



# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY SEPTEMBER 27, 2002

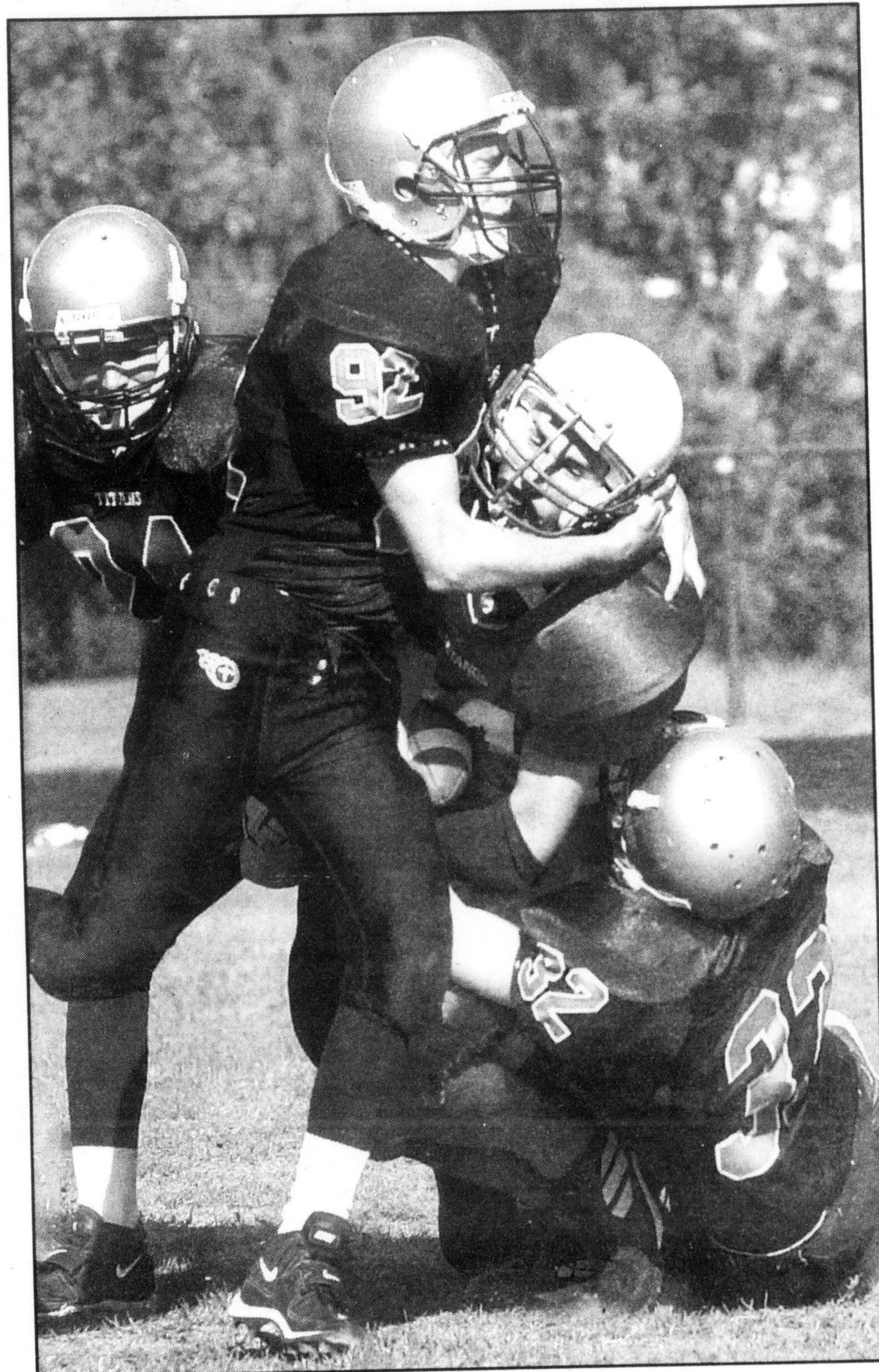


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

## Nowhere to run

Milton District High School's Andrew Basso gets manhandled by three Holy Trinity defenders in junior football play Monday afternoon at MD. The Mustangs were dumped 37-0.

