

Marlins pool efforts to capture team title at Division III finals

There was nowhere for division three provincial championship honours to hide this time around.

The Marlins Swim Club had come up short in the title hunt during previous attempts, but pooled their collective efforts to reign supreme during their latest trip there late last month in Etobicoke.

Milton out-gunned more than three dozen other clubs in the pool to come out on top.

Day one of the competition was highlighted by 10-year-old David Dimitrov, swimming timed finals, capturing gold in the 50-metre freestyle and silver in the 100m butterfly for the team's first points.

Also earning points for the 10-and-under boys were Evan Ries, 9, with a fifth-place showing in the 100m butterfly, Alex David, 10, with a seventh in the same event and Jason Shaw, 10, whose efforts in the 50m freestyle were good enough for fifth.

In the older age loops, eight Marlins engineered top-eight finishes in the preliminaries to qualify for a berth to the finals the following evening.

Day two's afternoon session brought more success from the 10-and-under boys as Shaw took fourth in the 100m breaststroke, Dimitrov struck silver in the 200m freestyle and David finished eighth in the same event. Shaw and David took second and sixth respectively in the 50m backstroke, Dimitrov and Reis grabbing second and eighth in the 50m butterfly and the four boys combined for the runner-up spot in the 200m freestyle relay.

The evening finals session was once again loaded with local representation, as a dozen Marlins qualified for another 18 positions. Jessica Switzer, 12, led the way with a pair of golds and a sixth-place effort while 14-year-old Rachel Robinson secured a gold and silver. Kate Chapman took a first and sixth, Kristen McIlroy and Jen Porenta were both golden as well, Ricky Davids amassed three silvers, Laura Prusha grabbed a silver and fifth, James Bramely and Christopher Reid each took fifth and Valerie Burke took home a sixth.

The noise level reached its peak during the 200m freestyle relays as the 11 and 12-year-old girls finished fourth, the same

age-class boys struck silver, the 13 and 14-year-old girls just missed the silver by a fraction of a second while the 15-and-over girls had an astounding relay — squeaking in for the gold with a fierce finish.

The excitement grew on day three as the 10-and-under boys once again delivered topnotch efforts, including a golden performance by Dimitrov in the 100m freestyle. Finishing fourth in the same event was Shaw, who also captured silver in the 100m backstroke.

Alex Davis took bronze in the 50m breaststroke and seventh in the 200m individual medley, just ahead of eighth-place teammate Evan Reis.

The high-endurance test of the afternoon — the dreaded 800m freestyle — didn't hold Milton back, as Robinson triumphed in her age division while McIlroy and Erynn Fraser placed second and fifth in the 15-and-over class. Burke and Prusha grabbed seventh and eighth-place honours among the 11 and 12-year-old girls.

Team victory was all but guaranteed heading into day three's finale — with Milton leading by 67 points — although the local swimmers took nothing for granted and continued to shine.

Switzer, 12, prevailed in the 200m breaststroke with an amazing six-second victory. Davids was second best in two races, while Prusha took the runner-up position in the grueling 400m individual medley.

Jacqueline Clarke claimed her first medal in the 13 and 14-year-old girls loop, taking bronze in the 200m breaststroke, finishing right behind Robinson — who also captured gold in the 400m freestyle.

Fraser snatched up silver in the 200m individual medley and bronze in the 100m freestyle.

Chapman, Porenta and McIlroy each took gold and eight other top-eight finishes cemented the Marlins' successful title bid.

The girls' 200m medley relay events were the last hopes for points and Milton stopped them cold in the 15-and-over age group, claiming top honours with a four-second win.

The 13 and 14-year-old girls hung tough for bronze.

Scoring woes plague Royals

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The cracks are showing through.

No longer able to call on premier snipers Kyle Grant and Onel Martino — both lost to graduation — Bishop Reding's 2002 senior boys soccer team has had major difficulty denting the twine.

Last Monday marked another blatant reminder of that fact, as the defending league champions held a distinct edge in play over the top-seated Q.E. Park Eagles but wound up losing 3-1.

"We were all over them but just couldn't bury it," said coach Fernando Costa. "With Kyle and Onel gone this year, that (lack of finish) was a big concern."

Chris Casa was the lone marksman, which may have cost the local lads an opening-round bye in the playoffs. Heading into yesterday afternoon's regular season finale against T.A. Blakelock, the Royals sat fourth in Halton's Volpe Division and needed not only a victory themselves but losses by both Iroquois Ridge and Oakville Trafalgar to finish top two.

