

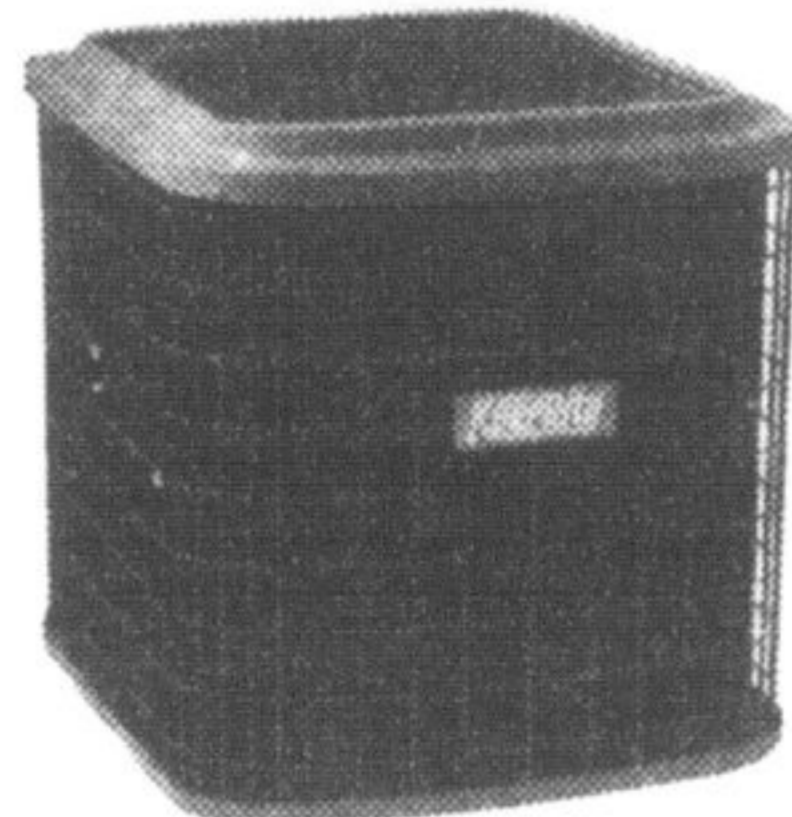


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Bishop Reding track and field athletes (from left) Darren Izumi, Mike Rubino, Ian Butcher, Chris Kargel and Mike McGill will represent the local school at this weekend's OFSAA championships in Belleville. The provincial finals began yesterday and run through until tomorrow. Butcher goes in as a gold-medal favourite in the midget boys 400m — having bested the OFSAA record by .73 seconds last week at the South Regionals in Hamilton.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



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Merchants GM, coach optimistic following weekend rookie camp

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Dave Brown seemed quite encouraged by his new surroundings early last month when he first joined the Merchants.

Since then, his optimism has only grown stronger.

"I'm not saying we're going to win the Royal Bank Cup this season, but we are going to win the Royal Bank Cup," said Milton's new general manager, who along with head coach Mario Cicchillo and their support staff moved over from the league champion Brampton Capitals. "We're doing the things needed to build a championship team."

Those comments come on the heels of what he and Cicchillo felt was a highly promising prospects camp last weekend at Etobicoke's Westwood Arena.

About 135 hopefuls made it out for the three-day tryout. This represents one of the biggest rookie camps in recent years for either Milton or Brampton — and according to Cicchillo, the increased numbers actually allowed for more individual player exposure.

"A lot of times when you've got only four to six teams you've got over 20 players on each squad and parents say their

kid's not getting enough ice time," Milton's bench boss explained. "We were able to have eight teams this time so everybody got a little more play."

In particular, he was impressed with a number of locals including Halton Hurricane Rob Sgarbossa and Toronto Young Nat Ryan Wildfang — who showed plenty of grit during a one-game playoff stint against Bramalea this past season.

The pair are expected to be among those selected for the annual OHA Referee School Tournament June 22 to 25 in Guelph.

Said Cicchillo, "I was quite impressed with some of the local players out there. It was probably the highest level of talent at a rookie camp we've had in a few years."

He and the rest of Milton's coaching staff were especially interested in finding a cou-

ple of young defencemen at the camp to build on a blueline unit that was rather mediocre last season.

Already brought in to improve the defensive side of things was Phil Sbrocchi - picked up last month from the Southern Conference's Thornhill Rattlers.

The 18-year-old blueliner had 20 assists and 70 penalty minutes in 28 games last season and according to Cicchillo will add mobility and leadership to the Merchants' defensive unit.

Meanwhile, former Merchant Doug Janjevich was recently hired as an assistant coach with the neighbouring Georgetown Raiders — who're the subject of much fan interest these days with their ownership change and addition of league veteran Peter Mavroudis.

Sr. Red Sox offer solid showing at tournament

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The Sr. Red Sox may be suffering from a lack of experience this season, but not from a lack of wins.

Heading into a tentative road trip to Burlington Wednesday, Milton had triumphed in nearly half of its games — sporting a 5-6 record that, for this time of year, is the team's best showing in recent memory.

Their spring efforts were highlighted by a 7-6 come-from-behind victory over Burlington Saturday afternoon at the Tillsonburg Tournament.

