



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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Spartan wrestlers three-peat at OFSAA

Drury becomes only the second school to win three straight years

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

Just call them the team for the new millennium.

In 2000, E.C. Drury reached the top of the high school wrestling mountain by finally winning OFSAA.

Since then, Larry Jaroslowski's Spartans have simply refused to relinquish their championship — engineering back-to-back title defenses to become only the second school in the 42-year history of OFSAA to pull off the coveted three-peat.

Drury joined founding member Chinguacousy in that illustrious group last weekend in Thunder Bay.

With at least half-a-dozen opposing teams threatening to end their dynasty, the local grapplers delivered a flawless 10-0 opening-round performance and went on to outdistance Port Credit 146-141.

"We were outstanding early in the tournament, far above any other school," recalled Jaroslowski, whose combatants' northern excursion was made possible by a huge financial boost from the school community. "Overall, our guys achieved as high as could be expected. We didn't lose a match that we should have won."

Drury had more depth

While Port Credit secured the two gold medals they were favoured to win — in the lightest weight divisions — the defending champs led in the overall medal count and placed seven of their 10 wrestlers in the top eight.

This allowed the Spartans to squeak by in a final round that saw the lead change hands several times before it was all over.

Drury's OFSAA triumph was led by 57.5-kilogram silver-medalist Matt Knock. The provincial returnee ran roughshod over his pre-finals competition — who were collectively whitewashed in four straight matches — but had little left at the end and lost by decision to pre-tournament

favourite Adam Harada of Sarnia.

Rounding out the school's individual medal haul were Baxter brothers Adam and Matt, who were within striking distance last year with fourth and fifth-place showings.

This time around, Matt went 6-1 with a pin — losing only to the gold-medal favourite in the quarterfinals — while the only blemish to Adam's 5-1 performance came in the semifinals versus former provincial winner Chris Prickett.

Exciting finishes

Each sibling secured narrow wins in their bronze-medal matches — Matt's a 5-0 shutout over Thunder Bay's Steve Flank and Adam's a 11-8 barn burner over last year's bronze medalist Scott Dione of St. Thomas Parkside.

These back-to-back wins — in the 64 and 61 kg. divisions respectively — helped set the stage for the team victory. Port Credit then lost its final match moments later and the title was E.C.'s.

Said Jaroslowski, "It's gotten to the point that we expect to win. It's been an evolution that way (in team confidence)."

Taking top-six finishes in their first trip to OFSAA were Jesse Ronan and Tyler Saliba — who took fifth and sixth in the 54 and 77 kg. classes respectively.

Graduate Chris Guard (72 kg.) and rookie Gary Ferrier (57.5 kg.) both cracked the top eight.

Ferrier was denied a berth to the finals by former Drury OFSAA champ Mike Devries, who moved to Stouffville two years ago.

Rounding out the team and winning key matches early on that contributed to overall success were Jason Landry, Rob Petherick and Adam Smith. Assisting Jaroslowski once again was coach Simon Vanellis.

Drury's three straight championships follow back-to-back silver-medal performances in 1998 and 1999.

