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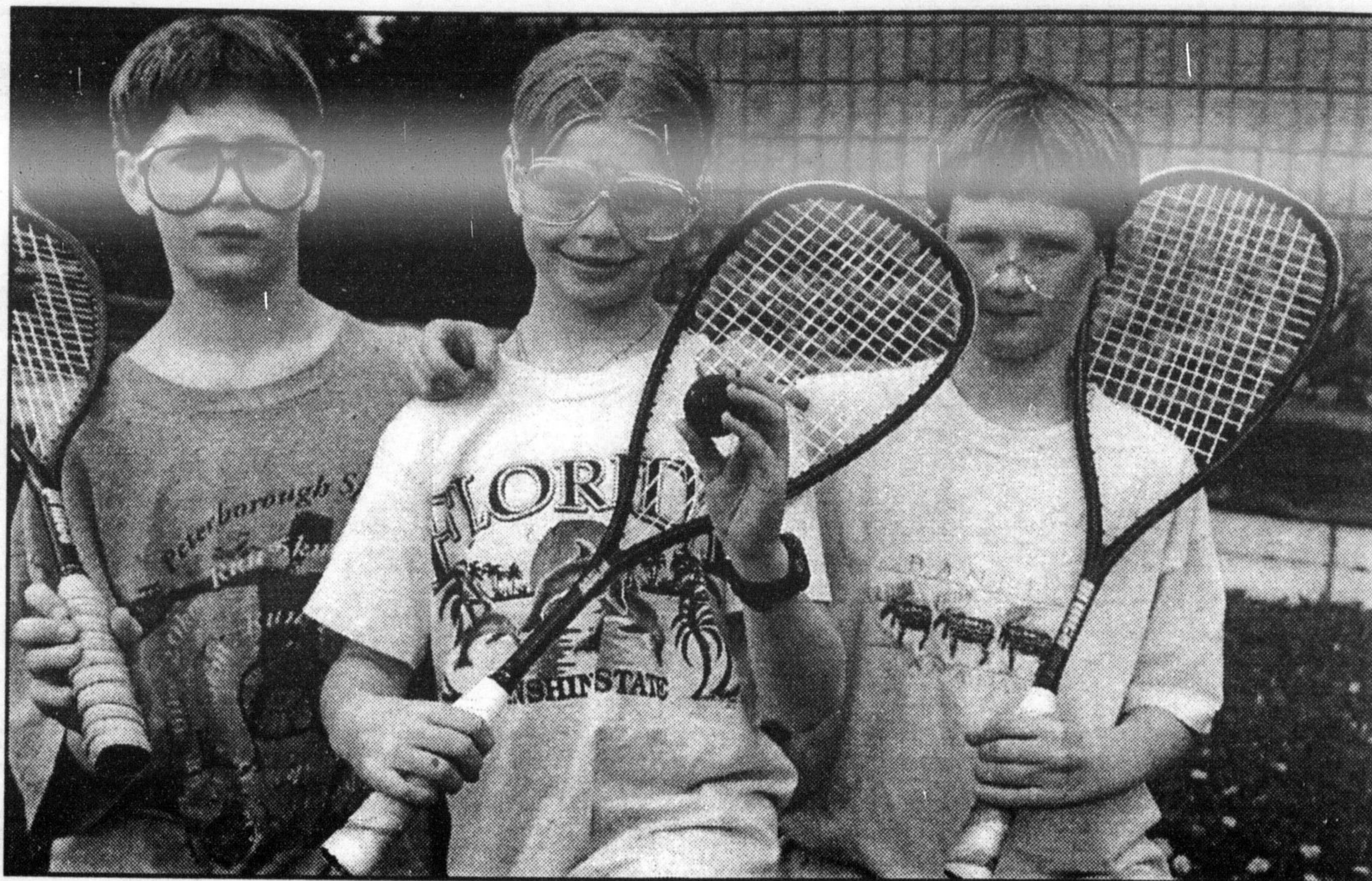


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Richard, Alisha and Jonathan Turner are making squash a family affair. The three siblings posted impressive results at both provincials and nationals this spring.