Rallying from a 4-0 deficit, George Moore's Sox — which include 11 newcomers, mostly rookies — went ahead in the sixth inning and then hung on for a huge pay-back win to avenge a 7-2 defeat two weeks earlier.

Nathan Tami delivered the save, coming in with two on and no outs in the seventh to nail down Burlington.

Sharing the spotlight was second-year outfielder Dwayne Johnson — who posted a pair of doubles, the later of which cashed in the winning run, and stole two bases.

A balanced 10-hit attack plus steady

pitching from Brent Kostal, Craig Holloway and Adam Finkbeiner also factored into the win. Meanwhile, Burlington stranded 10 runners on base.

Ryan Davison and Manny Thapar each drove in two runs for the Sox.

Saturday afternoon's win was sandwiched by an 18-1 romp against highly overmatched Wheatly and a humbling 8-1 loss to Oakville.

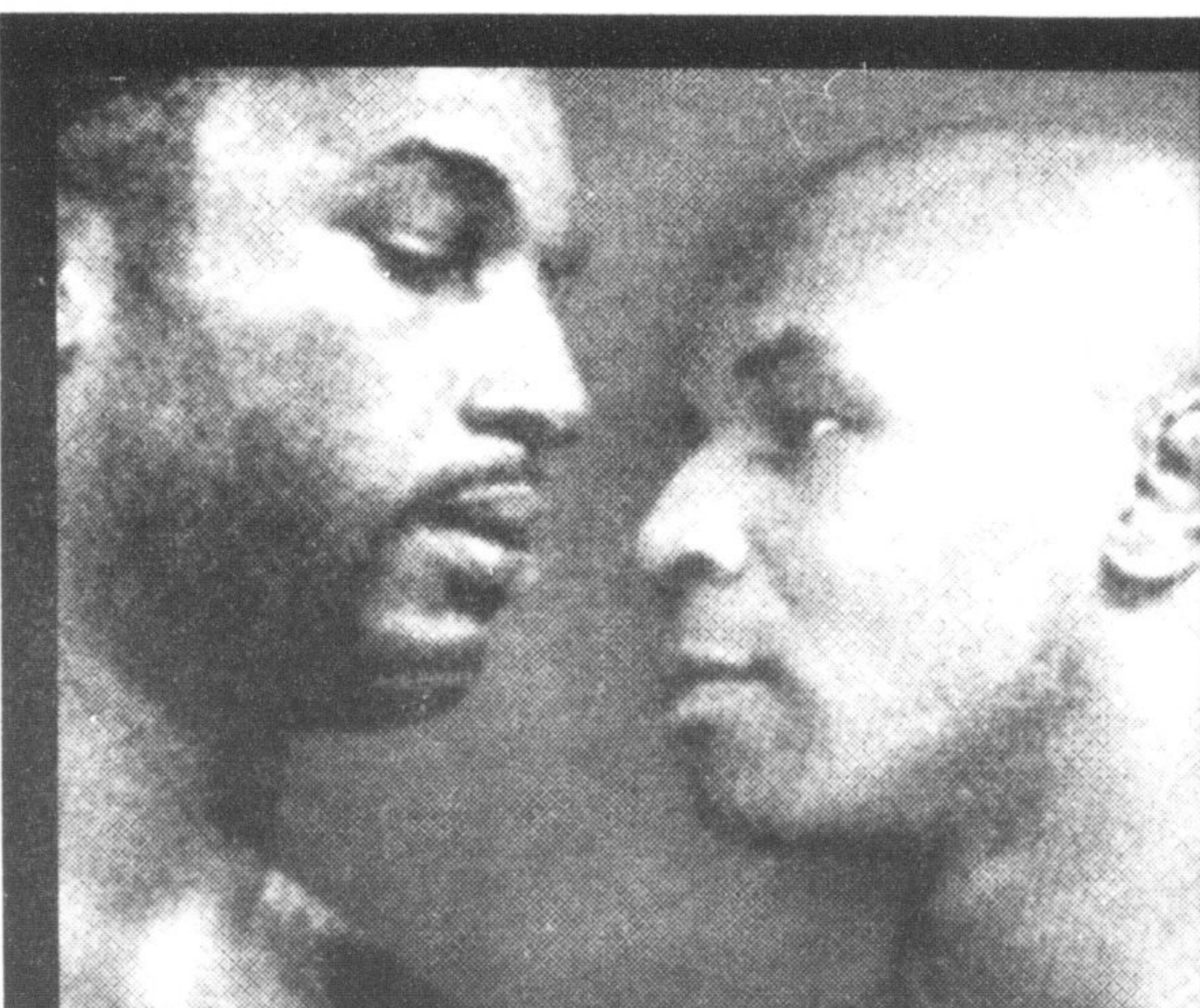
Milton's only tournament defeat was the direct result of an error and a handful of walks.

"When we don't give up errors and walks, we're in the game," said Moore.

Dan Fiorita was credited with the opening round win against Wheatly. The score mirrored the hit differential, as Milton collected 18 hits and surrendered just a solo homer to the opposition.

The Red Sox mounted a 4-0 lead in their first at-bat and from there tightened the grip with second and third-inning surges.

Milton's seniors sat at 3-5 in league play before Wednesday's Burlington trip. They return to Brian Best Park Saturday afternoon to do battle with the Glanbrook Grizzlies. Game time, as always, is 1:30 p.m.



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