

Experience behind bench is a key for both of Milton's senior football teams

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Milton's senior football teams will have plenty of experience this season — although almost all of it will come off the field, not on it.

Leading local gridiron warriors will be a pair of seasoned head coaches. Both have a tough road ahead in getting players back in form after a year hiatus, due to the teachers' strike last fall.

Taking over the reins at Milton District High is Ed Stavnitzky. A former university player, he's coached at various levels for the better part of two decades — leading teams to 10 championship games, eight of which were won by his charges.

Assistants experienced

The Mustangs will no doubt benefit from that type of track record — as well as the expertise of assistants Keith Pearce and Dave Kirk, who are both mainstays with the senior program.

According to Stavnitzky, MD has no shortage of athleticism but only one player returning from the senior squad of 1997.

"We don't have a lot of size and, unlike other communities, these guys weren't able to play club football while high school sports were interrupted last fall. That puts us at a real disadvan-

tage," the new skipper said, prior to yesterday afternoon's controlled scrimmage versus Georgetown. "We've got some good athletes, but it's hard to tell how things stand until they actually start hitting against another team."

An ex-quarterback, he plans to put plenty of emphasis on the passing game — more so than the local school has in past years.

Quarterback question

But right now, just who'll be hurling the pigskin remains a question mark. Jon Sprenger's size and efforts two years ago at junior would make him an obvious front-runner, although the lanky pivot is coming off wrist surgery — not to his throwing hand, but still potentially detrimental to his performance — and may not be up to the task this early on.

Said Stavnitzky, "We've got a couple of other candidates, but nothing's definite right now. Ian Robinson and Adam Finkbeiner look to be our receivers. Both have a lot of potential."

His Division II team begins a five-game regular season schedule Friday, Oct. 1 at Burlington Central. Their home opener is Friday, Oct. 15 against Oakville Trafalgar.

Meanwhile, Joe Jurus will take over operations at Bishop

Reding. They will field a senior squad for the first time in the school's history.

A St. Francis Xavier University player with a few years as both head coach and offensive coordinator at the high school level, he'll lead the troops alongside assistants Bruce Mazur, Tony Spagnoli and Gord McCarless.

The Royals don't enjoy any more experience than their cross-town rivals, although

they do have a fair number of players from the '97 junior team that went 4-2 and made playoffs in their inaugural year.

Junior vets

Among those are crafty quarterback Jodie St. John and talented rushers Dan McBride and Mike Long. Jurus sees a number of other promising players in the ranks such as linebackers Ivan Bosnjak and Matt Ishoy, tight end Matt Cheeseman, tail-

back Josh Fournier and two-way workhorse Sean Pearce.

"Our running game is pretty deep," said Jurus, who was able to get a plus .500 season out of a very young boys baseball team this past spring.

"I'd like to think we could do as well as the juniors did two years ago. Finishing top four and having home field advantage for the first playoff round would be our big goal right now."

Slated Division I, BR will try to match that feat starting this Friday (Sept. 24) at Burlington's Nelson Stadium. Their home opener is set for the following Friday (Oct. 1) against Oakville's St. Thomas Aquinas Raiders.

Milton District will also have a junior team this year. They start season play next Wednesday, Sept. 29 at home against Burlington's Lester B. Pearson Patriots.

Milton triathletes are less than thrilled with their World efforts

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
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Slight satisfaction, masked by lingering disappointment.

That pretty much summarized the post-race emotions of local triathletes Harry Barnes and Tina Braam, following the recent World Championships in Montreal.

Both Miltonians were among the best in individual age class competition — but fell short of personal benchmarks and, as a result, couldn't bring themselves to be overly pleased with their performances.

A substandard bike ride was the weak link for Campbellville's Barnes. The 52-year-old said this second stage of the course is where he lost a good five minutes off the leaders, and eventually a shot at medaling in the men's 50-54 loop.

He placed seventh — covering the 1.5 kilometre swim, 40 kilometre bike ride, 10

kilometre run in 2:13.54. This was three-and-a-half minutes off his season best finish of 2:10.23, set this spring in Florida.