Turner clan cottons to squash

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
Special to *The Champion*

The Turners don't just beat the competition — they squash it. Eleven-year-old twin brothers Jonathan and Richard, and 10-year-old Alisha are making the game of squash a family affair. Their combined efforts have made for a tremendous success story this year — both across the province and aboard.

Most recently the trio returned from the Canadian National Championships in Edmonton, Alberta.

Having already gained experience from last year's event in Toronto, as well as momentum from impressive 1996/97 campaigns, all three cracked the top 10 in their respective divisions.

Alisha placed seventh in the Under-12 girls class, despite being the youngest participant in her grouping. She reached the quarterfinals in the main draw, where she lost a hard-fought battle with a British Columbia opponent who went on to take the silver medal.

From there she moved over to the consolation play downs and made it to the semifinals.

"My serves were working, and I made some good length shots," said Alisha.

With more velocity to his shots and better placement this year, Richard jumped up seven spots in the Under-12 boys division to capture third-place honors and bring home the bronze.

He narrowly missed a trip to the finals, falling in close decisions to an Alberta combatant.

En route to the semifinals he turned aside challenges from four other hopefuls.

While able to crack the top 10 in Edmonton, marking a significant improvement over last season, Jonathan wasn't quite able to perform up to par due to an ill-timed flu just prior to the nationals. As a result, he finished ninth.

Preparation suffered from illness

"I was sick for a week and wasn't able to prepare nearly as much as I would have wanted to," Jonathan explained.

The Turner clan made big waves at last month's Ontario Provincial Championships as well, with three top five placings at the Barrie showcase.

Without Kitchener powerhouse Miranda Raneri to contend with, Alisha had little trouble stealing the show and grabbing top marks for her first provincial gold medal.

Raneri had been slightly ahead of the young Milton native throughout the regular season but chose to compete in the Under-14 class at the Ontario finals.

Richard helped complete an Under-12 sweep, capturing gold on the boys side. Jonathan meanwhile, took fifth-place honors.

The twins enjoyed a healthy rivalry in regular season tournament play this past year, swapping the number one seating off and on from start to finish.

Where Richard was the better Turner at provincials and nationals, Jonathan's star shone the brightest at this winter's Toronto and District (T&D) Jr. Squash Open where he struck gold and beat his brother en route to victory.

"There's definitely more emotion involved when we play each other," said Richard.

In addition to medal-winning performances in Kitchener, Toronto, Ottawa and Woodbridge this season, the two had the distinct opportunity of facing American sensation Nick Charles at the Canada-U.S. Open in Burlington over the Christmas holidays.

It's these kind of top-flight challenges, Jonathan said, that will help them improve.

Alisha took on plenty of feisty opponents herself this year, and was victorious against the majority of them.

Challenged older players

She won two gold medals in tournament play, and would have collected more if she hadn't moved up to Under-14 competition mid-way through the season — as her brothers did at times as well.

"It helps you develop when you play against older girls," Alisha explained.

Members of Club Meadowvale, Alisha, Jonathan and Richard were introduced to squash through parents Ken and Marlene about four years ago.

The elder Turners have been playing the game for 20 years.

According to Marlene, all three took to the game right away and showed promise almost immediately.

They entered their first competition less than a year later and are now coached by Jeff Devrill.

COMMUNITY Sports Calendar

**Attention all Sports Organizations!
To Place Your Upcoming Event**

Phone 878-2341 Fax 878-4943

Thursday, June 5th - Saturday, June 7th
OFSAA (All-Ontario) Track & Field Finals
Etobicoke Centennial Stadium
13 Milton athletes competing

Friday, June 6th
Milton Mavericks Junior Lacrosse
8:30 Orillia at Milton

Saturday June 7th
Milton Mavericks Junior Lacrosse
8:00 Milton at Mimico

Milton Mavericks Senior Baseball
1:30 Milton at Erindale

Thursday, June 12 to Sunday, June 15
Milton Mavericks Invitational Lacrosse Tournament
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