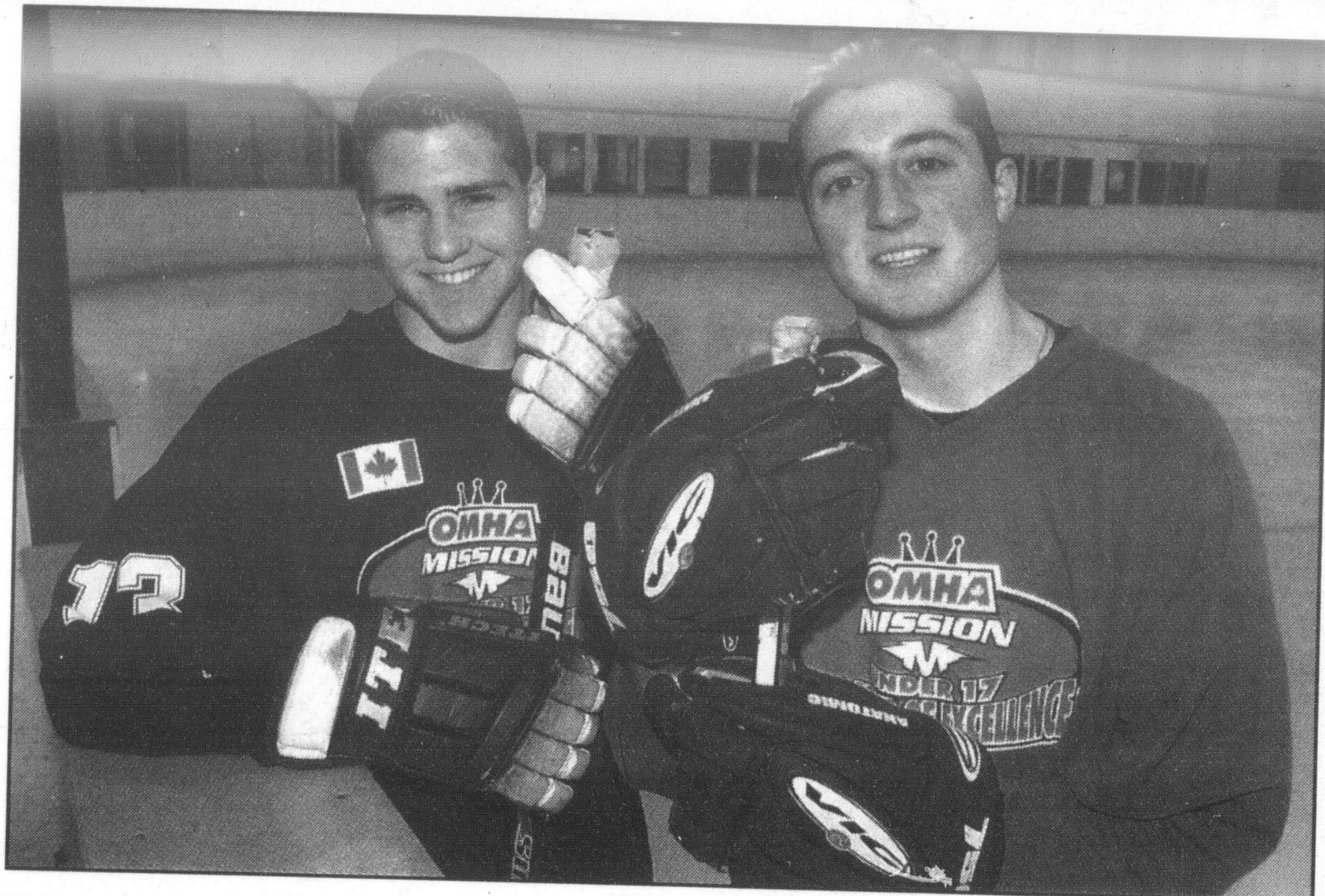


Local pair move on in OMHA Under-17 playdowns



Miltonians Kevin Parker (left) and Matt Lenardon have advanced to round two of the OMHA Under-17 playdowns.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

An odd trend is taking shape in Milton hockey circles.

Since 1999, odd-numbered calendar years have seen a familiar sight come spring time — the advancement of a local pair to round two of the OMHA Under-17 camp.

Frank Fazio and Travis Van Loosen were the first duo to bypass the initial playdown hurdle, while Christian Nonis and Ian Robertson followed suit in 2001.

Now longtime teammates Matt Lenardon and Kevin Parker have kept this pattern going, having booked passage to the district tryouts at the University of Guelph May 24 and 26.

Standout performers with the AAA Halton Hurricanes' minor midget squad this past year, the local lads were among 17 players (including two goalies) who advanced in a field of 68 hopefuls at the central region camp, held earlier this month in Georgetown.

A 6'1", 170 lbs. defenceman with puck-rushing ability, Lenardon delivered a splendid two-way performance in round one — collecting a goal and three assists while at the same time frustrating opposing snipers for much of the three-game weekend.

