



# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY DECEMBER 2, 1997

## Preliminary bouts before the anthem

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
Special to The Champion

Don't rely on scheduled start times to catch all the action of a Milton Merchant game these days.

Much of the hoopla now takes place before the opening puck drop, in the form of pre-game warm-up brawling.

For the second time in two weeks, the Jr. A club demonstrated their physical dominance before their patriotism (fighting prior to the national anthem) at Iceland Arena in Mississauga Saturday.

And once again veteran forward Troy Walczak was right in the thick of things. His initial tilt with Charger Ryan Eby opened the floodgates and inspired teammates Mike Hurst and Steve French to square off with Ryan Digby and James McKeracher respectively.

Participants in these second and third fights drew extra-game misconducts while all six brawlers were ejected from the afternoon make-up game.

As a pre-game bonus for the blood-thirsty, goalie Jeremy Wenzel accidentally caught Mark McPhail in the mouth with his stick.

Milton's defensive anchor sustained a split lip from the fluke mishap and needed seven stitches at Credit Valley Hospital.

At press time it was still undetermined whether or not he would be able to play tonight (Tuesday) in Hamilton.

Unfortunately for those who aren't early birds, the energy and emotion shown in warm-up didn't carry over into the actual game.

Knowing that victory was realistically unattainable, the vastly inferior Chargers simply went through the motions and took their lumps in a 9-1 blowout.

They managed just 12 shots on Wenzel and needed a third-period breakaway goal by Davin Donaldson to keep from getting blanked.

Merchant sniper Darren Haydar held some spectators' attention through the final 30 minutes, during which time he put together his first four-goal game at the Jr. A level.

He now sits 10 points ahead of Collingwood's David Deeves (34 goals, 35 assists, 69 points in 25 games to 25G, 33A, 59PTS, in 27GP) to lead the Provincial Jr. A League scoring race.

Brother Jeff recorded his 18th goal of the year, to break last year's total.

Also denting the twine were Jasen Hopiavuori, T.J. Lee, Rich Williams and newcomer Jeff Hutchins — who held his

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## Tough to clobber a Steel Head

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
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The Magnificent 10 couldn't capitalize on a second chance, and had to settle for second best Saturday at their annual Halton Region Men's Basketball Tournament at E.C. Drury High.

The Milton-based crew led through much of the first half of their Division 1 finals match with the St. Catharines Steel Heads — who ran with no substitutes due to two injuries earlier in the day.

Surprisingly, the short-staffed team got stronger as the game progressed. After drawing even at half-time, they dominated for all but two minutes of the second half and finished with a 70-59 victory.

They beat the Magnificent 10 by almost an identical margin (68-55) six hours earlier in round-robin play.

Steel Head forward Darryl Maude was the MVP of the championship game with a 26-point performance.

Merv Wrighton contributed 17 points while big defensive stalwart Chris Chambers was superb on the boards.

"These guys have a lot of years of college experience between them," said player-coach Rick Voelkner, who suffered a broken nose in round-robin play and missed the finals.

Gaunt twin brothers Jim and Richard each hit double digits for the Magnificent 10 as did Adam Jackson and Sherwin Steele.

Reg Burns and Carlo Comegna were workhorses throughout the match with feisty two-way games while last-minute draftee Kim Boret, visiting from Australia, helped counter St. Catharines' rebounding through the early going.

Both teams finished 2-1 in round-robin play. The Far Side of Milton meanwhile, ran roughshod over all challengers in Division 2