## Merchants keep unbeaten streak intact with gutsy tie

By STEVE LeBLANC

*The Champion*

The Merchants took immediate possession of the Western Conference penthouse with five straight victories to start the year.

But Monday's non-win — in the division's most intimidating barn — may well have offered fans the most encouragement so far in regard to the team's championship potential.

Trailing 3-1 with a period to go at Hamilton's Mountain Arena, Milton battled back from the brink to eke out a well-deserved tie — bridging the gap with a mere eight seconds remaining. James Duhamel sank the equalizer, chopping in a behind-the-net feed from Victor Spadafora for his second goal in as many games. Also assisting on the play was Rich Meloche.

The crunch-time tally highlighted a playoff-like intense showdown that featured plenty of bang for one's buck, including a commanding third-period performance by the as yet unbeaten Merchants.

"The guys showed a lot of character tonight. They didn't quit," said head coach Mario Cicchillo, whose team out-shot Hamilton 16-6 and scored twice in the third to

stave off defeat. "We wanted to treat this like a playoff game and I thought we had good intensity the whole way. We're in the process of building a championship team."

Stealing a point on the mountain is almost always cause for celebration, but what makes the tie all the more promising is that it came during the Merchants' only brush with adversity this season.

With Pat Lee away on personal matters and fellow gunners Craig Macdonald and Vic Oreskovich taking premature exits for fighting and head checking respectively, Milton's late-game scoring exploits seemed ripe for an interruption.

But Duhamel's heroics extended a six-game run that has seen the club light the lamp at least twice in the final frame. Meloche got the period rolling early with a one-time wrister on the powerplay for his seventh goal of the year.

Before that the Merchants spent the night fighting the puck after Dean Strong jammed home a close-range scramble before the game was a minute old. Spadafora assisted on this deposit as well and delivered what was arguably his most spirited effort to date against

his former team.

Veteran Hamilton netminder Dave Brown was particularly sharp between the pipes.

The Kilty Bees' first two tallies were the direct result of poor judgment by Milton blueliners — who screened Cody Spicer on goal number one and were caught up ice for the second.

Defensive breakdowns were limited through the balance of the contest, particularly in the third when the steel-town boys were held to just six shots. Joining Milton's blueline Monday was Arthur Sawa, who was granted an unconditional release from Mississauga by the OHA just a few hours before game time.

While Monday's Milton-Hamilton tilt wasn't quite as nasty as many between the two last season, there was enough extra-curricular activity — including a third-period slugfest between Macdonald and Hamilton's Tim Stewart — to re-ignite the feud.

The Merchants have a chance to put a little breathing room between themselves and the second-place Blades tonight when the two teams square off at Oakville's Ice Sports Arena at 7:30 p.m.

## Haydar assigned to Milwaukee

Next stop, Milwaukee.

Darren (Mini) Haydar was reassigned to the American Hockey League's Milwaukee Admirals Tuesday morning — when the Nashville Predators reduced their roster to 35.

He was one of 13 players sent to the franchise's top farm club.

Playing in Milwaukee could give the 2002 Hobey Baker finalist the opportunity to compete alongside fellow Miltonian Scott Bertoli, who's landed a tryout there after another strong season with the East Coast Hockey League's Trenton Titans.

The Admirals are now being coached by Peter Horachuck, who was behind the bench with Bertoli's Titans last year.

