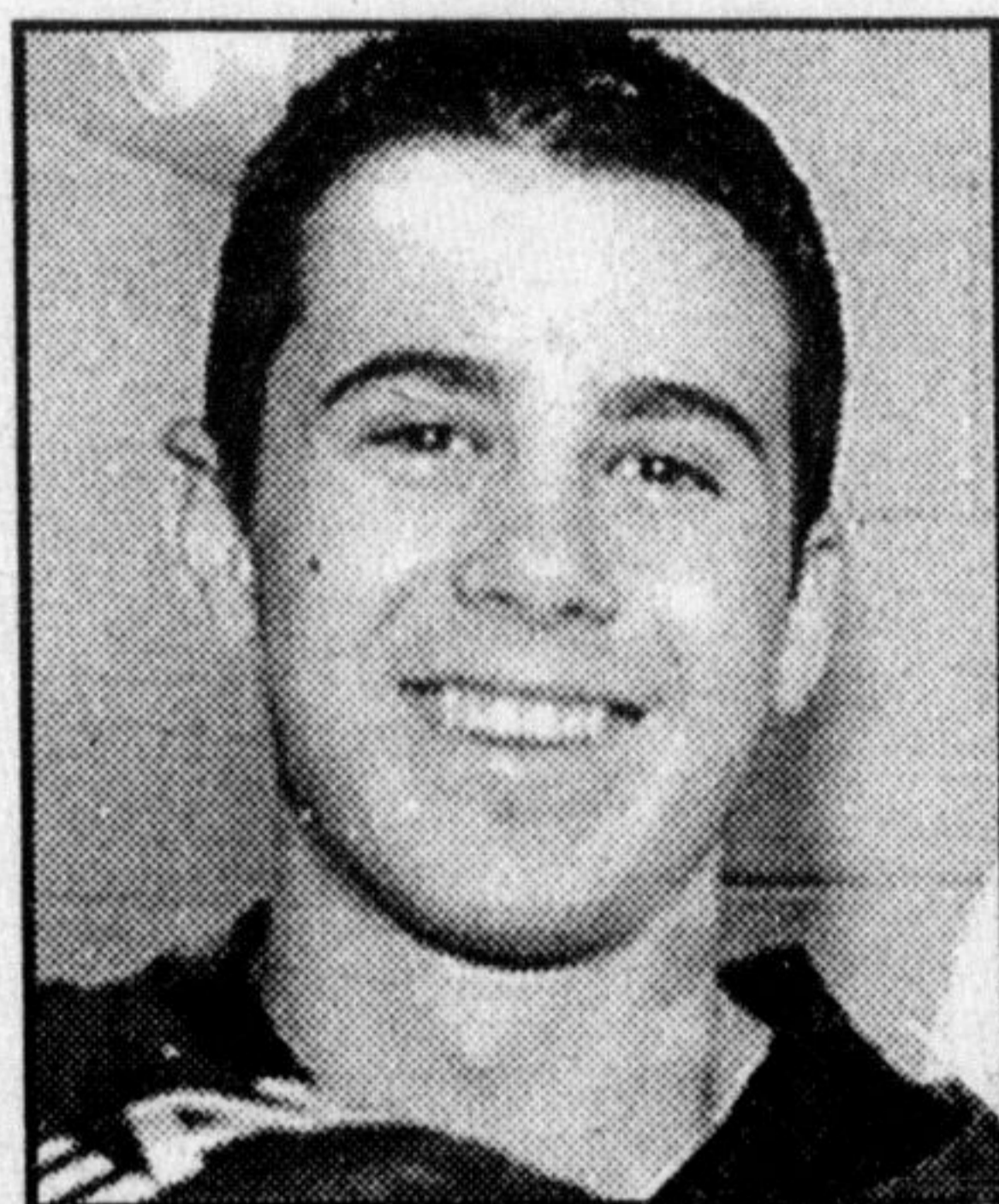


Van Loosen new addition to Burlington Cougars after an active summer at Under-17 playdowns

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Travis Van Loosen has clawed his way onto the Cougars. The 16-year-old recently earned a spot on Burlington's Jr. A club, making him the latest local player to join the tier two ranks.



Travis Van Loosen

"It feels really good," said the young forward, of signing on with Burlington. "I thought I'd be one of the last cuts and only get called up for a few games this season. Actually making the team was great."

Van Loosen's jump to junior hockey follows an active summer in which he advanced all the way to the final round of the Team Ontario Under-17 playdowns.

