

Thomas handily wins the Kiwi GolfScene Tour title

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Jeff Thomas' Kiwi GolfScene Tour victory was officially announced this past week — but it was hardly news to anyone involved.

With an unprecedented nine straight event wins to his credit — including one late last month at Oaks of St. George, where he upstaged his 17 and 18-year-old boys division opponents with a 75-shot performance — the Milton golfer had claimed the series points race long before it was finished.

In fact, the local teen missed the tour's final stop yet still ended up with a healthy margin of victory over runner-up Kyle Coulter of Elora.

He would have easily been the top overall male finisher — among all age groups — had it not been for the season-ending absence.

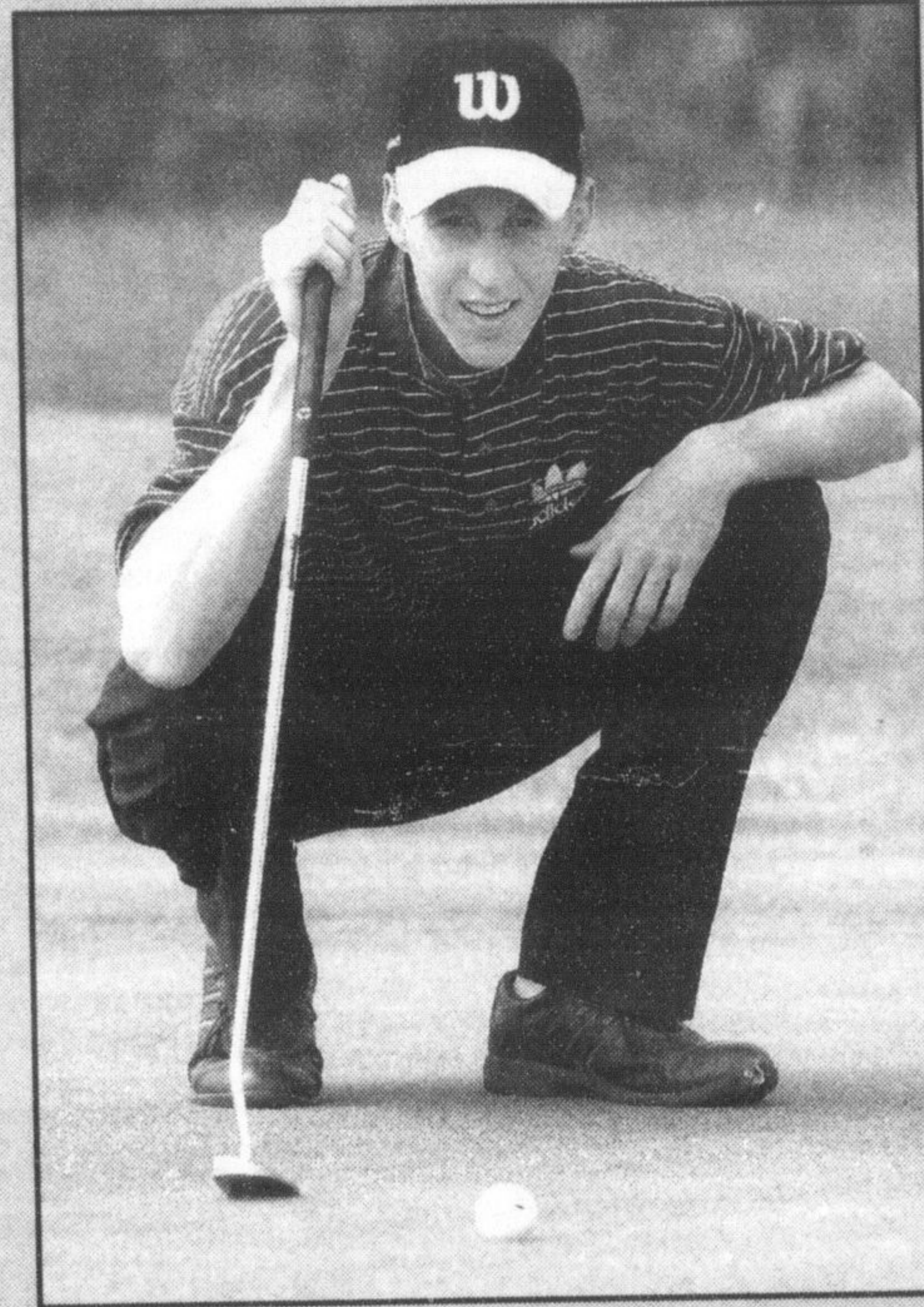
Thomas' Oaks of St. George triumph was nearly highlighted by an added bonus when he came within an inch of a hole-in-one on a dog-leg left par three 12th hole.

"It was extremely close," he remarked.

Along with his nine event wins, the division champ often finished with the longest drive and fewest number of putts on the day.

He also excelled on the more prestigious Wilson Junior Tour and placed 13th for the season — which automatically qualified him for next year's competition.

Meanwhile, Milton's Neena Suhkram won the open girls division during Kiwi GolfScene Tour's final stop of the year at Savannah Links in Ancaster with an 84-stroke effort. She finished six shots ahead of Waterdown's Brittany Stevenson and delivered the longest drive of the day.



File photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Jeff Thomas was on par with a highly successful golfing season.

Fellow Miltonian Laura Burns — who had a few top three placings throughout the season — ended up in a tie for the least number of putts, with 32.

Thomas and his fellow division winners will be honoured at a season-ending banquet at Mount Hope's Willow Valley Golf Club Sunday.

BR coach feels team is still strong despite major player exodus

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
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Bishop Reding Secondary School's Joe Jurus spent the last two years working towards gridiron success.

Now his hopes rest in simply sustaining it.

With 14 starters and most of his top performers lost to graduation, that'll be a tall order — especially when there's a Halton Region Tier 1 championship to defend later this fall.

But BR's senior football skipper isn't pushing the panic button just yet, stating that some skilled returnees and a revamped offensive attack should help counteract the mass exodus of players.

Coach remains optimistic

"We've still got some talented guys and the commitment level has been high," he said.

"If we stay healthy, we should be okay. We probably won't be able to contend with the (Halton) Metro Bowl teams yet, but by the end of the year we should be back to where we were last fall."

For that to happen, the defending regional champions will have to make significant adjustments.

Realistically, BR won't be able to rely as heavily on its ground game this season — with the loss of many gifted rushers including standout Mike Long, who scored seven

touchdowns in 2000 and recorded the lone major in a 7-0 championship whitewash of Oakville's Loyola Hawks.

So Jurus plans to incorporate a more frequent air-strike, and will enlist the services of two quarterbacks to deliver it. Taking over for graduate Jodie St. John are co-pivots Andrew Pepper and Kyle Hartlen — who when not throwing the pigskin will fill in at other offensive posts.

Meanwhile, Ryan Taylor ran the ball rather well last year and will be looked upon to make some big carries again this fall. Chris Dumencu and James Kaiser will be among others called on to make ground gains.

Long's absence will be greatly missed defensively as well — but looking to fill the gap is veteran linebacker Matt Ishoy. Mark Gribbon, Jurus hopes, will be an anchor on both sides of the line.

The Royals — who won the regional title just four years after beginning their program — had nearly four dozen players try out for this year's team, a strong indication that the program remains alive and well despite a significant turnover.

BR will be involved in this afternoon's pre-season controlled scrimmage showcase at Milton District High School. Their six-game schedule begins next Friday, Sept. 21 at home against Oakville's St. Thomas Aquinas Raiders. Game time, as always, is 3:30 p.m.

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