

Bitter pill for ladies in Pan Am soccer

By STEVE LeBLANC
The Champion



File photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Chrystal Johnston turned 19 Thursday. She had hoped to mark the occasion by playing for the gold, or at least still be celebrating a bronze medal triumph with her Canadian Under-20 women's soccer squad mates at the Pan American Games.

Instead, Milton's star midfielder spent much of her birthday reeling from the national team's heartbreaking fourth-place finish — which followed back-to-back shootout losses.

"It's extremely disappointing," said Johnston. "We definitely expected to at least take bronze. We were all in total shock."

Canada's fall from grace began in the semifinals when they let a 2-0 second-half lead slip away and lost on the dreaded penalty kicks to Mexico.

There was no shortage of misfortune for the host country, as they put one in their own net during regulation time and then missed on consecutive sudden-death scoring chances.

Recalled Johnston, "We thought we had that game, for sure. We just broke down at the wrong time."

This pushed them into a battle for third spot with Costa Rica Wednesday.

But if the tournament hosts figured a bronze medal victory was in the bag, having blanked their opponents 3-0 during round two, they were sorely mistaken.

The Costa Ricans would eventually crush their

Chrystal Johnston's team didn't get all they wanted out of the Pan Am Games, but the future looks bright for the Milton soccer star anyway.

hopes for a little consolation by edging them in the shootout, after a 1-1 regulation stalemate.

Canada ended the international showcase on a three-game losing streak after winning their first three, including a 3-2 decision over Mexico in preliminary play.

The United States went undefeated and trimmed Mexico 1-0 in the gold medal match.

From an individual standpoint, the local player had a highly successful experience in her first Pan American Games.

She started all but one of the half-dozen games and played a strong set-up role — collecting three assists in a 7-1 rout of Trinidad/Tobago and one more during the initial clash with Mexico.

"I thought I did really well. All the preparation we did really gave me a boost for each game," explained Johnston.

"It was so exciting to see all those people in the crowd. That made it even more heartbreaking. We had so much support and felt we let the fans down."

Milton Ladies Softball League

Team	GP	Ws	Ls	Ts	PTS
Cricket's	13	12	01	00	24
Charley's	14	12	02	00	24
Base Biters	12	09	03	00	18
Sturdy Girls	12	08	04	00	16
Cruisers	14	06	08	00	12
Shooters	11	05	06	00	10
She Devils	12	03	09	00	06
Hardball	11	01	10	00	02
Harrop Rest.	13	00	13	00	00

Milton Ladies SloPitch League

Team	GP	Ws	Ls	Ts	PTS
McKeown	13	09	03	01	19
The Legion	13	09	04	00	18
SW Painting	13	07	06	00	14
Mike's	12	06	04	02	14
Charley's	13	04	07	02	10
All-Purpose	12	00	11	01	01