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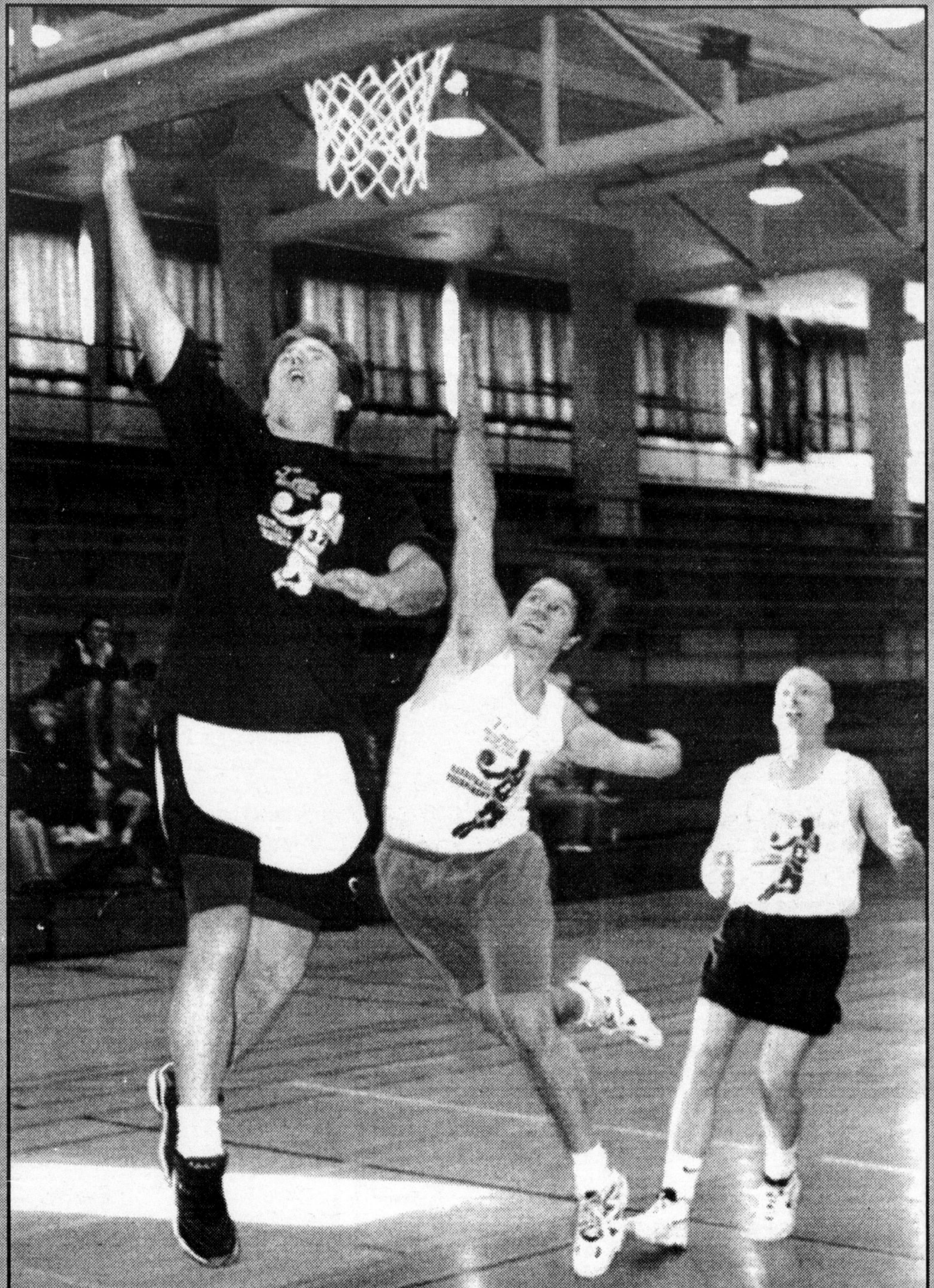
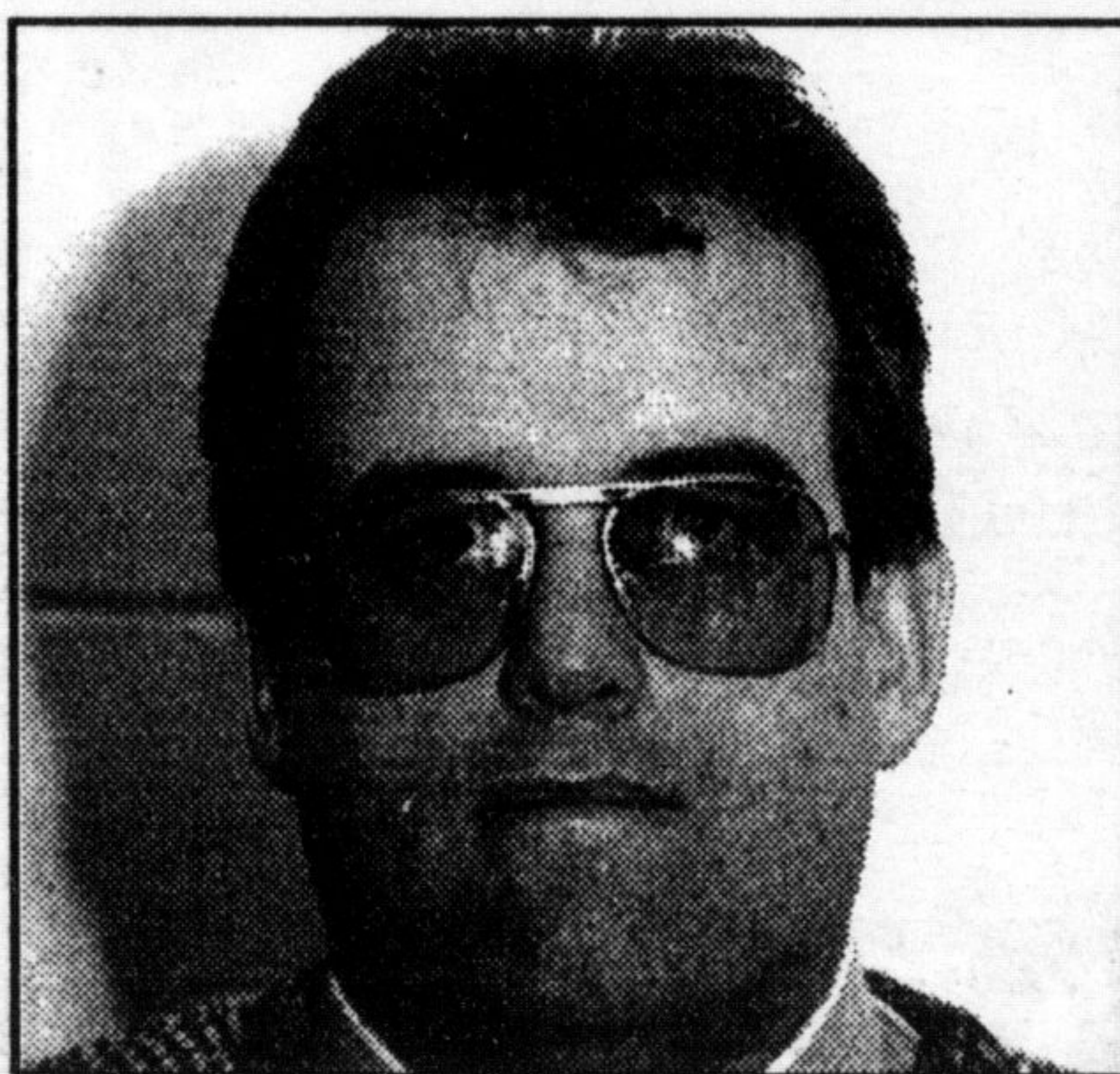