"I'd say my efforts were pretty good at both ends of the ice," said the 16-year-old blueliner, who overcame a wrist injury this season and averaged about a point a game for the Hurricanes.

Parker — a prototypical power forward with equal parts grit and goal-scoring skill — thrived up front with three goals and three assists in Georgetown.

Suggested the 15-year-old left winger, "I think I did alright."

The 6'1", 170-pounder was a dependable point-a-game contributor throughout the 2002/03 campaign, and — like Lenardon — was a big reason why Halton finished second in the regular season and made it to the league championship.

Grand-scale heartbreak was waiting for the local teens in the finals, with Hamilton eclipsing the Hurricanes 1-0 in triple overtime.

The Milton duo both rank this among their most exciting hockey moments, and are each eyeing futures with either a Jr. B or Jr. A club — in addition to a strong showing at the University of Guelph, that is.

Top players at next month's final evaluation camp will be chosen to attend the Team Ontario Under-17 Provincial Selection Camp in June.

There, elite bantams will be identified for participation in such events as the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge and the Canada Winter Games.

Such notable names that have come through the OMHA Under-17 program include Keith Primeau, Adam Foote, Ed Jovanovski and Owen Nolan.

Reding's OFSAA qualifying bid falls short at E.C. Drury

Access denied.

That was the story for three Bishop Reding doubles teams, who by way of stiff competition were prevented from advancing to high school badminton's innermost sanctum. The Royals' OFSAA qualifying bids fell short at neighbouring E.C. Drury Wednesday morning, during the Golden Horseshoe Athletic Conference (GHAC) championships.

BR's two senior mixed doubles teams delivered fairly respectable showings, both cracking the top six in the double-knock-out tournament. However, only the top two finishers in each division moved on to the All-Ontarios.

Erinn Greenfield and Reg Taylor placed fifth on the strength of a 21-4 second-round victory over a duo from Oakville's T.A. Blakelock. Sandwiching this win were a 11-15, 10-15 loss to a top-seeded pair from Hamilton and a 21-9 defeat at the hands of a Georgetown squad.

Their 1-2 record was equaled by fellow Royals Jon Ram and Alexis Stoffels, who took sixth spot and pushed a highly-ranked team from Burlington's Notre Dame to a third and deciding game.

They were hammered 15-1 but rebounded to win the next set 17-14 before falling 15-9 in the tie breaker. From there, they dumped a pair from Hamilton 21-7 and were then eliminated by opponents from Oakville's Iroquois Ridge 21-15.

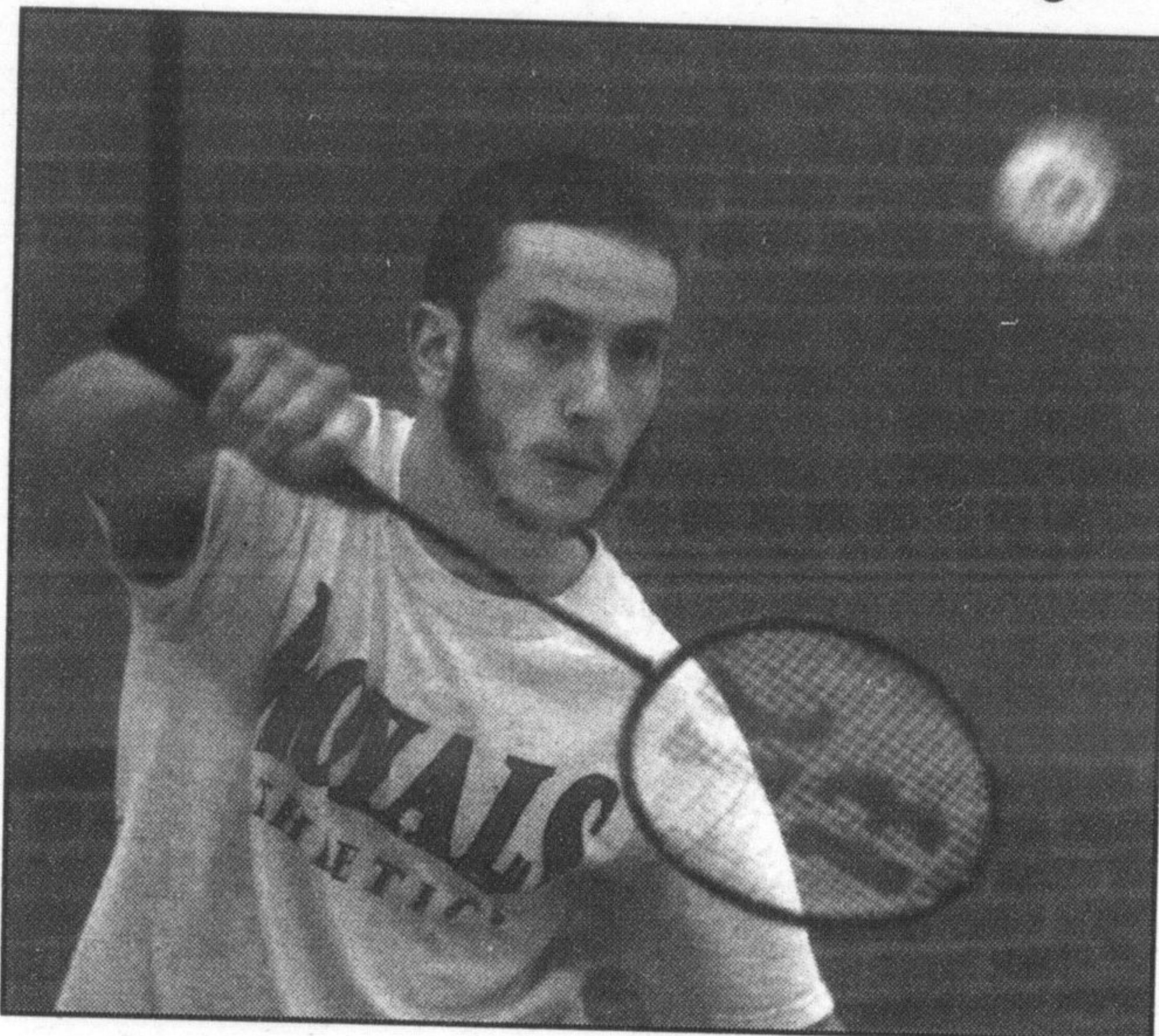
Meanwhile, Olivia Horbasz and Alana Petrie suffered an early exit in girls doubles play with back-to-back losses to teams from Hamilton and Notre Dame.