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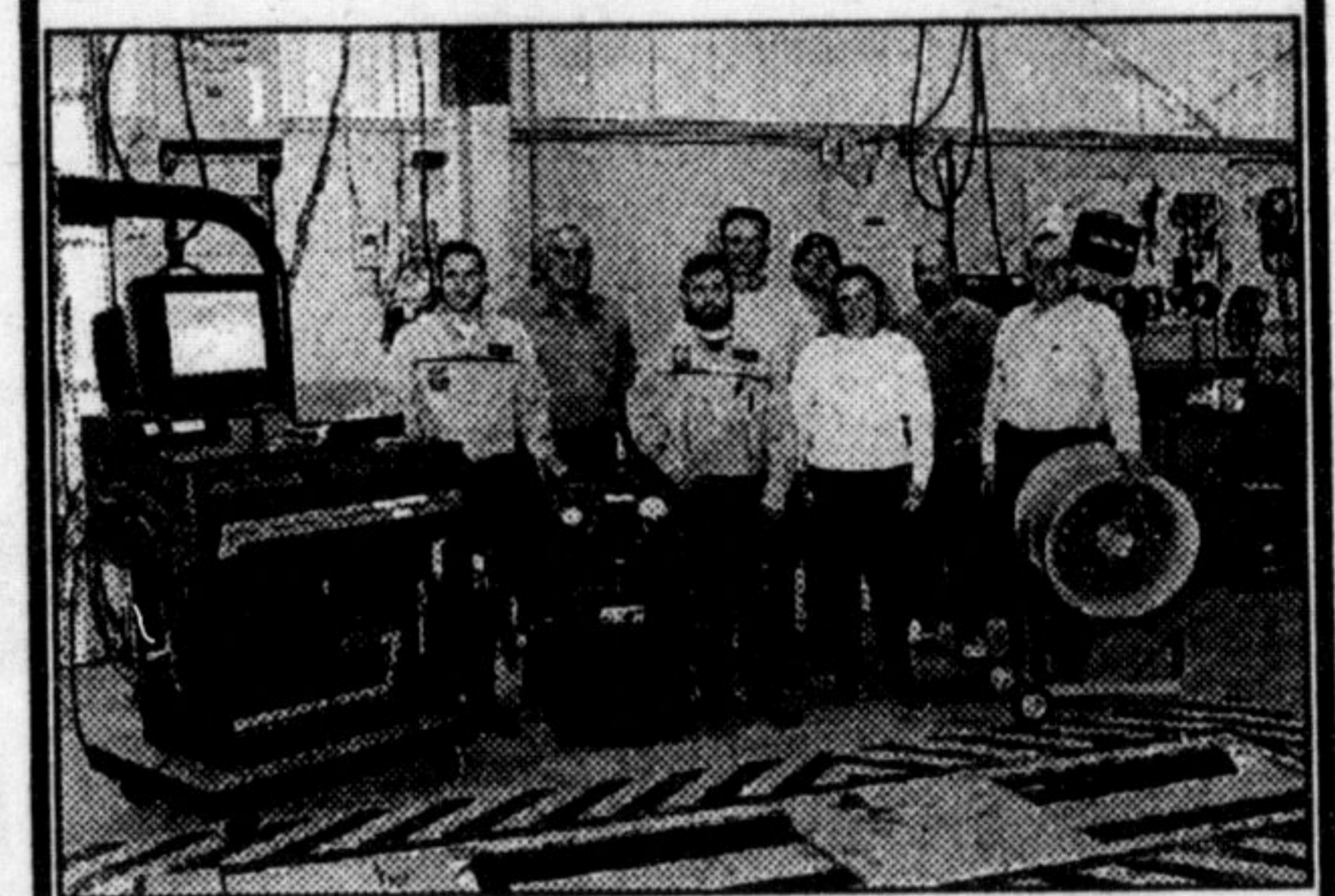
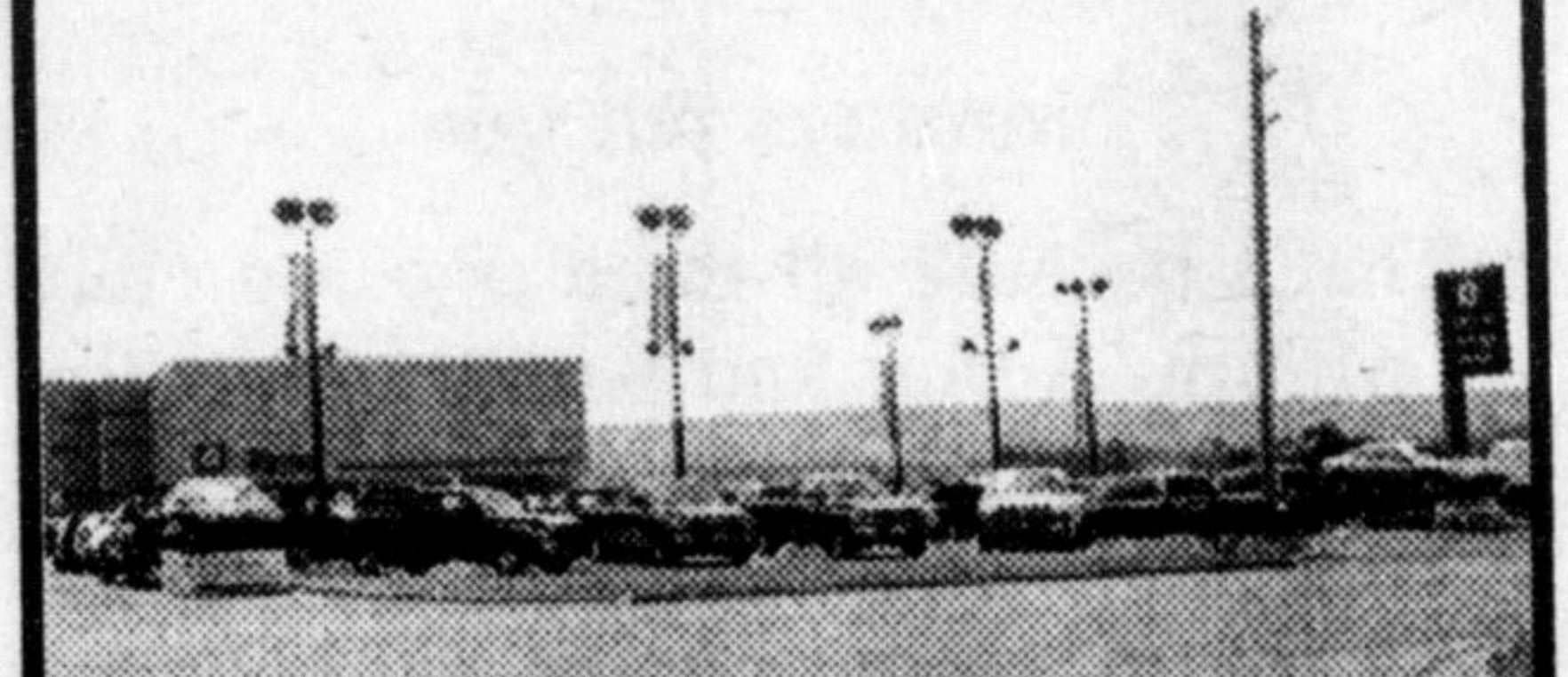