This experience — plus the confidence acquired from being a bantam age draft pick of the OHL's Oshawa Generals, as well as beefing up by 12 pounds — no doubt served him well when it came time to try out for Rick Trotter's Cougars.

Remarkably Burlington's 6'1", 175 lbs. freshman, "I'm not sure just why, but my physical game has picked up lately. I'm not scared of the checking (at this level) so far."

That was fairly evident in his first two regular season appearances — both versus the Hamilton Kilty Bees. The neighbouring rivals split the games. Burlington took the season opener 3-1. Steeltown then evened the season series, winning 4-2 last week.

Although not netting any points, the local rookie showed strongly in both contests — creating some scoring opportunities and holding his own against opponents up to four years older than him.

"I have to admit I was a little nervous for that first game. The

crowd was a lot bigger than I'm used to," explained Van Loosen. "But I thought I did pretty well and I'm getting a fair amount of ice time, more than I thought I would."

In pre-season play, he had a goal and two assists during the Cougars' championship run at the Fort Erie tournament.

Van Loosen — currently centering the fourth line — realizes that points aren't going to be as easy to come by as last year when

he led the Burlington AAA major bantams' top scoring unit.

But then again, it's not like making the junior team was a piece of cake either.

"I've just got to keep working hard and capitalize on opportunities," he said.

Van Loosen's Jr. A debut at Milton Memorial Arena — against the Merchants — comes Wednesday, Oct. 6.

Red Sox grab gold

Midgets rally to triumph in playoffs

The Milton midget second entry team enjoyed a handsome hardware haul this year — winning both the regular season and playoff championships in rural league baseball action.

The latter title was captured earlier this month during a best-of-three clash with Waterdown. The Red Sox got off to a slow start, losing the first contest 3-2, but recovered quickly to take games two and three for an exciting come-from-behind series triumph.

A 7-0 whitewash in game three — which clinched the trophy for the local lads — featured stellar pitching by Andrew

Kirkland. He worked the first four frames and surrendered just a single hit.

Relievers Zack Cosby and Brian McComb were solid as well — with neither allowing any runners past second base. The trio received ample defensive support, with contributions coming from every position.

Catcher Chris Dumencu picked off two runners at second to further cripple Waterdown's meager offensive efforts. Dave Brawley led at the plate for the victors with a multi-hit performance.

Jamie Whyte had four solid innings on the mound while Dumencu led with three

hits in game two — which Milton won 4-3 to initiate the series turnaround.

Adding two hits apiece were Rob Hatje and Kevin Sales. The Red Sox pulled out the victory in their final at-bat, with three consecutive singles to score both the tying and winning runs.

Overall, Milton finished the season at 12-3-2.

Making up the rest of this year's championship team were Jeff Anthony, Greg Bell, Dan Digirolamo, Adam Fredricks and Richard Roskam plus coaches Herlo Hatje, Murv Fredricks, Paul Anthony and John Roskam.

Minor hockey coaches and managers can fax team reports to The Champion's sports department at 878-4943 or drop them at the office, 191 Main St. E.