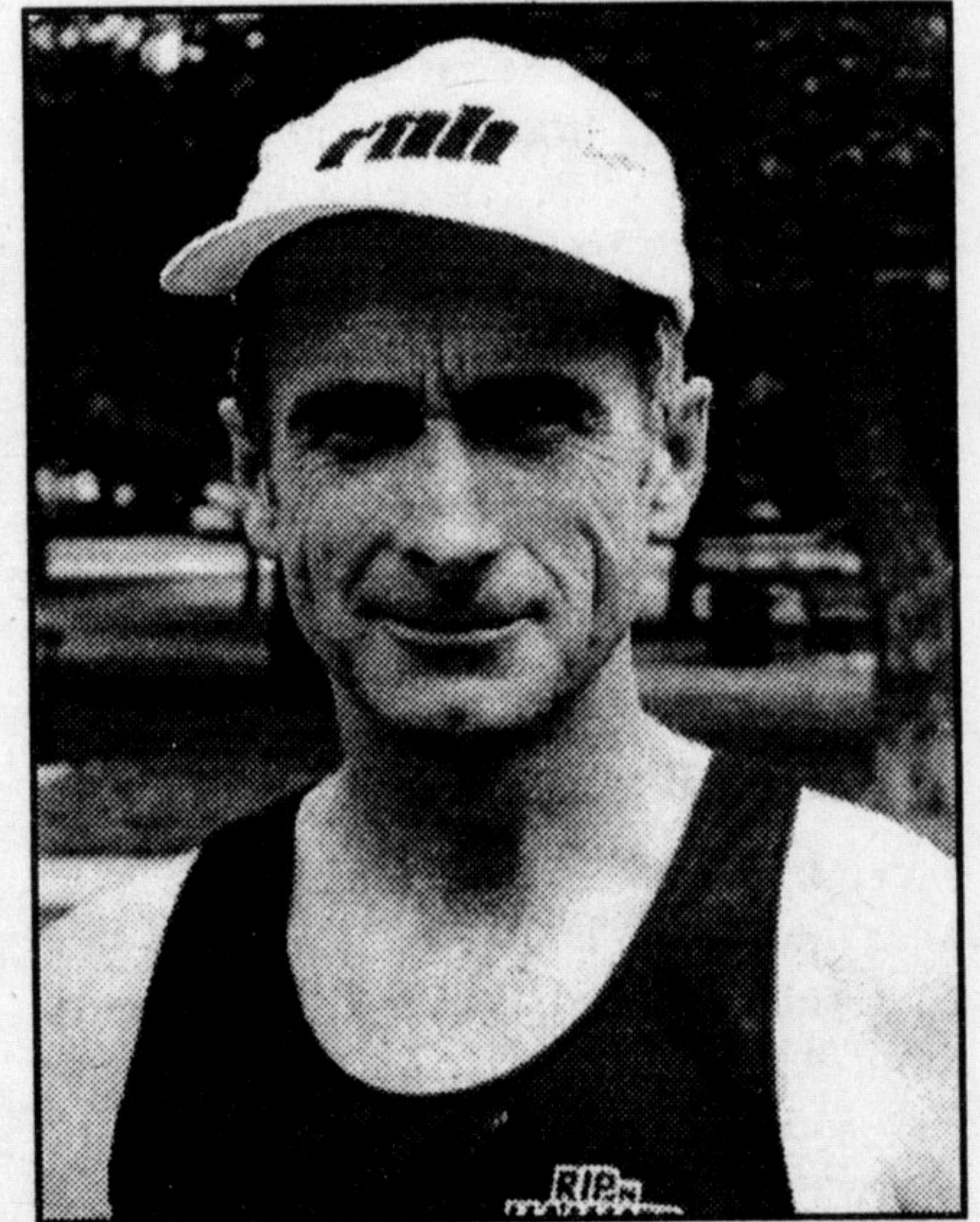
"The bike just wasn't there for me," explained Barnes, "My first thought after the race was that there's definitely room for improvement. The Americans had strong bike rides and if they can do it so can I."

Hurt in crash

In all fairness, the local racer went into the international showcase at a significant disadvantage. Having sustained some minor injuries in a car accident just a few weeks earlier, he was forced to curb his training schedule leading up to the Worlds.

Also, particularly high winds wreaked havoc with Barnes along much of the cycling course. He is an especially slim

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Harry Barnes

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