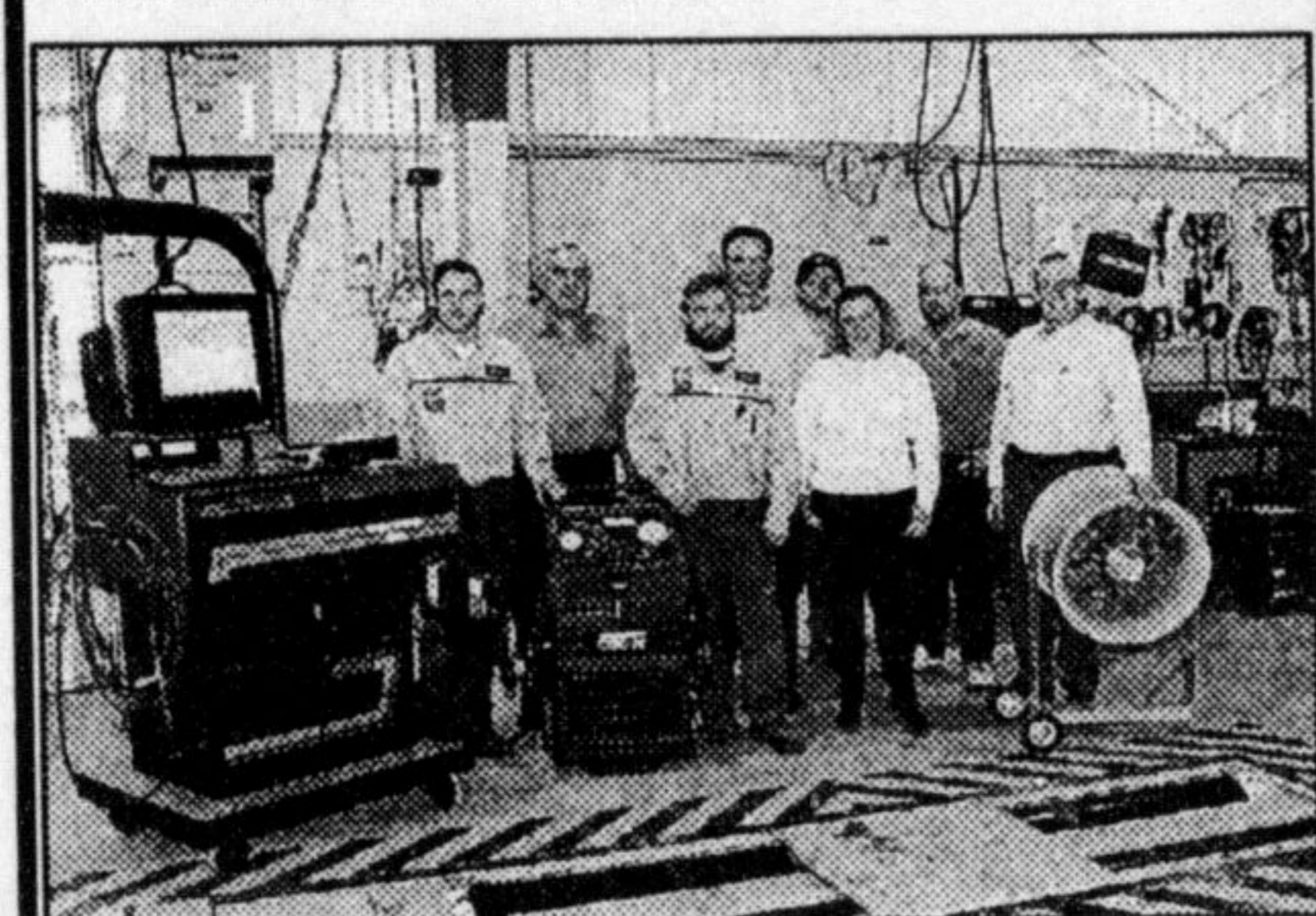


# Strank is no fair weather player

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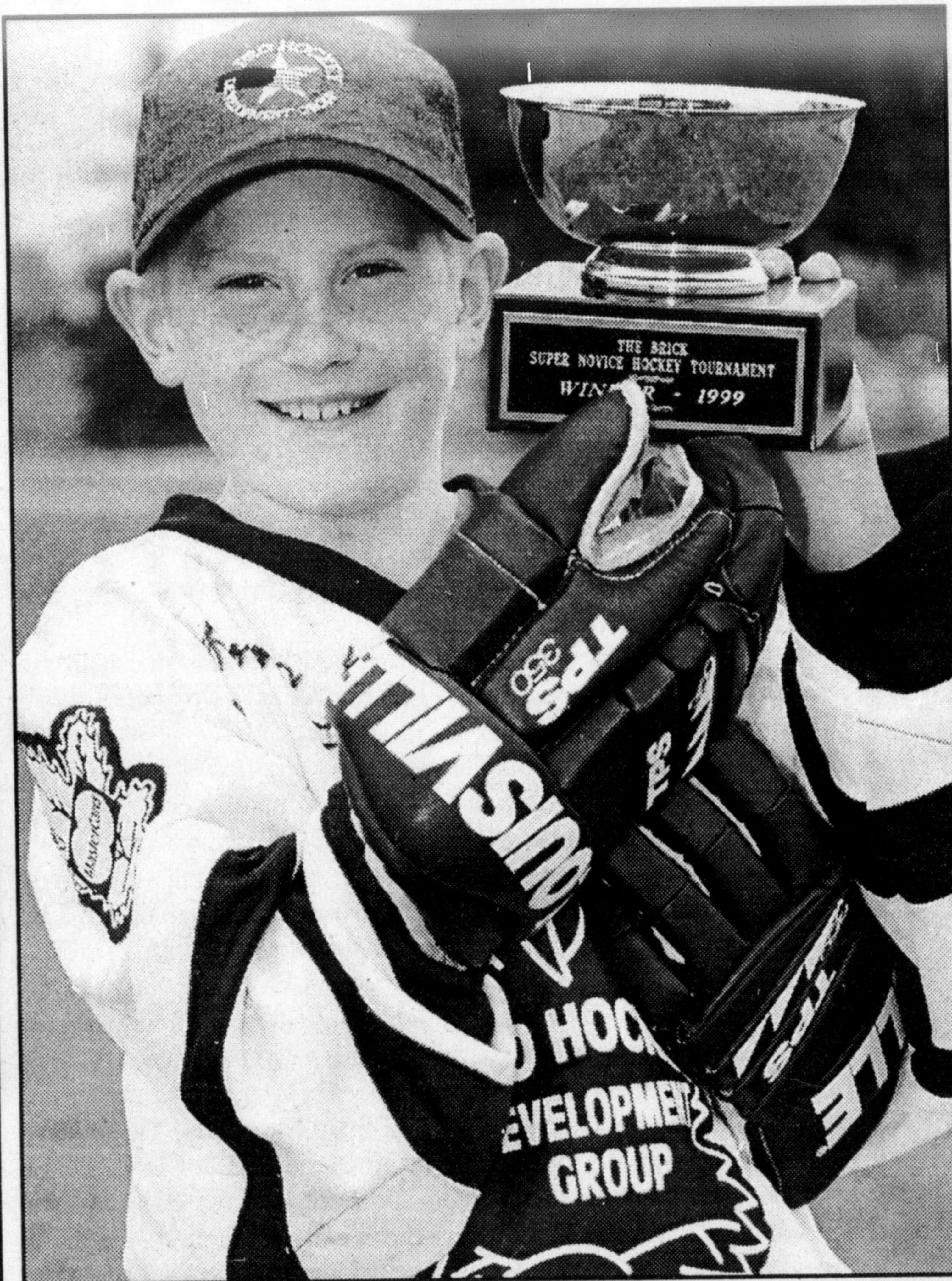


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Milton's Geoff Strank displays the trophy he won recently at the Brick's 10th annual Super Novice Tournament in Edmonton. His Toronto summer development hockey team has been on a tear, winning six of seven tournaments.

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

*The Champion*

Geoff Strank's hockey successes can't be contained to the cold climate months.

In fact the youngster's brightest moments on the ice have come over the past several weeks, with Toronto Pro Hockey Development's novice team.

This summer squad, made up of players from across the GTA, has played in seven tournaments and flourished at every turn — capturing six titles and placing second the other time.

“All the hard work has definitely been worth it,” remarked the 10-year-old, referring to the hefty hardware haul he has earned for all his weekend toil.

Toronto's crowning jewel came earlier this month at West Edmonton Mall Ice Palace, where they outlasted 11 teams over five days on the way to garnering gold at the Brick's 10th Annual Super Novice Tournament.

The August 8 title match featured a little payback against the Winnipeg Junior Jets — who two days after trimming them in the final round-robin game were edged 3-2.

Geoff helped initiate his club's comeback victory, assisting on goal number one in the second period and combining with teammates to neutralize opposing snipers for the balance of the contest.

Said the local left winger, “It was an opportunity of a lifetime and the biggest thrill of my hockey career.”

Semifinal action, against the Los Angeles Junior Kings, was just as exciting. Toronto again fell behind early but battled back to win 4-2.

And once more it was the victors' Milton connection that sparked the rally — this time scoring the initial marker on a one-time wrist shot. This opened the door to four straight goals and a berth to the finals.

Overall, Toronto went 5-1-1 at the tournament while Geoff registered a goal and four assists over the seven games.

“He's more of a lunch bucket player, nothing fancy,” said father Adrian. “He does a lot of digging in the corners and helps set up goals, rather than scoring them.”

“The boys all did really well out west. It was such a great opportunity for everyone.”

Geoff has been playing summer hockey for three years. He says the year-round grind is all worth it.

“I just love hockey,” he added. “It's great playing against all these guys during the winter and playing with them in the summer. It teaches you good sportsmanship.”

Geoff will be moving up to the minor atom ranks this season with the AAA Halton Hurricanes.

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