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TUESDAY APRIL 7, 1998



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Fire on ice

Sherylene Leslie performs an impressive solo routine Saturday during one of three ice shows put on by the Milton Skating Club.

Amy gets bronze medal

Amy DiPalma's efforts at the recent provincial championships were good enough to bronze.

The Milton rhythmic gymnast amassed 64.42 points for the bronze medal at Brock University — outscoring 23 participants including a handful of national team members.

She earned the silver in rope, bronze in both ball and hoop plus fourth-place honours in ribbon.

A member of the Etobicoke Olympium Rhythmic Gymnastics Club, Amy will now prepare for the Canadian Championships in June. She goes to the nationals ranked second.

Merchants up by two in the OHA final series

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
Special to The Champion

Drama and dominance shared the spotlight in the Merchants' delivery of a two-game road sweep this past weekend.

Milton used extreme measures to beat the Metro League champion Wexford Raiders — bombing them 11-2 in one breath and gutting out a 3-2 double overtime decision in the next.

They led the best-of-seven Ontario Hockey Association (OHA) championship series 2-0 prior to last night's game in Milton.

Steve French kissed Wexford's hopes for evening the series goodbye 1:03 into the second extra session Sunday.

The graduating left winger hauled in a cross-ice pass from Chad Blundy and undressed cager Chris Short with a bottom shelf backhand.

"I caught him going in the wrong direction and from there it was all net," said French, who joins Kevin O'Flaherty in the double overtime playoff scoring club.

Raider Bernie Sigrist erased Milton's 2-1 lead in the final 30 seconds of regulation time after captain Jeff Haydar took a highly questionable high sticking major.

Good penalty killing

Led by Shane Sullivan, the Merchants did an excellent job killing the balance of the penalty in the first overtime period.

Prior to this they denied Wexford on nine straight man-advantage situations and collected their fourth shorthanded goal of the playoffs — scored by French on a broken play in the opening frame.

Milton's first goal of the game came on the powerplay, courtesy of a tic-tac-toe maneuver completed by Darren (Mini) Haydar who floored John Rumero with a thunderous second-period check and drew the first assist on the game winner.

Sullivan, Jeff Haydar, Ron Baker and Jasen Hopiavuori picked up helpers as well.

Though technically the visiting team, the Merchants enjoyed far more support at the Scarborough arena. Close to 200 Milton fans made back-to-back trips east and drowned out Wexford's small following.

Crowd big edge

"It's a huge factor in our success," said Merchant president Gregg Carrigan, whose team is now just half a dozen wins away from going to the nationals. "It means a lot to the guys to know they're playing for a community as well as themselves."

