



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

TUESDAY, APRIL 29, 2003

Mavs unbeaten in home-opening weekend

Milton ekes out win in first ever showdown with Oakville

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The Jr. B Mavericks earned very few points for style at John Tonelli Sports Centre Saturday night.

But where it counts — namely the scoreboard — Milton came through, sidestepping some anxious moments spawned by discipline trouble and questionable officiating alike to trim the neighbouring Oakville Buzz 7-6.

The narrow victory, one severely lacking in flow and finesse beyond period one, allowed Glen Little's Mavericks to walk away from their home-opening weekend having yet to taste defeat.

Equally important, the win was against a division opponent the local juniors will likely have to stay ahead of in order to clinch a second straight playoff berth since returning to the league last spring.

"It was essentially a four-point game," noted the Mavericks' skipper, whose team tied the defending national champion Clarington Green Gaels 12-12 Friday evening and enjoyed a healthy fan base for both contests. "We kind of took ourselves out of the game with penalties when it was 6-2. But it was one of those close games we would have lost last year, so it's a good stepping stone."

On a night when both even-strength play and goals were at a bare minimum, the hosts scored four times with the extra attacker and sprinkled in three shorthanded markers to squeeze past their regional rivals.

Also factoring heavily into the slim victory was a rock-solid outing by sophomore tender Josh Arnold, who made four dozen saves overall and three crucial stops in the waning moments to prevent Oakville from equalizing. Milton's hometown cager was particularly effective when challenged downstairs through the opening half.

Kyle Goertz, last year's rookie of the year, notched the game winner — striking on the crease to cap his second two-goal performance in as many nights.

Continuing to pay dividends for their new team, Burlington brothers Brenden and Morgan Thenhaus combined for five points, while also denting the twine were captain Kyle Hagel, Mark Galick, Mike Novak and Steve Chuchmach.

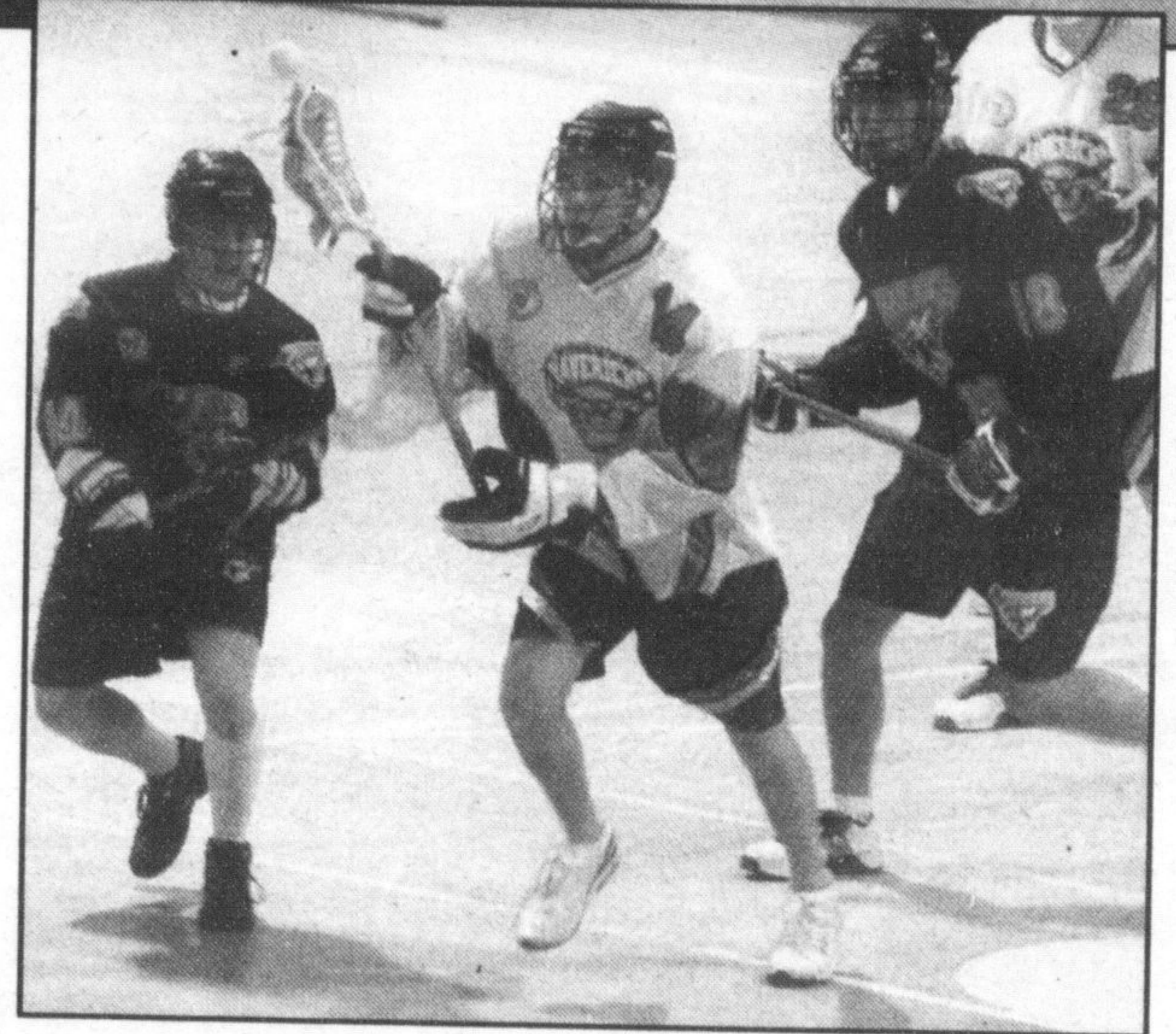
Against the rebuilding Green Gaels Friday, the Mavericks exhibited a little more restraint than they would the following evening. Craig Willis' steady cage work and back-to-back deposits by Goertz in the third period were other key ingredients in the draw.

