

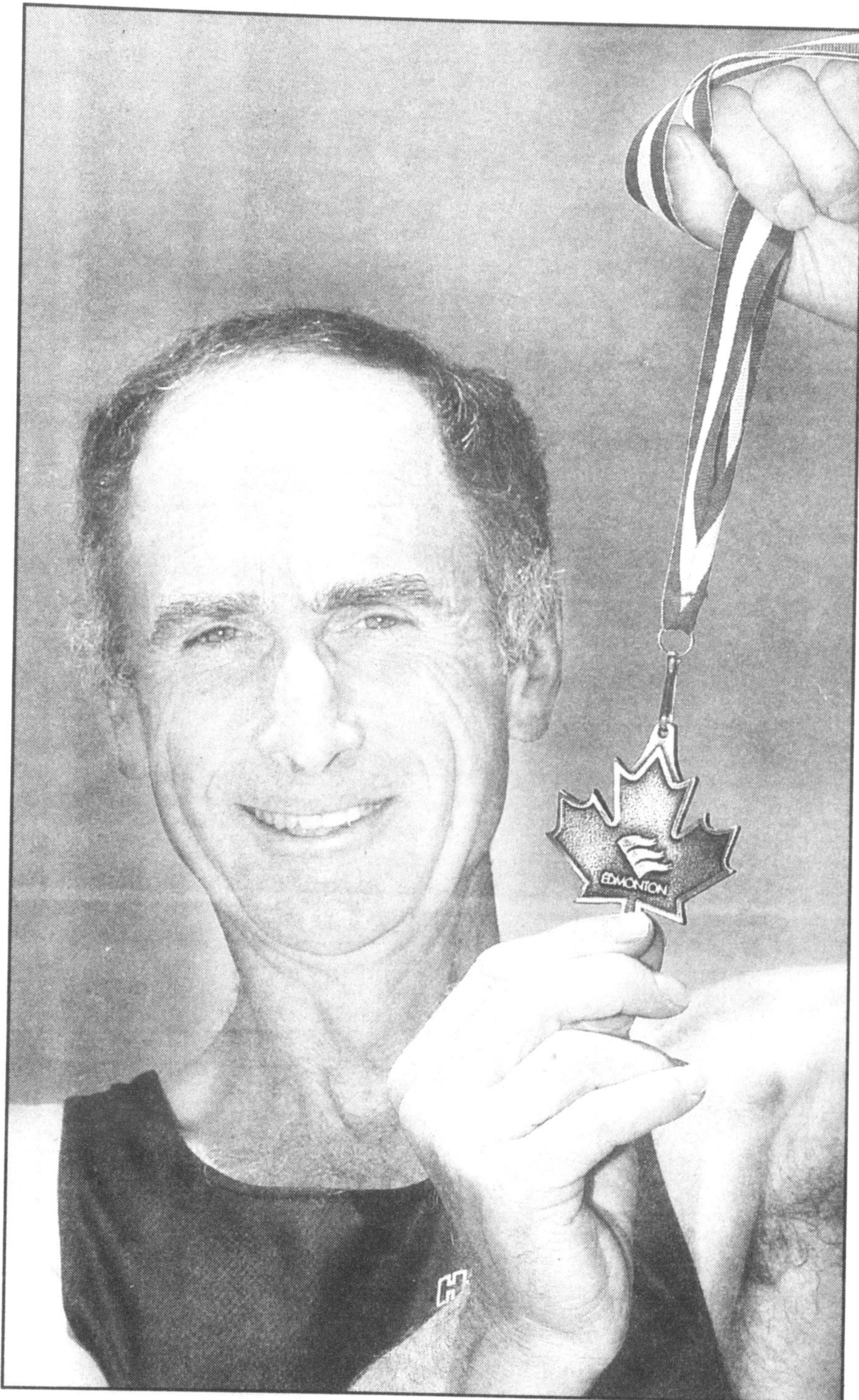


# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY JULY 18, 2003

## Barnes retains national triathlon title



### Emotionally-charged week ends with gold

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

*The Champion*

**H**arry Barnes no doubt has a new-found appreciation for the mental toughness plays in an athlete's success.

The star triathlete has had to summon up this intangible commodity before, but never to the degree that he did in Edmonton Sunday morning.

Persevering through a week of emotional turmoil, Campbellville's 56-year-old racer left it all out on the course to defend his national age-class title — topping the men's 55-59 division in a sensational 2:14.19.

He shed nearly five minutes off of last year's time and won his age group by seven-and-a-half minutes, while beating the 50-54 men's champ by about three.

Barnes' national dominance was in itself impressive.

Add in the circumstances amid which he reigned supreme, and last weekend's performance was nothing short of remarkable.

Just three days before he was scheduled to head west, the perennial powerhouse received word that his mother had passed away. So instead of getting in a final workout or two before nationals, he was unexpectedly re-routed to his native Newfoundland.

Recalled Barnes, "I flew home on Wednesday and helped prepare for the funeral on Friday. I obviously didn't have time to think about the race."

Still dealing with his mother's death, the local triathlete had even more anxiety awaiting him in Edmonton Saturday afternoon, when upon arrival he discovered

that the airline had lost his bike.

While it was found a few hours later, the mix-up added to what had already been an extremely difficult week — one that didn't offer much hope for a successful title defense.

"I hadn't eaten or slept for more than two hours for four days," explained Barnes. "I was just drained."

But running on empty — physically and emotionally — didn't seem to present much of a stumbling block throughout the 1.5-km swim, 40-km bike, 10-km run nationals. Barnes mounted an early lead with a strong 24.26-minute swim and widened the gap over the balance of the race, punctuating his decisive win with a fierce 40.14-minute run.

"My mental toughness really kicked in," said the national champ, whose latest gold-medal effort came during rather cool, overcast conditions. "I figured I would break down at some point because of my mother's death, but I got out to a good start and just kept going. I think it (exhaustion) will catch up to me one of these days."

Sunday's national age-class victory was the fifth in six years for Barnes, who'll now turn his attention to the provincials, being held late next month in Wasaga Beach. After that he'll look to upgrade the 2002 World championship bronze medal he secured in Mexico with a silver or gold in New Zealand in December.

"Capturing a world championship medal was the goal for a long time, but there's still another step up, and I think I can do it," suggested Barnes.

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE  
Harry Barnes proudly displays the national age-class triathlon gold medal he secured in Edmonton Sunday.

## Bantam Mavericks golden

Another tournament appearance, another tournament title.

Milton's bantam rep lacrosse team added to its impressive season haul last weekend in Mimico — reeling off four consecutive victories to secure top honours.

The Mavericks capped their championship run with a 7-5 decision over the tournament hosts, thanks largely to a three-goal output by Tyler Harvey. Cole Madansky tallied twice, while singles were chipped in by Mike Currie and Kevin Winter.

Harvey also delivered a hat-trick during the champs' 7-1 rout of Orangeville in round three. Two-goal efforts were turned in by Currie and Winter.

Before that the local lads doubled up West Durham 4-2 and bombed London 10-2. Madansky and Ian Goertz exploded for four goals apiece in the second-round cakewalk, while netting the other two was Currie.

Against West Durham, Milton's marksmen were Currie, Goertz, Harvey and Ryan Lecky.

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