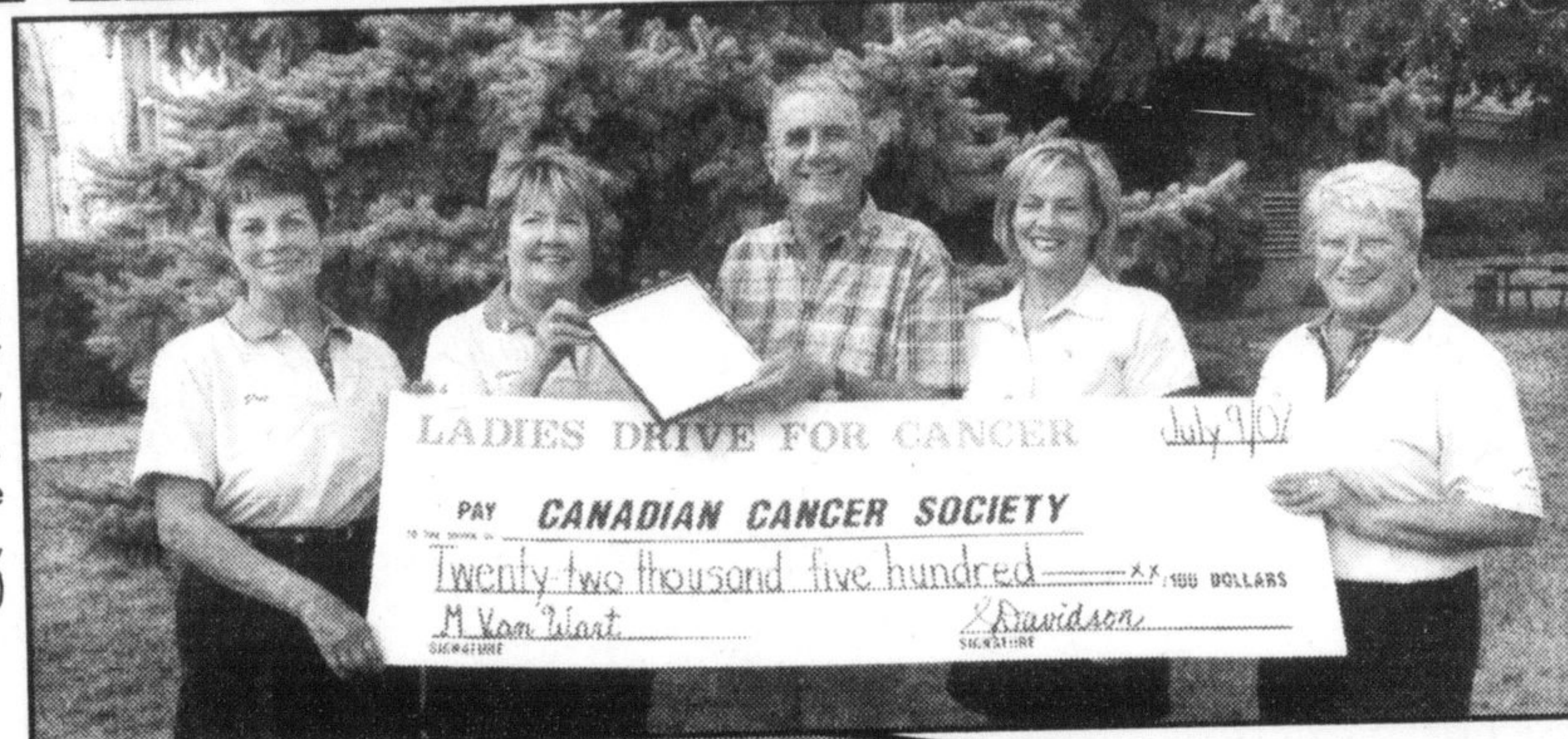
Haydar's scoring prowess should be a welcome addition to the Admirals, who averaged just two-and-a-half goals a game last season and finished last in the AHL's West Division.

It will also offer local fans a chance to see him play close to home in early January, when Milwaukee has a two-game weekend stand at Copps Collisium against the Hamilton Bulldogs.

The Admirals begin their training camp today.



(from l-r)  
Pat Scannell, Cheryl Davidson, John Perrott (Cancer Society), Judy Perry, Dottie Brophy. (missing from photo are Sharon McKeown, and Mary VanWart)



To Milton & the surrounding community for all your generous support.

This year's contribution is \$22,500 to the Breast Cancer Research Foundation. Our total contribution is over \$100,000 to the Canadian Cancer Society.

A sincere **THANK YOU**  
from **THE LADIES DRIVE 4 CANCER**