

Sailor Stephanie is aiming higher

By STEVE LeBLANC
Special to The Champion

Stephanie Taylor is hoping for some smooth sailing next month, when she enters uncharted waters in Brandon, Manitoba.

In only her fourth year of competition, the 19-year-old Miltonian will test her skills against the nation's top sailors at the upcoming Canada Games. Her five-day race schedule will take place August 9 to 13 on Pelican Lake.

As if she wasn't enough of a rookie compared to most of her national colleagues, Taylor will be moving up to the Europe class — in which she has virtually no experience.

"I've been racing in Byte division regattas up until now. Many provincial coaches are trying to get the top sailors into the Europe class, which is what you see in the Olympics," said Taylor.

"The Europe boats are bigger and 10 times more technical. Basically, we're developing a whole new generation of sailors in Canada."

The E.C. Drury High School graduate won't be representing Ontario next month but her native Quebec — where she spent the bulk of last summer and fall training at the Royal St. Lawrence Yacht Club near Dorval.

"We lived in Hudson, Quebec and were members of the Royal St. Lawrence where my grandfather had a boat. When he died a few years ago we inherited his boat and kept up membership at the club. I've been sailing ever since," she explained.

Taylor survived three sets of qualifying trials in the Byte class to earn her Canada Games berth. She finished first in two races, the latest of which came four weeks ago at her own club. Two weeks earlier she placed fourth in Hudson.

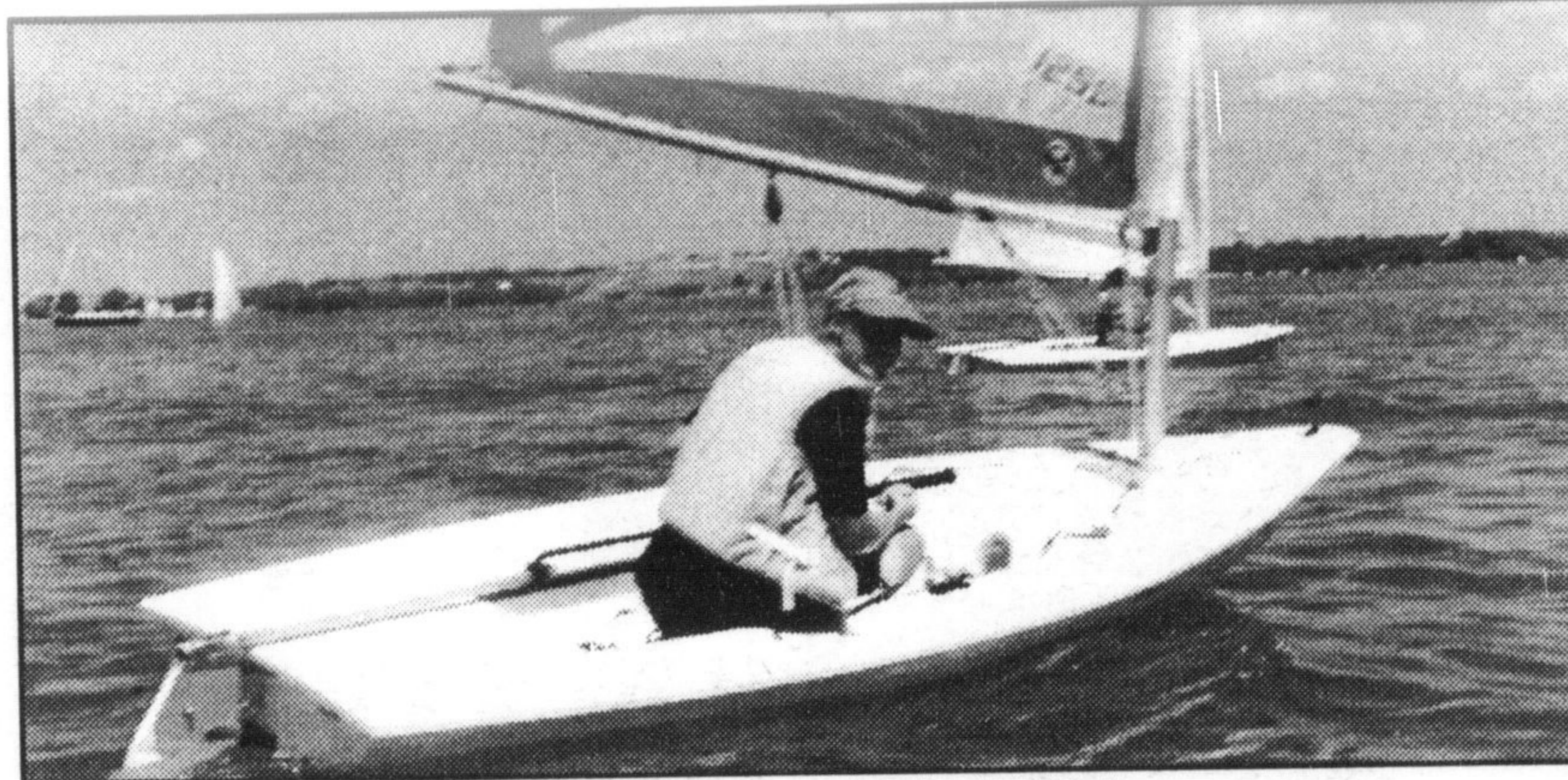
The average regatta ranges anywhere between three and five nautical miles.

"The key to sailing is consistency," Taylor stressed.

Her successful qualifying campaign now finds her ranked number one among Quebec's Byte sailors but unseeded in the Europe class for next month's Canada Games.

This has done little to dissuade coach Tyler Bjorn, who predicts his star pupil will finish top five in Manitoba.

"Part of the reason for his (Bjorn) high expectation is the amount of experience I've gained in the past year. I sailed four regattas over the winter in Miami, St.



Stephanie Taylor will compete next month in Manitoba.

Petersburg and Baltimore.

"My tactics have greatly improved and I'm much more of a mentally strong sailor now," said Taylor, who celebrated the Christmas season with a second-place finish at the Orange Bowl in Miami.

While still competing in Byte division regattas, Taylor is looking to graduate to the Europe class within the next year. To do so, she'll likely need some sponsorship as a new boat will run her upwards of \$5,000.

She's hoping to use the Canada Games as a stepping stone to another successful qualifying campaign — namely, the Olympics.

"The 2000 Olympics are in Sydney, Australia. I'll try the trials for that but I don't really expect to qualify. They'll more or less be a tune-up for the 2004 Games," Taylor said.

Mavericks hot

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Leworthy's tallies and three of Currie's. D'Oliveira and Craig Hedley figured heavily in the win as well with two-goal outputs. Hedley made a great interception for his first score and later turned in strong penalty killing efforts. Captain Andrew Hartholt was restricted to the role of set-up man, with half a dozen assists and no goals. Other sound performances came from Brent Moyer, Cory Leigh, Donald Perry and back-up net-minder Joey Camilleri — who saw his first playoff action through the first and second periods. Brantford sniper Neil Shoemaker led his team with three goals. **Maverick notes:** Milton has outscored the Posse 51-27 through the first three games of their series.

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