



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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French will take Brock University hockey helm

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
Special to The Champion

Mark French has a new challenge amid old surroundings.

The 26-year-old Milton native is set to take over the Brock University hockey program — of which he's been a player and assistant coach for the past five years.

A former Jr. B Merchant, French will act as the Badgers' interim skipper while long-time coach Mike Pelino exercises a one-year leave of absence privilege.

Pelino has held the reins at Brock for more than a decade and will now try his hand in the Western Hockey League — as an assistant with the Spokane Chiefs.

His departure offers French an initial testing period, in what he hopes will be a long and rewarding career coaching competitive hockey.

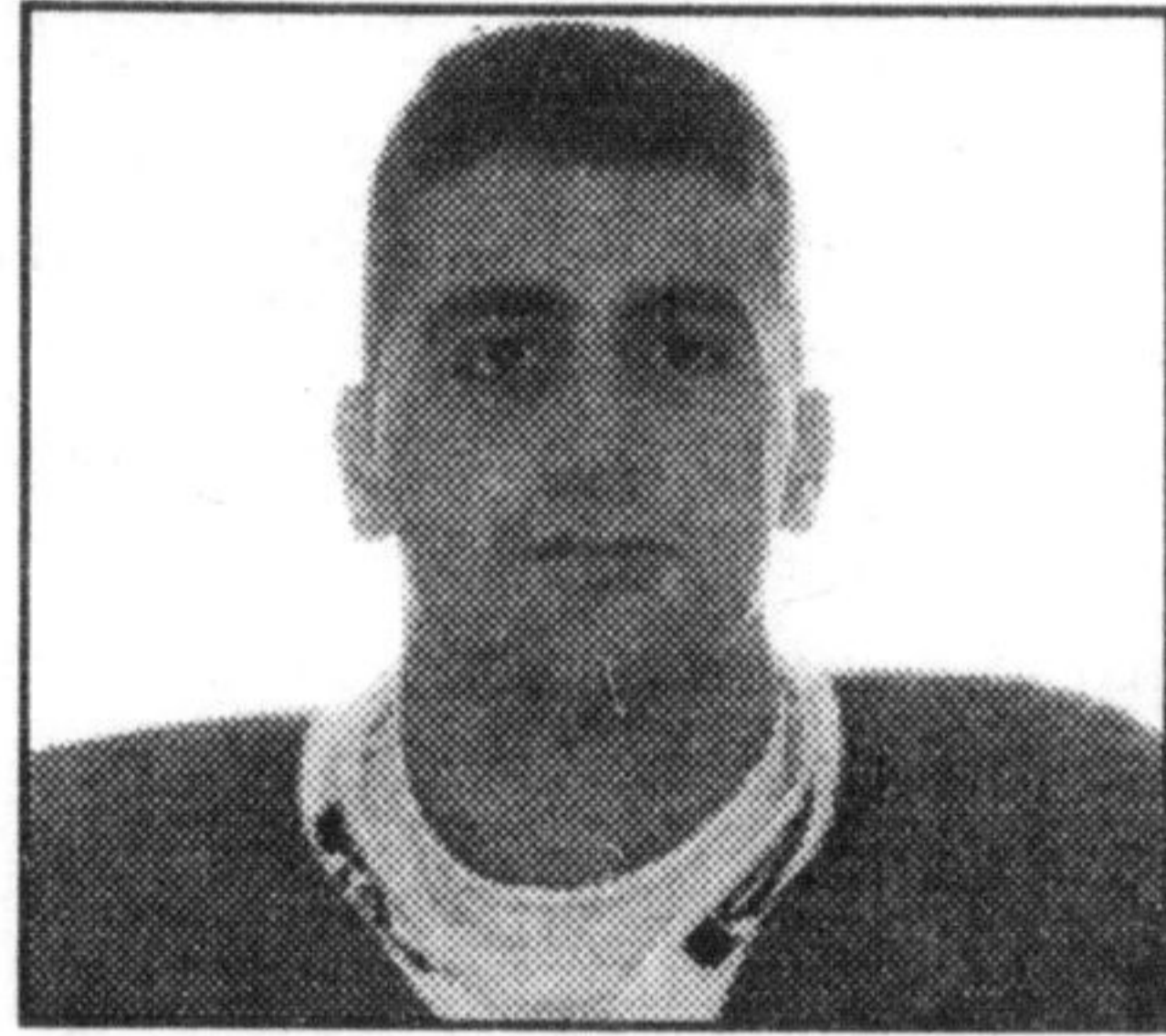
"I plan to make a career out of coaching, so I'm very excited about the opportunity," said French, who's instructed at the Ontario under-17 camp the past few years.

French offers effective communication skills and vast knowledge of offensive systems as his greatest assets for his new assignment.

While he admits his youth may act as an initial obstacle, he plans to earn his players' respect from the onset.

Hockey officials wanted

The Golden Horseshoe Hockey League is accepting applications from experienced officials for the 1997-98 sea-



Mark French

He was successful at doing so with Badger teammates throughout a four-year playing stretch. He captained the squad for his last three seasons and was a four-time recipient of the 212 Degree Award — presented to the hardest working, most determined player.

"I've always held myself in high regard and commanded respect from those I've play with or under. I fully expect that to continue.

"Sure there'll be some key moments early on when players try to test my limits, but the discipline level at Brock will be as high as it's always been," he said.

Despite having a relatively young team last season, French helped the Badgers to a third-place finish in the Ontario University Athletic Association (OUAA) West Division.

With a couple of key Ontario Hockey League (OHL) graduates set to join a more experience roster this fall, he plans to put Brock back on top.

son. Individuals must at least be 16 years old and have refereeing experience. Call 332-0757.



