



# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

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## Porenta's Olympic dream draws closer

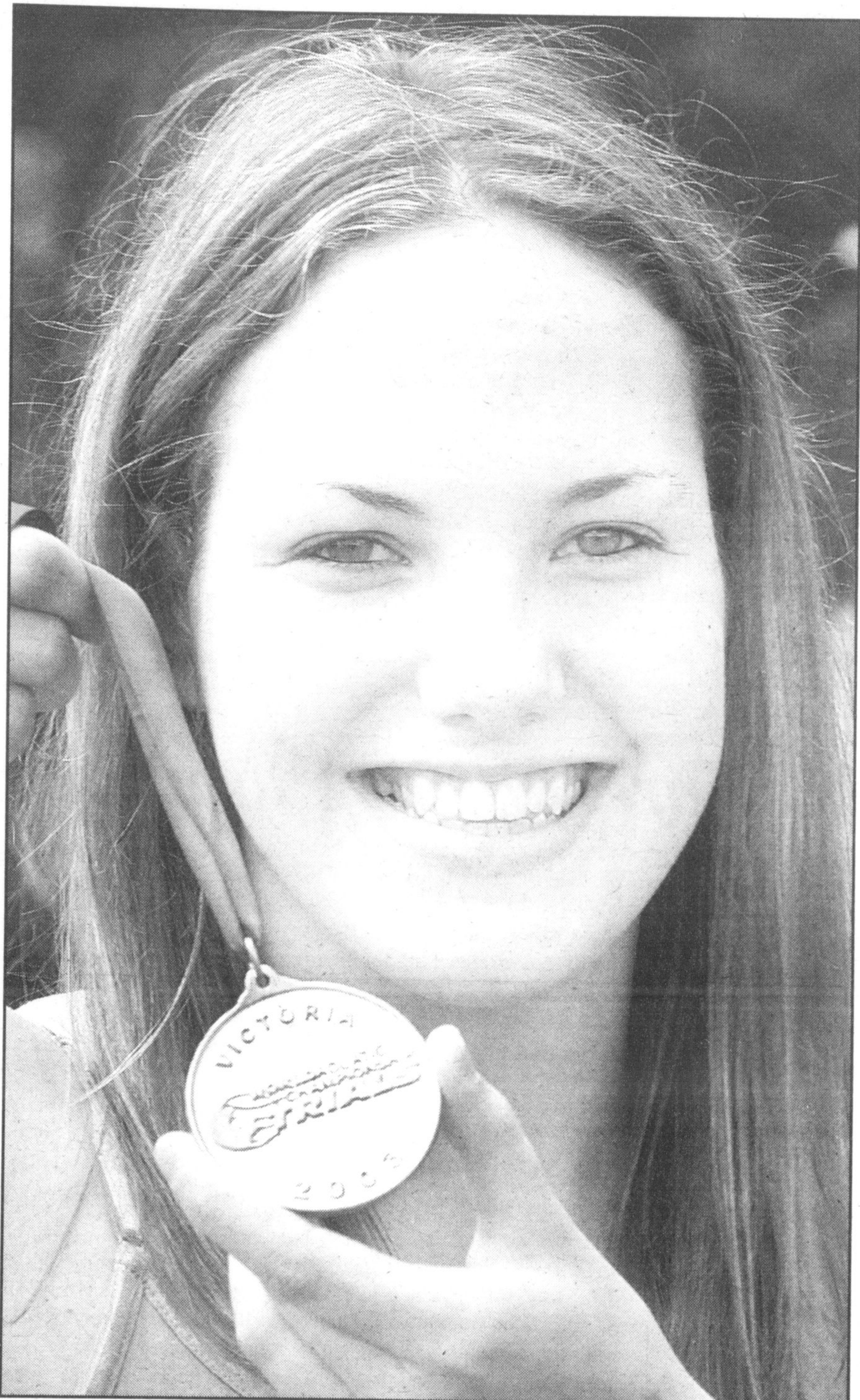


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE  
Jennifer Porenta proudly displays the silver medal she captured in the 100m freestyle at the recent World Trials in Victoria.

### Milton swimming star breaks 57-second mark in 100m freestyle at World Trials

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

Jennifer Porenta's Olympic dream drew a huge step closer to reality recently in Victoria.

There Milton's 18-year-old swimming ace delivered three top-eight performances at the World Trials, highlighting her west coast campaign with a second-place finish in the 100-metre freestyle June 29.

More importantly than securing silver, the local pool shark managed to dip under the 57-second mark — a feat achieved by only three of Canada's six qualifiers for the 2000 Summer Games.

While Olympic times have improved significantly since then, Porenta's 56.86s effort certainly puts her in elite company. "Breaking 57 seconds has been a dream of mine for a while," said the freestyle star, who was a scant .14 seconds behind golden girl Laura Nicholls. "After posting a 57.18 in the heat event, I really put it in my head that I could do it (go

under 57s). I'd never been that focused in my life."

And having bested her 100m record three times already this year, the Olympic contender believes the best is yet to come. "I really think that there's still room for improvement. I can still get better with my breathing and other things."

Porenta had actually been struggling up until the World Trials — with some spring illness hindering her preparations — and got off to a rocky start in the 400m freestyle, which she essentially bombed with a 24th place finish.

"I was wearing a new suit and it kind of hurt my shoulders at first. But the 400m isn't one of my main events, so I really wasn't worried at all."

Quickly rallying from this sub-par start, she turned in two straight personal bests in the June 28 200m — the second of which, a 2:03.09, was good enough for seventh in the finals.

Recalled Porenta, "That gave me a lot of confidence and acted like a springboard for the 100m."

Following her silver-medal per-

formance in the 100m, Milton's top swimmer capped the World Trials with a fifth-place showing in the 50m freestyle June 30. She just missed setting a new individual benchmark by clocking in at 26.52, and was a heartbeat away from clinching another medal.

Porenta's 100 and 200m times have qualified her to compete at next month's FISU World University Games in South Korea. She said, "I'm really excited about this. I need some more international experience. It's a big step."

But Porenta will need a financial boost to make it overseas, and anyone wishing to help sponsor her trip is asked to contact local swim instructor Emil Dimitrov at (905) 878-4130.

Meanwhile, fellow Miltonian Kristin McIlroy also participated at the World Trials — highlighting her efforts with a 20th place performance in the 200m backstroke.

The 16-year-old also broke the top-30 in the 50m backstroke, finishing 28th.

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### Jr. Sox rally to topple G'town

The Junior Red Sox gave their coaches and fans more than a few anxious moments in Georgetown Wednesday evening.

Expected to deliver another mercy beating on the basement-dwelling Eagles, Milton instead was stuck in neutral until the final inning — when a now-or-never surge resulted in nine runs and an eventual 12-5 comeback victory.

"Oh yeah, very much so," said manager Glenn Turner, when asked about feeling nervous as the night wore on. "We sure left it (offensive burst) 'till the last minute. We should have put them away much sooner."

Ryan Harper picked up the win with two-and-a-third

innings of relief work — following a solid showing by Kevin Cooper — and also factored heavily into the ninth-inning rally with a pair of runs.

Overall, Conan O'Brien was the top offensive performer with four hits and an RBI.

Milton's clutch comeback punctuated a rather long and emotionally-charged clash, in which catcher Mike Austen and two host players were thrown out. Remarkably, "It was a night of fireworks alright."

The Red Sox travel to Brampton Thursday evening for a game that could essentially determine who qualifies for this year's Ontario 'C' championships, which Milton won last summer.

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