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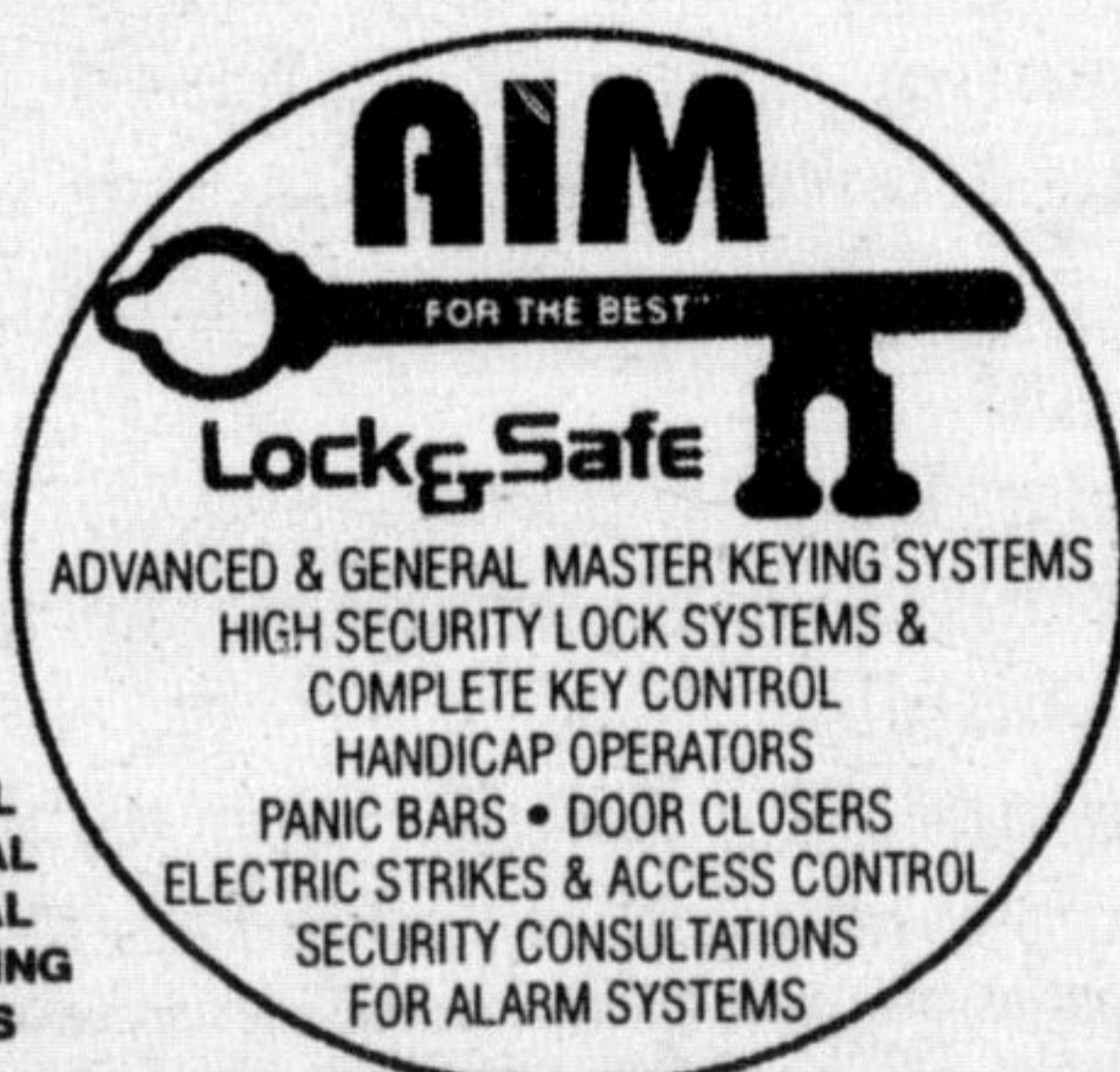
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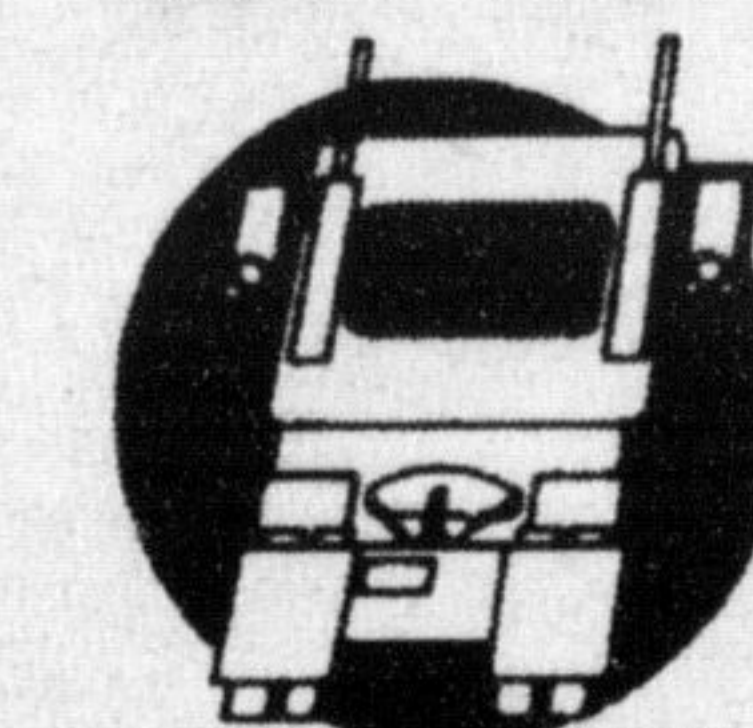


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