A lack of scoring aside, BR's seniors have given fairly spirited efforts this season. Case in point was Wednesday's 2-1 triumph over Loyola, in which they overcame a shortened roster to improve to 3-2. Matt Stockton and Connor Sweeney did the scoring, while delivering an exceptional performance between the pipes was veteran netminder Allen Lourenco.

Should the seniors finish third or fourth, they'll host round one of the playoffs tomorrow at 3:30 p.m.

Meanwhile, BR's junior boys squad sat on the verge of a winless season heading into yesterday's battle with Blakelock. A lack of offensive — with just four goals in five straight losses — has been an even bigger shortcoming for the juniors, who're undergoing a major rebuilding period after making it to the regional finals last spring.

The younger Royals headed into yesterday's battle hoping to snap their losing skid and set up a more favourable first-round encounter with Milton District. A loss would put them up against third-place Q.E. Park. Either way, BR's juniors will assume the role of visitors when post-season play begins tomorrow afternoon.

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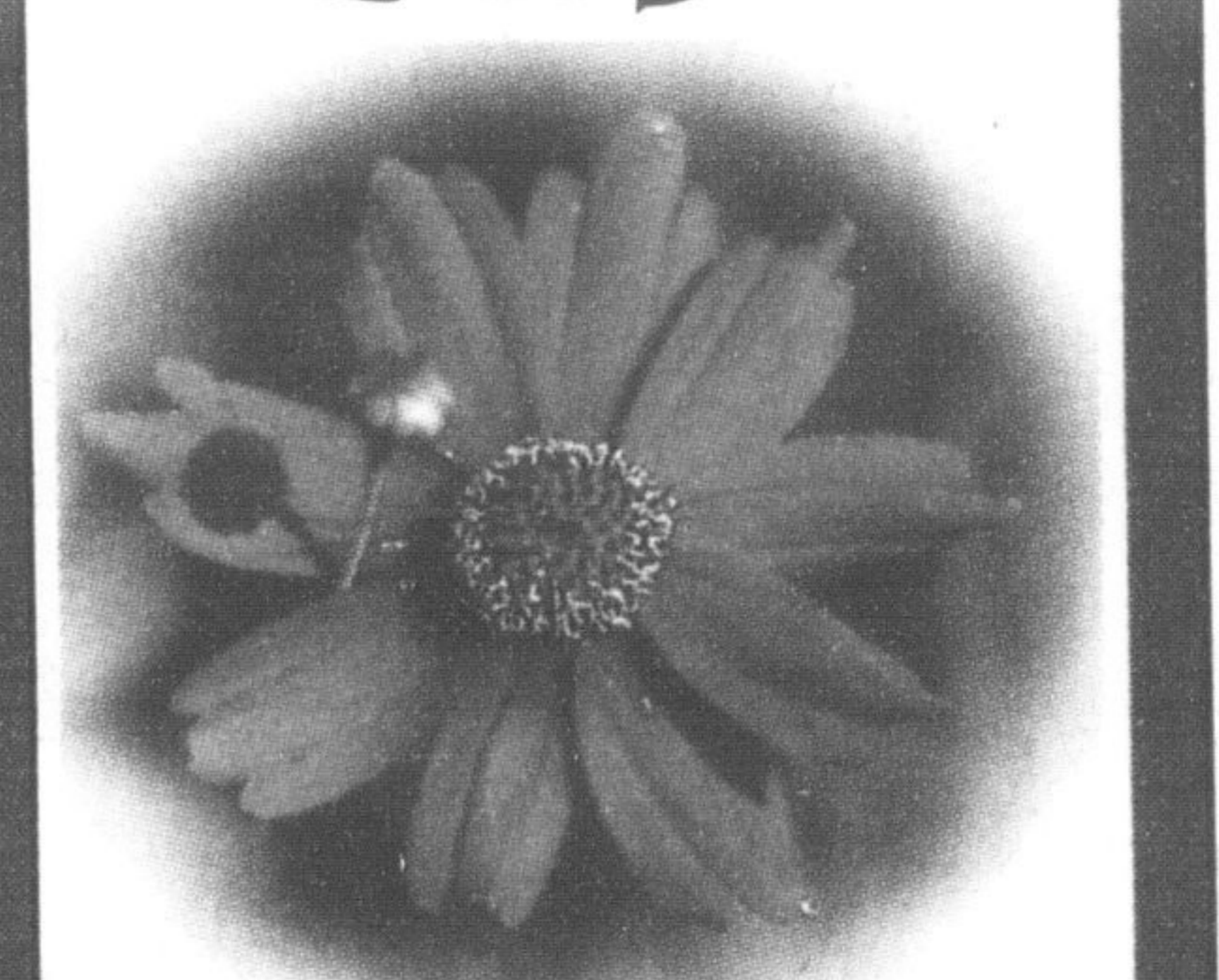
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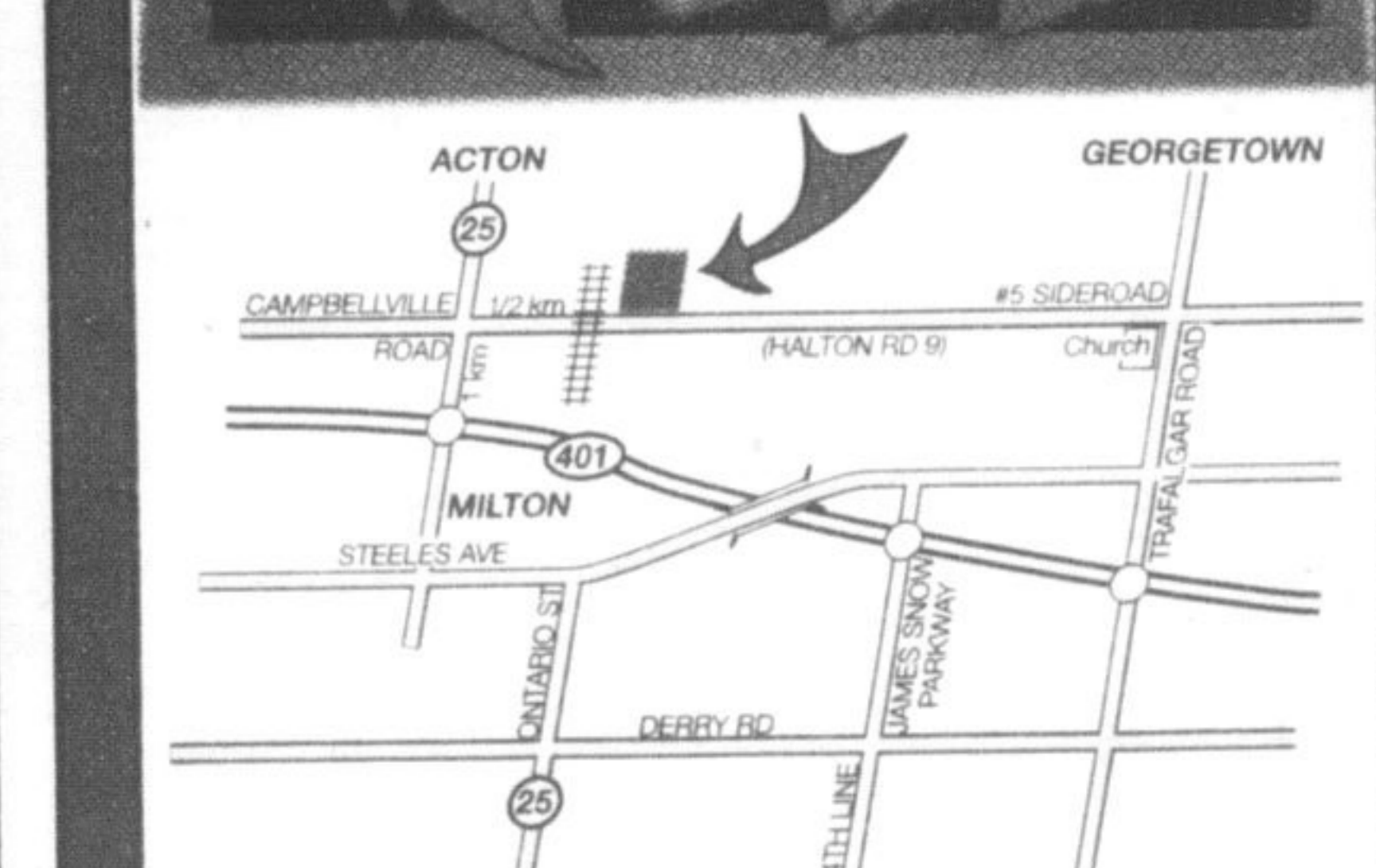
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