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

A pair of Milton Magic defenders watch helplessly as The Far Side's Kevin Houldcroft goes up for two during Halton Region Men's Basketball Tournament play Saturday at E.C. Drury High.



Brad Grant

## Grant cuts into Newmarket deal

It appears Brad Grant has advanced his agenda again.

The Milton Merchants' owner scooped up talented leftwinger Jeff Hutchins last week, in the aftermath of a six-player deal designed to benefit the Newmarket 87's and Metro's Thornhill Islanders.

Newmarket, in desperate need of blueline help, recently sent four players (including Hutchins) and \$4,000 to Thornhill in exchange for a pair of top-notch defencemen — one of whom has failed to report to his new team.

Hutchins reported to Thornhill, but only on the con-

dition he be traded back to a Provincial Jr. A club.

Grant dealt away future considerations for the hard-nosed forward, who amassed 25 goals and 28 assists in 44 games last season.

"Brampton, Milton and Aurora were all in the running (for my services). I'm really happy with the way things turned out," the 19-year-old Toronto native said. "Milton has a very balanced team that's capable of going all the way."

The 6', 187 lbs. third-year junior should add toughness and a big shot up front — not unlike former

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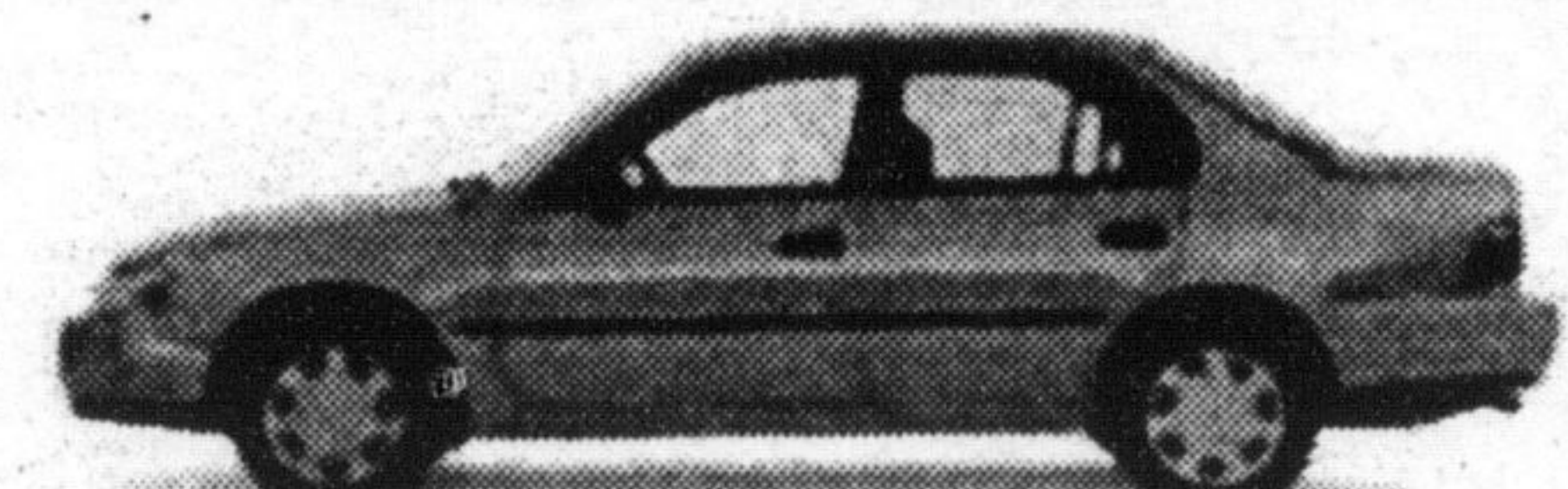


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