



# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Condren, Waples neck and neck down to wire



Photo courtesy of New Image Media

Randy Waples, seen here in action with Daylon Tempo, is once again in the running for Canadian Trotting Association Driver of the Year.

Steve Condren and Randy Waples have one more race remaining before they officially close the books on their 1998 harness racing seasons.

The Milton-based drivers have once again been pitted against each other as O'Brien Award nominees for Canadian Trotting Association Driver of the Year.

The winner will be announced tomorrow evening during a gala awards banquet at Mississauga's Delta Meadowvale Hotel.

This is the second straight year the local drivers have been finalists for the coveted prize, which Condren won last time.

The 41-year-old Miltonian, who was unavailable for comment at press time, continued to be the top money man on the national circuit — amassing just over \$4.5 million in total earnings.

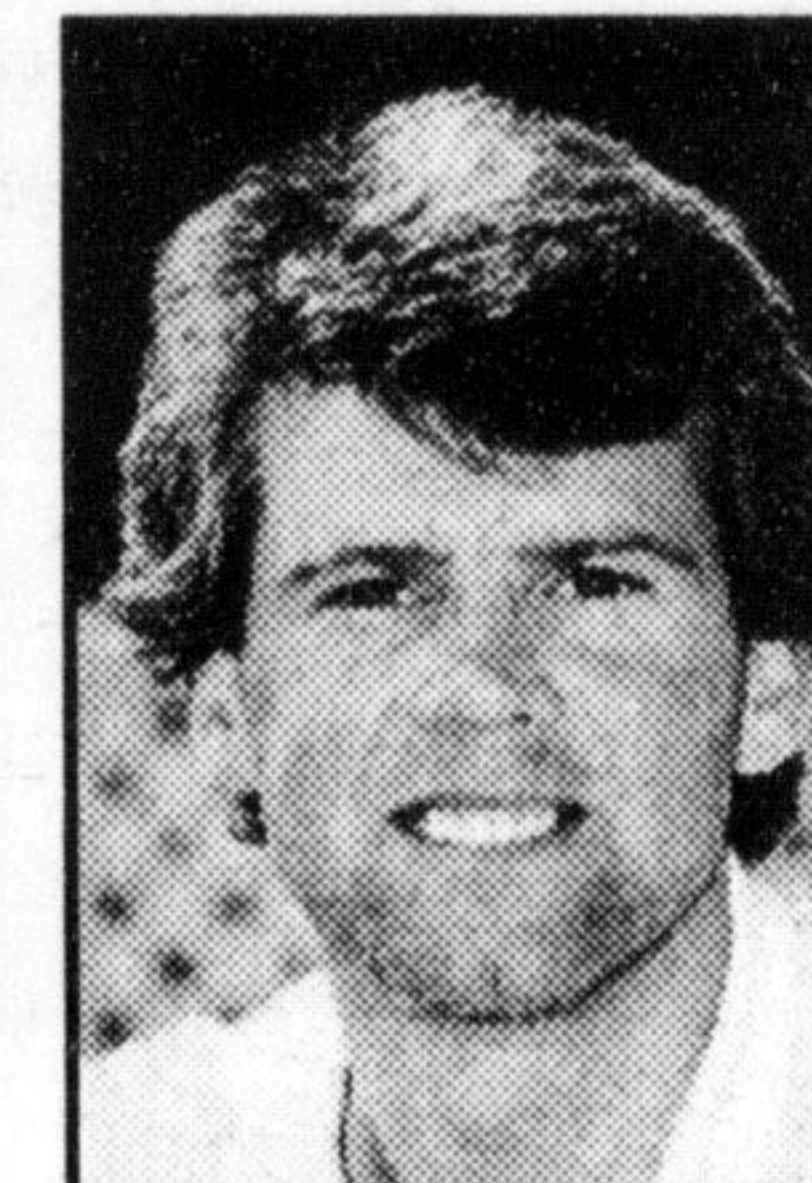
He finished with 245 victories. Perhaps the biggest of these came aboard three-year-old filly trotter Image Control in the Canadian Breeders Championship at Mohawk Raceway.

Among his other top-flight riding partners were Armbrro Scorpion and Stonebridge First. Both horses excelled in Ontario Sires Stakes competition.

"Steve (Condren) is just so consistently successful at everything he does in harness racing. A young rider can learn a lot by the



Steve Condren



Randy Waples

way he carries himself as a driver, owner and overall player in the sport," said Waples.

"I improved in all areas of my own racing, but it's hard to say if that'll be enough to win. The O'Brien is awarded by a group of judges so it's hard to say how it'll go."

For his part, the 33-year-old Hornby resident led the way with 452 wins and placed second to Condren in earnings, banking \$4.25 million.

Though Waples didn't triumph in any of the higher profile events, he managed to surpass the 1,000 win plateau, which for a driver only a few years into the sport is an impressive achievement.

He had more starts than any other driver in 1998, indicating confidence many horse owners have in his skills, and in just two seasons has tripled his win total.

## Milton keeps streak alive

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

Jeremy Wenzel's crafty cage work and a second-period uprising kept the Jr. A Merchants unbeaten on the road.

Milton's goalie made plenty of quality stops while his teammates lit the lamp three times during the mid-portion of the night to topple the Streetsville Derbys 5-2 Tuesday.

The West Conference frontrunners have yet to lose in hostile arenas this season, with just a handful of away games left to play.

They're also in excellent position to once again put up 40 wins and finish atop their division.

"That's been our goal from day one," said defence-man John Nadalin, one of the scorers in the club's latest victory. "We want to do exactly what we did last year, only this time win the (national) championship as well."

The Merchants were fairly disciplined in Streetsville and showed strongly over the final two frames.