Port Elgin newcomer Derek Eans and hometown sophomore Jon Sweetland also tallied twice, as did Brendan Thenhaus and Hagel — who sank a potential winner with three minutes to go in



Mavericks cager Josh Arnold takes the net with him while guarding against an Oakville striker, while (at right) Adam Rutz looks to maneuver by two defenders Saturday night at Memorial Arena. Milton won 7-6 to cap an unbeaten weekend.

Photos by **GRAHAM PAINE**



regulation.

The teams exchanged goals through the 10-minute overtime session, with Galick doing the honours for Milton. Morgan Thenhaus was the other marksman for the hosts, who used this year's added speed to full advantage by scoring several of their goals on fast-break transition plays.

The Mavericks will try to add to their early-season success against division rival Mimico Friday at 8 p.m. at Tonelli. From there, they finish out the weekend with a trip to Georgetown's Gordon Alcott Arena Sunday to battle the Halton Hills Bulldogs at 6 p.m.

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The 60 Second Tan

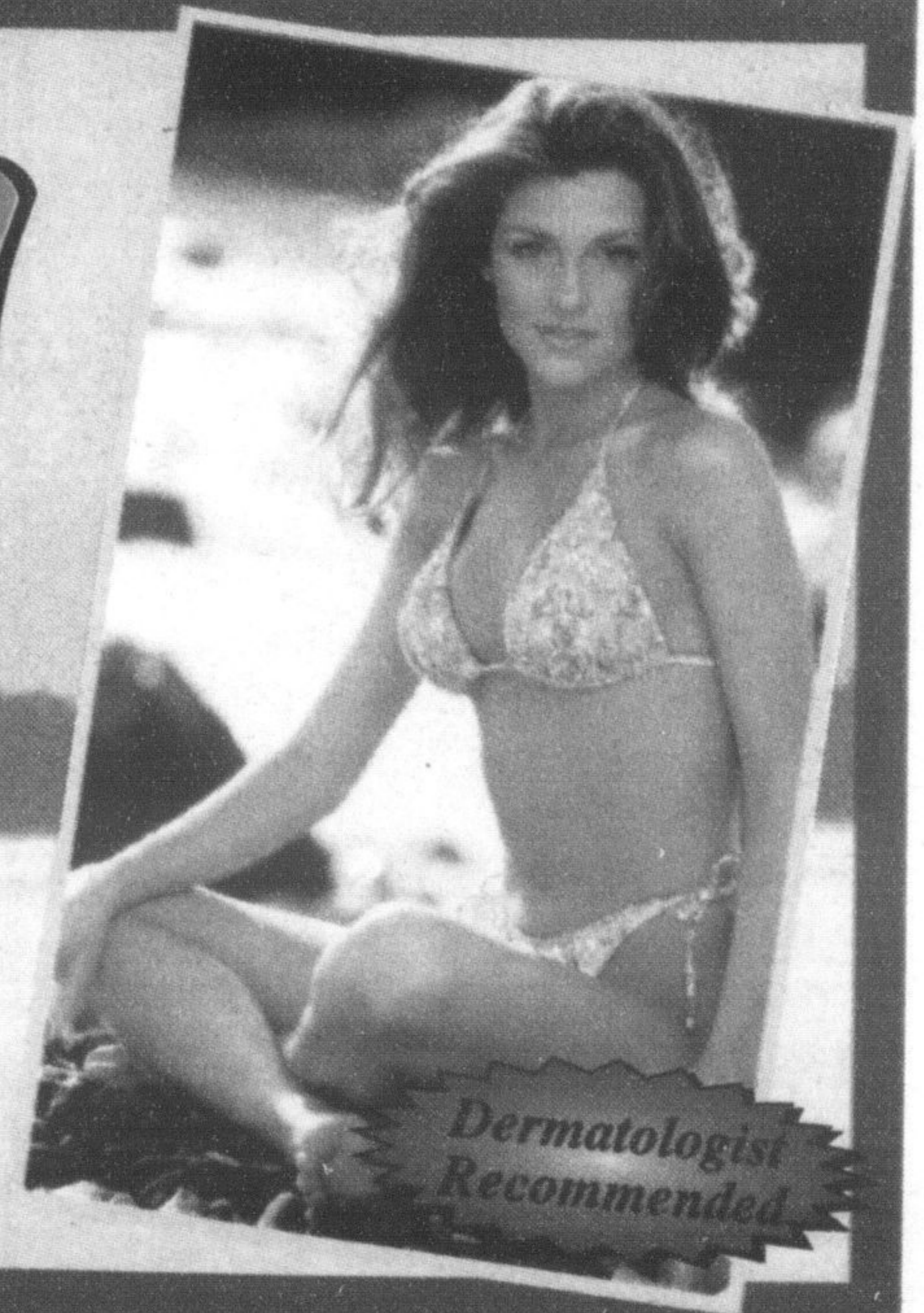
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