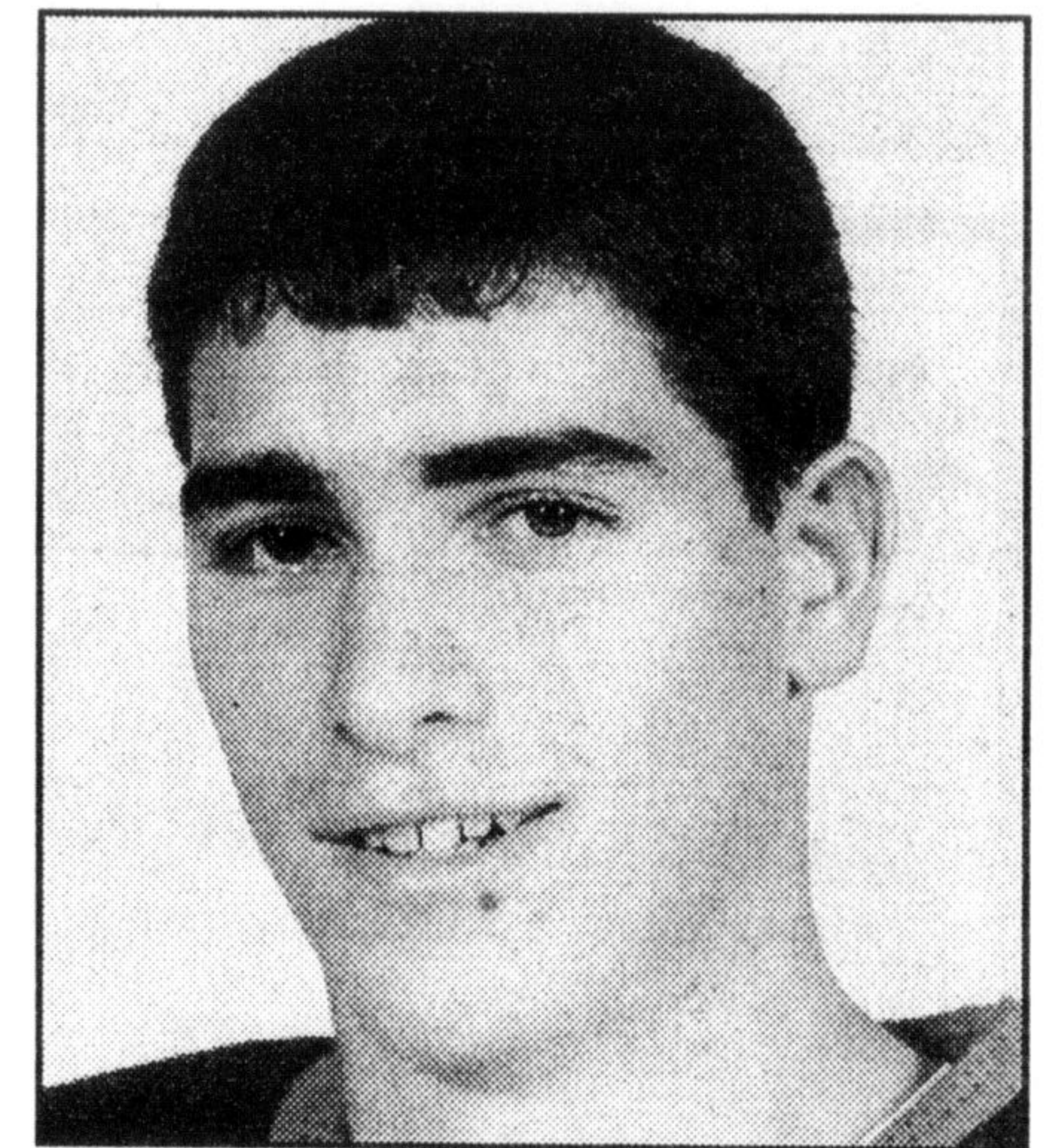
Milton scored a season high six powerplay goals Friday. The nine-point overall spread represents their widest margin of victory through the playoffs.

Said Wexford bench boss Kevin Burkett after game one, "I think of how Caledon lost by nine goals in game seven (of the Metro finals) and just thank God we've got a chance to show we're better than that."

Uninspired play and cheap stick work was about all his team brought to the table in the series opener. The worst culprit was enforcer Mike Heather, who short-circuited after redirecting a shot into his own net and deked Bannan in the third.

Teammate Nathan Gillies settled the score in the final few seconds of play, pummeling the loose cannon in one of the best tussles.

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Steve French

This Buck moves up

David Buck jumped longer and higher than anyone else at the fourth annual Ontario International Games.

Representing Athletiques International Track and Field Club, the 13-year-old Milton athlete topped both the bantam boys high jump and long jump — with 1.46m and 4.67m efforts respectively.

He led an 11-member local contingent that helped Athletiques International win the team title at York University.

Buck's Milton teammates amassed 11 silvers and nine bronze medals.

Here's a rundown of their individual efforts:

Aaron Reese, 10, silver in the 1,500m, 1,500m race walk and shot put, bronze in the 800m.

Shannon Laing, 8, silver in 60m and shot put, bronze in the 200m, long jump and high jump.

Mia Fazio, 10, silver in 1,500m, bronze in the 200m.

Devon Reese, 7, silver in the 200m, bronze in the shot put, fourth in the long jump, sixth in the 60m.

Lauren Beatty, 10, silver in the 60m and shot put, fourth in the 200m.

Andrew Lyall, 9, silver in the shot put, sixth in the 60m.

Caylanne Lyall, 12, silver in shot put.

Melissa Logue, 13, bronze in 800m and 1,500m.

Gary Laing, 10, bronze in the high jump, sixth in shot put.

Jaymes Beatty, 13, fifth in 60m.

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