Remarked head coach Marty Williamson, "This is a

tough building to compete in but we lifted our game in the second and played well from there. I feel good about how we're now doing, heading into next month's playoffs."

The high-tempo contest — which marked the return of recently suspended players Ryan Carrigan, Dave Csumrik and Rob Meanchoff — saw the visitors score two goals 30 seconds apart on a pair of point blank bullets.

Connecting on the first of these was Geoff Schomogyi, who extended his current scoring streak to eight games. He also delivered a nifty pass on linemate Ryan Robichaud's first-period tally.

Captain Kevin O'Flaherty and Mike Wheelihan were the other marksmen while team scoring leader Ed McGrane picked up two assists.

Replying with goals for the Derbys were Larry Moniz and Adam Paiement.

Shots on net were 29-26 in favour of Streetsville, who put a lot of authority and creativity behind their chances — the bulk of which were denied with terrific glove and pad saves by Wenzel.

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## Ventura is surprised

### Teen chosen by Six Nations

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

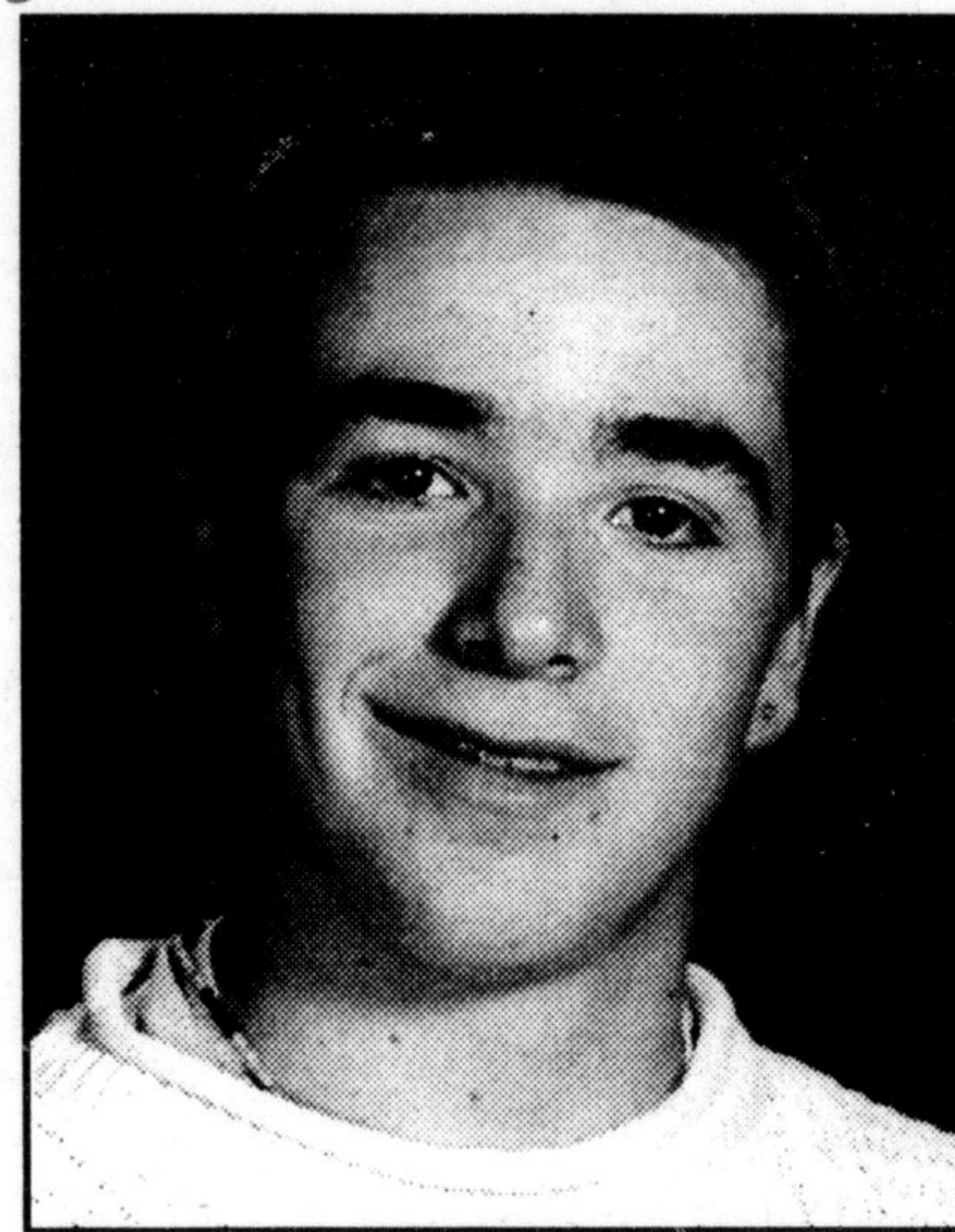
Does Six Nations know something the rest of the lacrosse world doesn't?

That was what Milton's Matt Ventura pondered recently, after receiving word about being selected in the recent Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA) Junior A Draft.

The 16-year-old was utterly shocked — to say the least — to learn he was the Arrows' first round pick.

His surprise was not based on humility but cold, hard self-appraisal. After all, he

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Matt Ventura

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*Knuckles Sportshop announces personnel changes effective at the end of this month. Jason Levey will be leaving us after a year of service, and we wish him many thanks, and good luck. Many of you should be pleased with the addition of Steve "Hendo" Henderson to full time status. Steve has many years of experience serving customers from Milton and Halton, from his many years at Milton Pro Sport. Steve is an excellent skate sharpener, and specializes in competitive figure skate sharpening. Welcome aboard, Steve!*

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