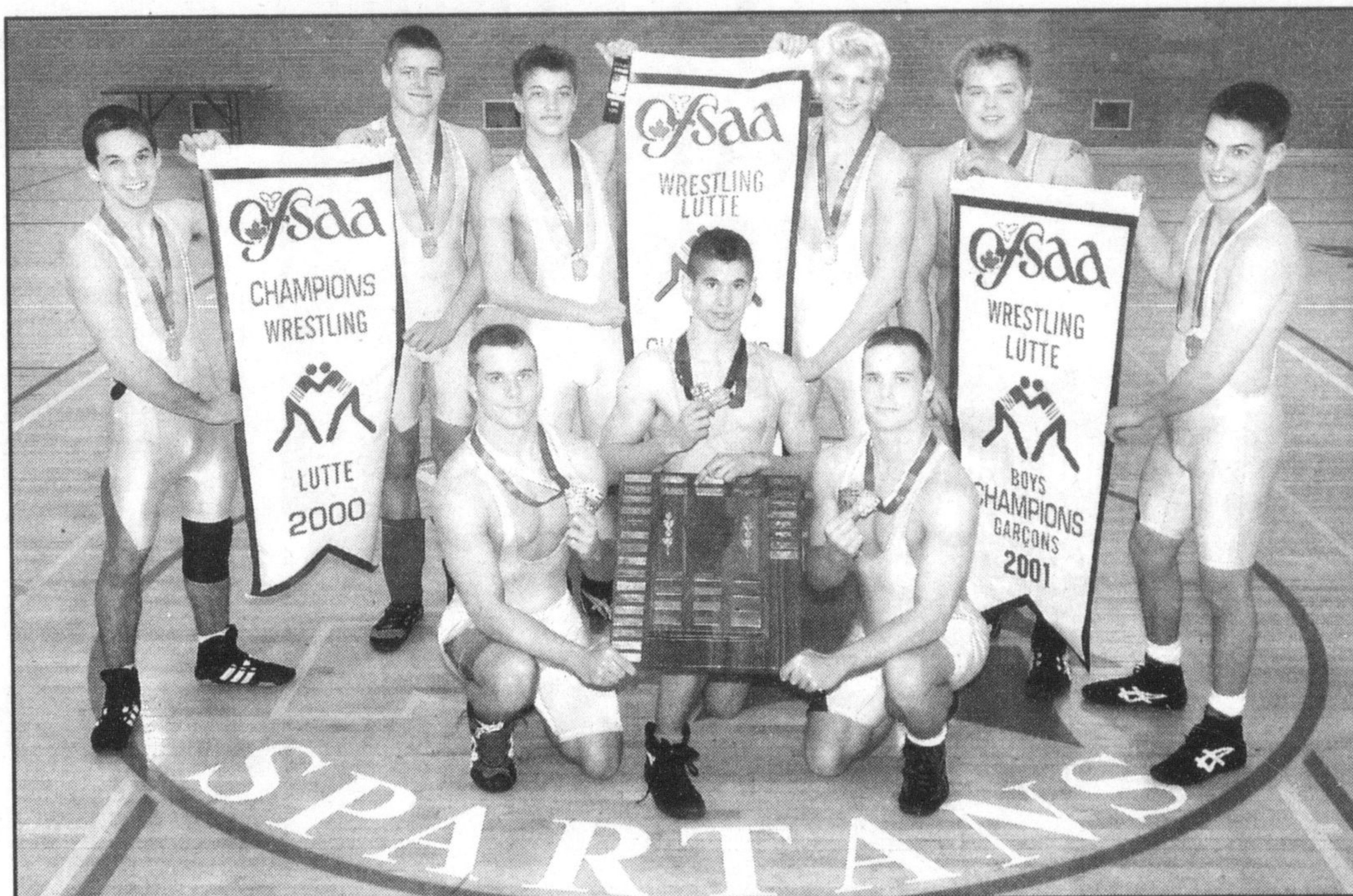


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

E.C. wrestlers show off the three consecutive OFSAA championship banners they've secured as well as the coveted trophy. Among this year's team were (front row, from left) individual medalists Adam Baxter, Matt Knock and Matt Baxter plus (back row, from left) Gary Ferrier, Adam Smith, Jesse Ronan, Chris Guard, Jason Landry and Rob Petherick. Absent from photo is Tyler Saliba.

Mini's Wildcats number one

Darren (Mini) Haydar's New Hampshire Wildcats are number one.

UNH had flirted with the NCAA Division 1's top ranking all season and finally achieved it during regular-season ending play last weekend — when they swept Boston College to finish 25-6-3 and take the Hockey East title.

Their top seating was stamped with Saturday's 5-2 victory — in which the former Merchant sniper netted his sixth game winner of the season and assisted on an empty-net deposit to ice the win.

The Wildcats trimmed their division rivals 2-1 Sunday.

Haydar — UNH's electrifying senior captain, who's up for the coveted Hobey Baker Award — finished the year with 27 goals and 66 total points,



Darren Haydar

which was good enough for third among all NCAA Division 1 scorers.

He finished behind only SCSU's Mark Hartigan and UMN's John Pohl — both of home played three more games.

The Milton star's 2001/02 exploits include back-to-back Hockey East Player of the Month awards as well as MVP status at the Bank One Badger Tournament.

Haydar and the Wildcats now begin their quest for a trip to the Frozen Four this weekend with a best-of-three Hockey East quarterfinal series against Merrimack.

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