 girls, Anna Vitetta (P.W.M.), Sandy Drummond (Fair.), Sherry King (Fair.); 10-11 boys, David Flemington (P.W.M.), Jeff Graham (W.I.D.), Jimmy Janzen (Fair.).  
12-plus girls, Caroline Best (Fair.), Sue Vanderdool (Pal.), Connie Anderson (Kil.); 12-plus boys, Darrell Towse and Dale Tawse (Kil.), third Ken Vivian (P.W.M.).

- SHOT PUT**  
10-11 Girls, Amy McKay (Snid.), Bethie Myers (Fair.), Debbie Harris (Kil.); 10-11 boys, Brian Jay (Kil.), Brian Anderson (Kil.) and Joe O'Grady (J.M.D.).  
12-plus girls, Denise Davies (Kil.), Valerie Noyes (Snid.), Debbie Hutchinson (Fair.); 12-



SIMON BENHAM jumps his farthest in the boys' long jump during the public school track and field meet held last week. Simon, competing for W. I. Dick, was in the 12 and over age class.



UP AND OVER, Janice Simmons of Kilbride clears the cross bar at the high jump pits. She was competing in the 10- and 11-year-old class at the public school track and field day held last week.

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## Seminar honor for Kevin Parker

The top 40 singles figure skaters in Canada are getting together at a training seminar in British Columbia, and Kevin Parker has been asked to participate.

It's a great honor for the 12 year-old skater, who lives at R. R. 1, Campbellville and attends Brookville school. He has won seven gold medals in the last two years and has come out on top in every competition he entered lately.

The Canadian Figure Skating Association has just

written Kevin that he had been chosen. Airfare, ice costs and professional fees will be paid by the Association. And they also ask his own professional coach to attend. Kevin's is Neil Carpenter.

Kevin will just pay his own residence fees.

Others expected to be there are Toller Cranston, Ronnie and Lynne Nightingale, top names in Canadian figure skating circles. Head coaches are Mrs. Ellen Burka and Mrs. Linda Brauchman, with invited specialists from Canada and Europe.

Kevin has a couple of weeks off from skating practice right now as he finishes up his year at Brookville. Then he's off to St. Thomas for eight weeks at skating school there. After a couple of days he heads west for the training seminar.

He skates now with the Hamilton Stoney Creek club. The Parkers lived in Acton before moving to the Campbellville area. He's been back to Acton as guest skater at carnival time.

Kevin is very excited about being invited to join the 40 other skaters for this very special training.

## Fairview takes firsts

Fairview school athletes Tina Collins, Karen Makin and Chuck Meyers all put in top notch efforts at the North Halton Senior Public school field day at Ontario School for the Deaf in Milton last Thursday.

Tina took top honors in the junior girls' shot put with a throw of 8.52 metres while Meyers won the same event in intermediate boys' competitions with a 12 metre throw.

Karen triple jumped 8.3 metres in the intermediate girls' classification to take top place.

Members of the senior boys' relay team also took home first place ribbons.

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