Their sub-par performance could be at least partially attributed to an ill-timed injury. Petrie took a nasty whack on the head during round one and couldn't quite find her groove through the balance of her duo's short-lived run.

The BR six-pack qualified for GHAC the previous week with top six efforts at the regional championships at EC. This made for the biggest conference contingent in the school's history.

Neither EC nor Milton District were represented at GHAC.

Drury and BR will play host to the OFSAA showcase Thursday to Saturday.



Bishop Reding's Reg Taylor competes at Wednesday's GHAC championships at E.C. Drury

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Sneyd's Burlington dominance continues

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

For Rory Sneyd, Burlington can safely be referred to as victory lane.

Milton's 27-year-old speed demon has become a pretty reliable winner in the south Halton community in recent years — and added to his championship resume at the Burlington Road Runner's Good Friday showcase.

With the exception of a short-lived challenge from Toronto's Predrag Mladenovic, Sneyd led the five-kilometre race from start to finish and clocked in at an impressive 15:35.

"He (Mladenovic) caught up to me with about a kilometre left, but with about 400 to 500 metres to go I made my move and he just gave in. I'm not sure what happened to him," recalled the annual track and field nationals participant, who bested his big city rival by 12 seconds.

The Good Friday triumph was his second in three years, and boosted his win count on the Burlington pavement — by his best recollection — to at least six.

He's won the Moon In June three times and topped the field at both the half-marathon and Downtown Dash.

"It's been six or seven (victories). Yeah, I've had some success there," said Sneyd, who's running efforts are financially backed by Burlington's Foot Tools. "Those (Burlington) races definitely feel like a homecoming."

His 5km results have been significantly better in the past, but usually when he's had stiffer competition to feed from. Breaking one's top time in any given

race, he stressed, generally doesn't happen without an external challenge.

While preparations for his summer wedding are limiting the accomplished runner's training these days, he continues to hold out hope of delivering a sub-30-minute 10km performance someday.

That goal was sparked at last fall's national road races in London, where he posted a personal best 30:45 performance.

Said Sneyd, "It would probably have to come on the track (which is easier than the road), but I think it's doable. That would really be something for me."

In the meantime, he'll turn his attention back to guiding Burlington's Notre Dame track team — a task he's grown to love over the past four years as a teacher and coach at the Catholic high school.

"I like the double role (coaching and competing). I think it helps me relate better to the students," Sneyd remarked. "I find it (coaching) really rewarding because with the kids you've just got raw talent that with just a little instruction and work you can make huge strides with them. At this point for me it takes so much to make any kind of improvement, but for them the progress can be remarkable in a very short period of time."

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Milton Sports
— Looking Back

April 26, 1992

Campbellville's Junior Hanley saw his dominance of Quebec's Sanair Super Speedway extended with a win in the GM Quick Service 150. Hanley overcame a race-long challenge by Randy MacDonald to take the series-opening event and win his third consecutive race at the 1.3-kilometre tri-oval to three.

April 30, 1995

Milton's expansion Jr. B lacrosse team won its first-ever home game, edging the neighbouring Georgetown Bulldogs 9-8. Led by three-goal scorer Andrew Wilfong, the Mavericks outscored Georgetown 2-0 in the third period to pull out the win and drew a sizeable crowd of about 500 to John Tonelli Sports Centre.

April 26, 1997

The Merchants are toppled 4-1 and lose the series to Rayside-Balfour by an identical margin in their first trip to the All-Ontario finals. With a clear size disadvantage and fatigue from back-to-back seven-game marathons against Bramalea and Newmarket, the Merchants had little left for the provincial championship clash and were decisive beat.