

MD cheerleaders settle for silver at provincials

Mustangs' Ontario title defence falls four points short

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Winning a championship is tough, but defending it is almost always tougher.

Milton District's cheerleaders have a newfound respect for that theory, after falling just short of a provincial title repeat last weekend.

Within the confines of Kitchener Memorial Auditorium, MD delivered the third silver-medal performance in school history — surrendering varsity high school division gold by a mere four points to upset winner White Oaks of Oakville.

"Overall, we did pretty well. We just made a few little mistakes. I think nerves just took over," said 12th grade veteran Christine Chadwick.

Oakville's T.A. Blakelock Tigers — as always — were expected to provide the biggest obstacle between the Mustangs and another provincial championship.

And for a while they were.

Blakelock held a 12-point lead after Saturday's opening round, with second-place MD still eyeing

the gold. Recalled staff advisor Stacey Farrell, "Blakelock's losing their coach next year and doesn't know if they'll have a team, so I think they had that extra motivation right from the start. But we thought if we could just improve our energy a bit, we could catch them."

However, overtaking their long-time adversaries didn't equal championship glory.

As it turned out, the Tigers took themselves out of the running Sunday with a couple of illegal free flies — in which the cheerleader being lifted is not fully supported by her teammates. Explained Farrell, "Basically, one girl let go."

Blakelock's faux pas, possibly attributed to a pair of ill-timed injuries just before showtime, resulted in a crippling 80-point deduction and a subsequent fifth-place finish.

Meanwhile, the Mustangs faltered slightly on two of their super-lifts during their second-round routine, which allowed White Oaks to creep up from third and secure top spot.

"We knew right away we were out of the running for first," said Farrell. "We just did a couple of things a little shaky, but sometimes that's all it takes."

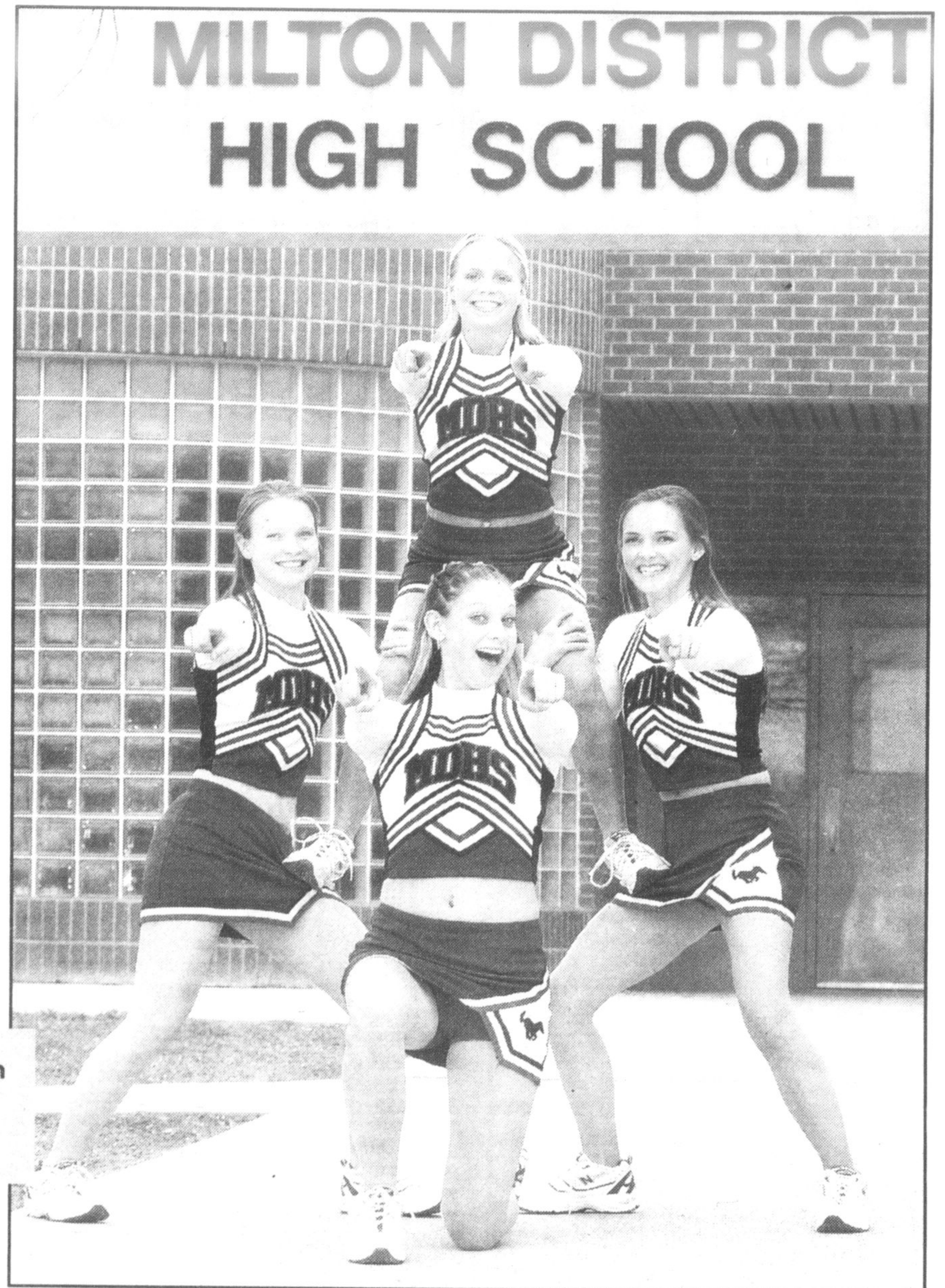
MD will close out the season at the annual Paramount Canada's Wonderland showcase on May 10. This will come in lieu of a return trip to the nationals, at which the local ladies placed fourth during the inaugural event last year.

