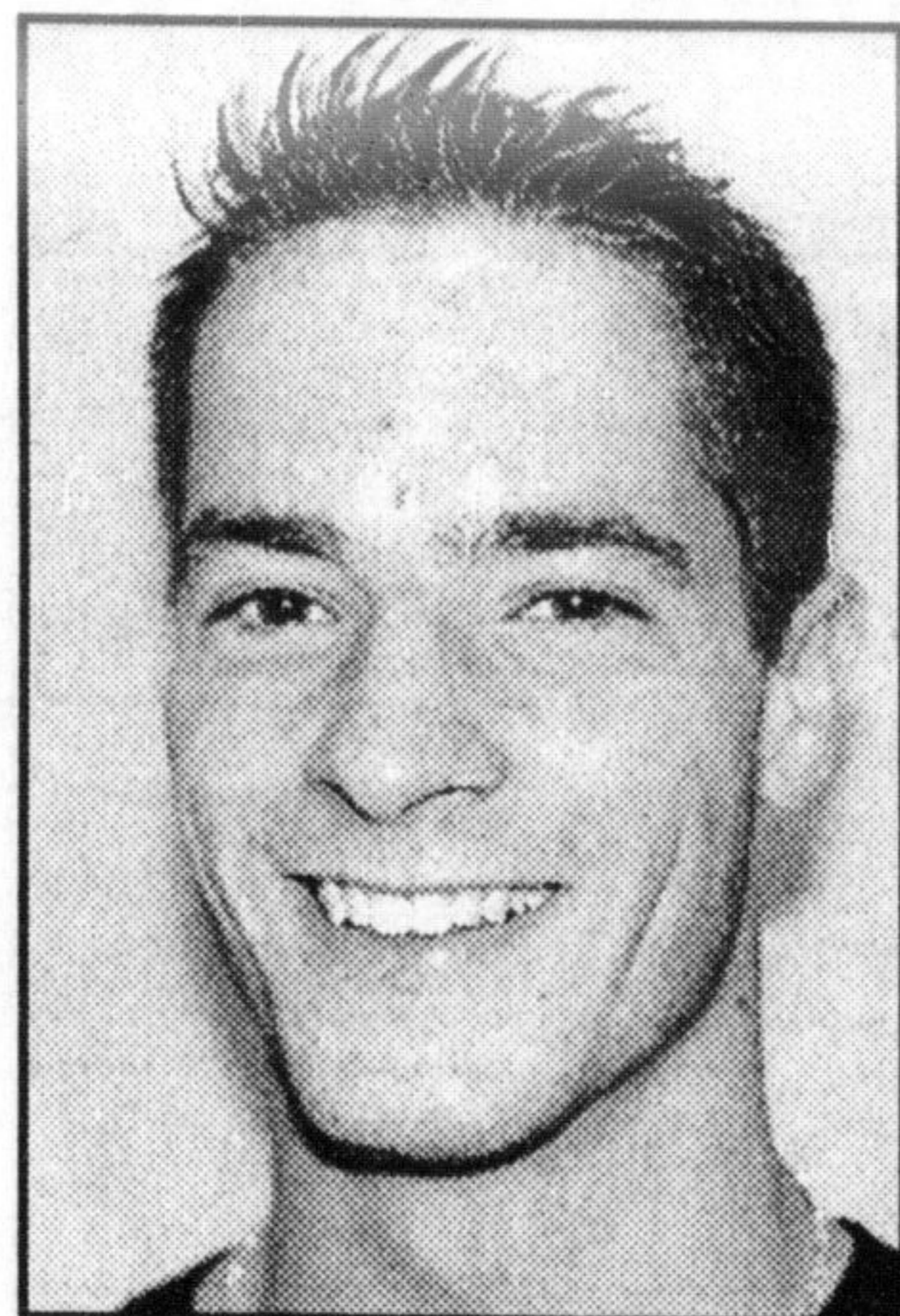


# Haydar closing in on new freshman record



Darren Haydar

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

*The Champion*

Darren "Mini" Haydar may be leaning toward a business major, but when the puck drops he's all about history.

Making it, that is — the way only he can.

Last year the electrifying sharpshooter set an all-time single season scoring record for the Milton Merchants. Now he needs just two goals to become the top producing freshman ever at the University of New Hampshire.

He inched closer to the mark of 23, which has stood for more than a decade, with a second-period goal in last Friday's 5-4 win over Northeastern.

Prior to that he tallied twice against the University of Massachusetts Lowell — leading the Wildcats to a 4-1 victory — for his eighth multi-goal game of the sea-

son.

"I'm just happy we're doing so well. We weren't expected to," said the 5'8", 160 lbs. right winger, choosing to downplay his imminent induction into the UNH record books as well as his recent addition to the NHL draft list.

"This was supposed to be a rebuilding year, but our overall effort and team chemistry has been great and we just keep winning."

This is due in no small part to Haydar's offensive consistency, which amazingly enough seems to have surpassed that of his 1997-98 campaign.

He has buried the biscuit in more than three quarters of the Wildcats' games, while his 22 goals leads all of NCAA Division I.

### Style suits him

Haydar said he's greatly benefited from the style of play in university hockey, which features an enhanced skill level and a lot less roughhousing, as well as a schedule that includes fewer games and more practices.

"We do so much preparation that by the weekend you're really up for the games," he explained. "That shows through in the commitment factor. Even if we're ahead by a few goals in the third period there's never any running around in our own end."

Trying to navigate past blueline teammates in practice has quickly become one of the most enjoyable parts of his week. Said Haydar, "I'm haven't a lot of fun challenging myself against them, they're just so good. I can take them wide once in a while, but it's awfully tough."

While somewhat surprised at how smooth his transition to the NCAA has been, Haydar said a hearty acceptance by the veterans — who immediately took to his tireless work ethic — definitely got him off on the right foot.

An early-season promotion to the first line with the nation's points leader, Jason Krog, certainly didn't hurt either.

"Lately I've been getting better goals, skating with the puck more, although a lot of my scoring comes from finishing his (Krog's) plays," said Haydar.

All this offence has not only impressed those in Hockey East, who've selected him as Rookie of the Week four times, but a number of NHL teams as well.

Within the past couple of months scouts from the San Jose Sharks and New York Rangers have expressed interest in Milton's most prolific scorer.

The attention has him considering a future in pro hockey, although he's not preoccupied with the notion just yet.

"My dad probably gave me the best advice, that scouts could be in the stands at any given time so I should just play my game and not do anything stupid," Haydar remarked. "I have actually been thinking about it (a career in NHL), but I'm trying not to get too concerned about it. I don't want to hurt my team, getting a swelled head and all."

Haydar will have a chance to break his school's freshman record this Sunday when his Wildcats face Maine, who are ranked second in the country.

UNH is seeded fourth overall and sports a record of 19-4-1. They went to the national championships last spring and made it to the Semifinals.

## Drury is bouncing back

• from **ASHES** on page 21

season record to 23-5.

At the same time in Montreal, Chris Holmes had a career day as well. The grade 11 competitor prevailed in four consecutive matches — with two pins — to

capture his first ever open division gold medal at the Riverdale Invitational.

He not only turned back all challengers but was also named outstanding wrestler for the tournament, matching Merritt's feat of a year ago.

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