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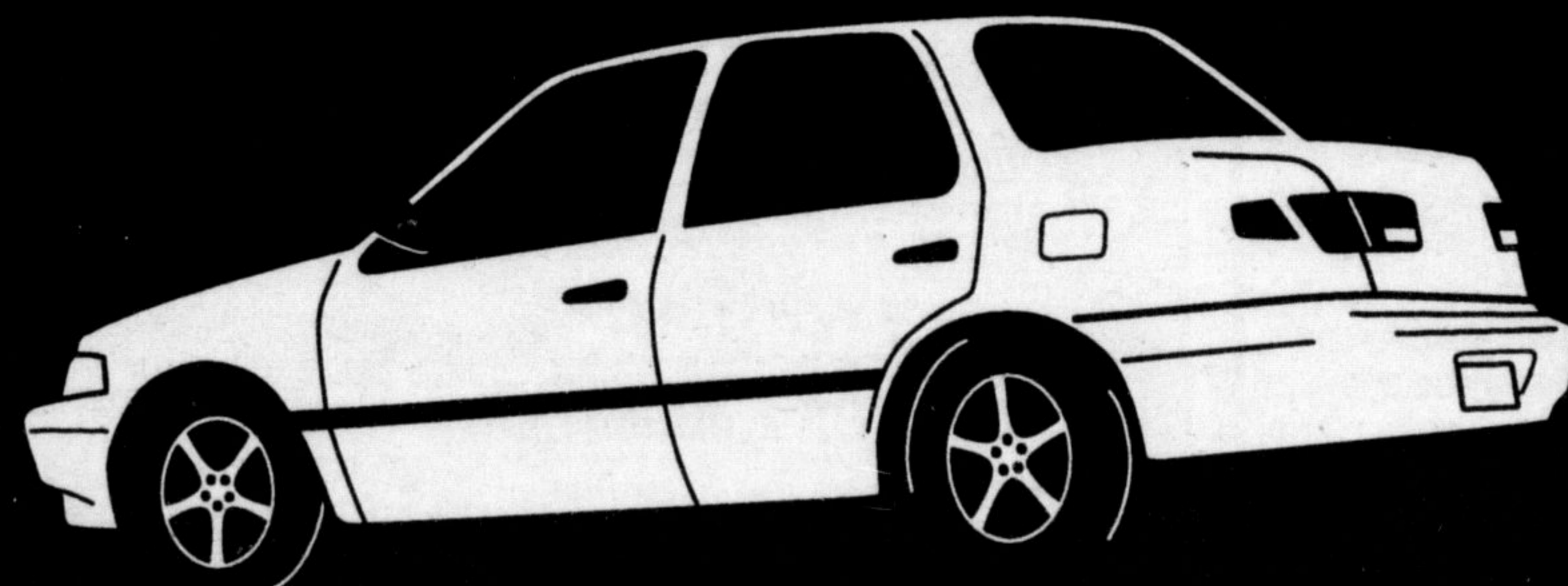


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