Making up this year's team are Heather Bray, Christine Chadwick, Cailin Drjiber, Jessica Dulude, Maria Fearnall, Laine MacDonald, Natalie MacMillan, Ashleigh McGuinness, Val Massel, Kristine Morrow, Sally Nichols, Katie O'Reilly, Amanda Oullette, Lisa Perruzza, Lyndsay Richardson, Alicia Robinson, Brittany Roskam, Cassandra Rudder, Brittany Russell, Katherine Russell, Sarah Samuelson, Sabine Strohan, Genevieve Vanderbreggen, Laura Thistle, Katie Warner, Tatiana Deoni-Tielemans, Meghan Sinclair and Amy Williams.

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MD cheerleaders (clockwise from top) Christine Chadwick, Katherine Russell, Natalie MacMillan and Katie O'Reilly led this year's team to a silver-medal finish at last weekend's provincials.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



Barnes sizzles to Florida win

Red-hot performances in the sunshine state are nothing new for Harry Barnes.

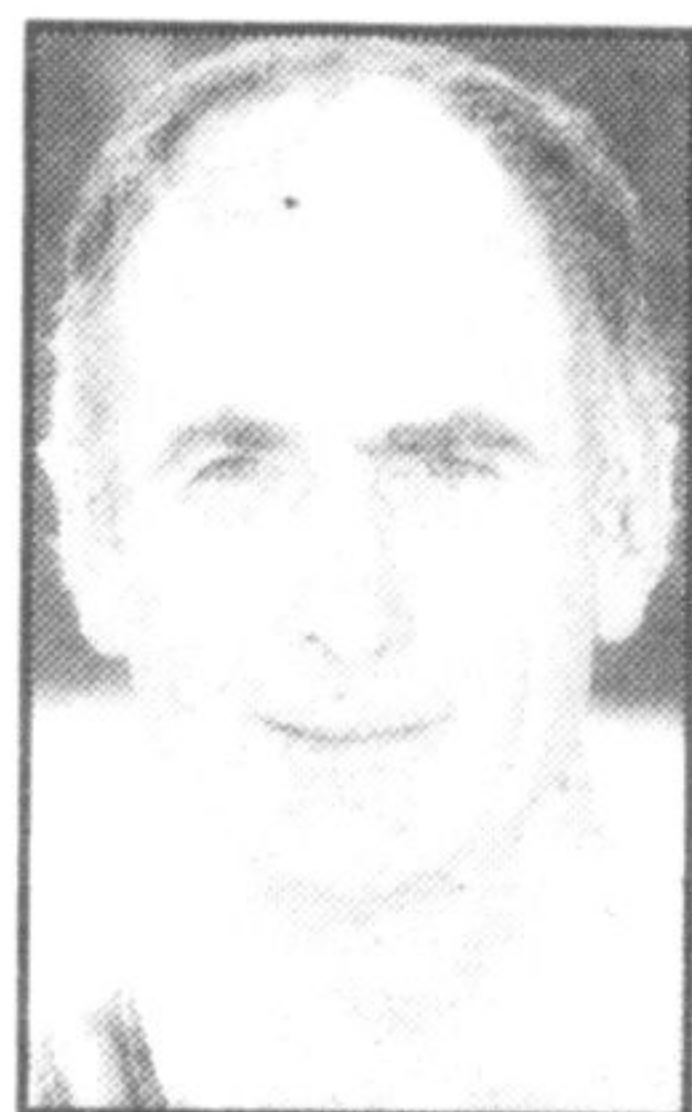
But Campbellville's 56-year-old triathlon ace was downright smoking in St. Petersburg, Fla. Sunday morning — taming the annual St. Anthony's Meet in a personal best 2:09.55.

His record finish — over the 1.5 kilometre swim, 40 kilometre bike, 10 kilometre run — decimated all masters-age racers. He won the 55-59 men's division by more than nine minutes and would have been only slightly less dominant in the younger 50-54 loop.

He would have placed top-10 in any one of the male divisions and 17th in the men's open class. Overall, he finished 59th.

"My God, I thought it was a dream," Barnes recalled of first realizing his time. "I never thought I'd see 2:10 again."

A grand masters' champ at the event four years running now, the rural racer improved in all three legs over last year's results. And unlike 2002, Barnes did-



Harry Barnes

n't have to play catch-up.

This time around he was first out of the water with a remarkable 23.28 effort, shedding nearly four minutes off of last year's showing. Said the multi-time national champ, "The water was a little calmer this year and I just got into a rhythm. I was just flying out there."

The same could be said for the biking portion, which he completed five minutes ahead of last spring, in a blistering 1:02.

And while a sore left calf forced him to take it easy through the early going of the run, Barnes soon turned on the proverbial jets and posted a 41.03 (43 seconds faster than 2002) to cap a stellar overall race.

"I'm actually surprised because I was kind of tense and uptight before the race," explained Barnes, who spent a week at the United States' triathlon training centre in Clermont, Fla. in preparation for the event. "But everything just seemed to come together. I just got faster and faster."

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