Karate black belts (from left) Stephanie Geneau, Scott Hogarth and Dane Geneau will compete in a world tourney.

Hogarth's team looking for wins

Scott Hogarth will visit the fatherland of martial arts this month for the granddaddy of competitions.

The five-time world champion and holder of seven different black belts will lead a handful of Fighting Griffin Martial Arts students into the Okinawa Karate and Kobudo World Tournament August 23 and 24.

The Milton instructor and his black belt pupils left for Okinawa Wednesday and will be among 2,500 world-wide black belts to christen the brand new Budokan Prefecture Hall of Martial Arts.

"This is a huge first, to go with my students and be among the first to compete at this brand new facility," said Hogarth, who

reopened his martial arts club six months ago. "It's a very big deal."

Among those accompanying him are Dave and Stephanie Geneau of Waterdown. This isn't the couple's first trip to Okinawa, although it will be their first opportunity to compete.

"I got involved in martial arts through Dave about five years ago on a previous trip to Japan. I saw him demonstrate in front of black belt instructors and got hooked," said Stephanie, a second degree black belt who'll compete in women's forms.

"I'm going there to win."

Dave, a third-degree black belt who's trained for 14 years, has equally ambitious

goals for himself. He'll put his skills to the test in both men's forms and sparring.

Hogarth is confident in their abilities, as he is with all of his students.

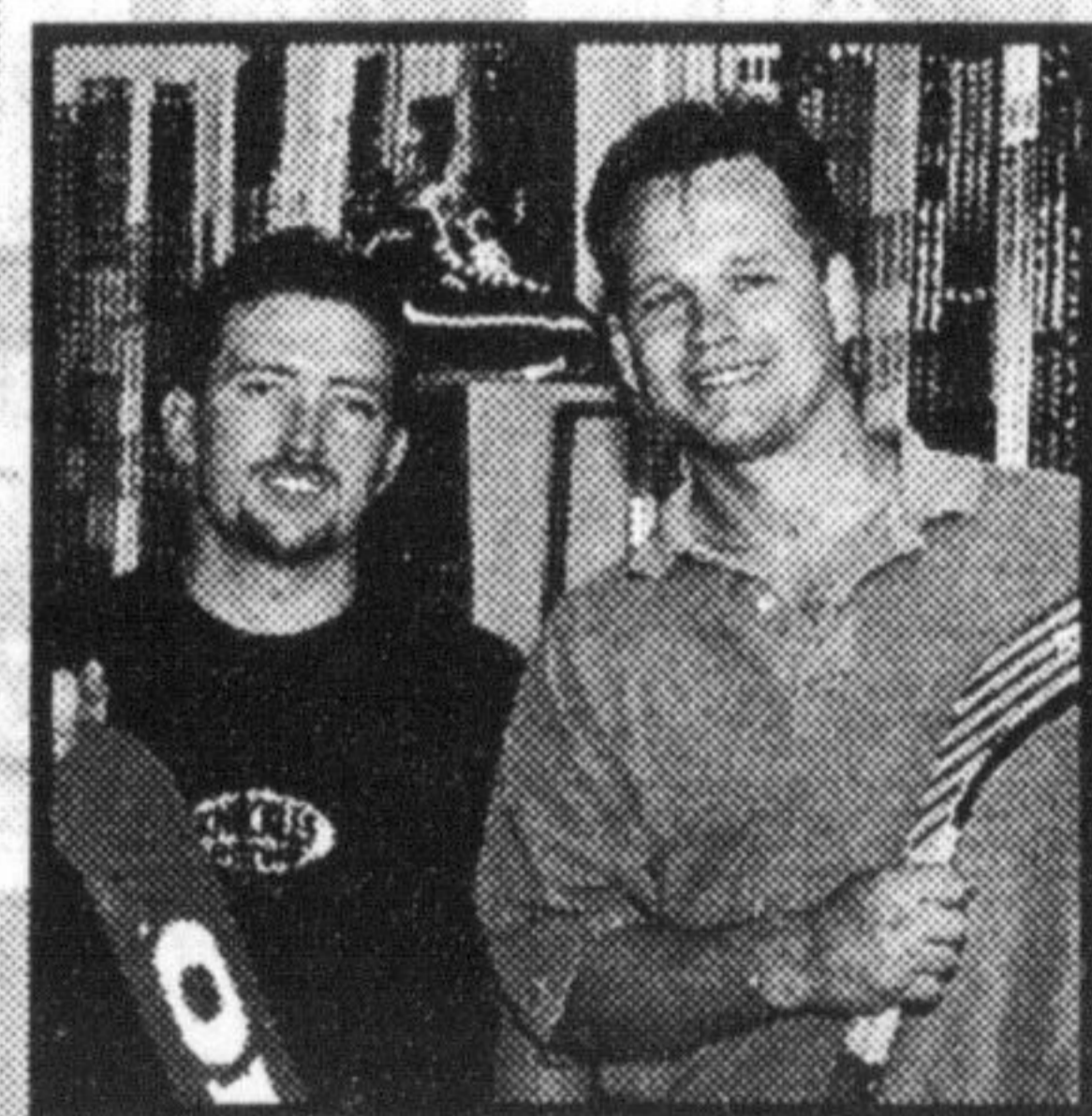
"I have top-notch students and we're not going over there with the idea of just doing well. Our philosophy has always been that somebody has to win, so why not us?"

Also competing next weekend from Fighting Griffin will be Sandy Graham of Grand Valley, Mississauga's Justin Galal and Derek MacDonald of Milton — a former international medalist who'll compete in senior men's forms.

Sandy's daughter Connie is making the trip as well and will act as the local team's cheerleader.

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