

# Marauders eclipsed in season finale

BY MURRAY TOWNSEND

Special to The Champion

They may have lost the battle, but they won the war.

The Milton Marauders came out on the short end of a 10-6 decision to Mega City on Saturday afternoon at Milton District High School, after leading 6-3 until the final minute.

Stefan Linder accounted for the Milton offense with two field goals.

The Marauders needed to beat the Maddogs by 31 points to squeeze into the final playoff spot. That meant airing the ball out early and often. On their first play from scrimmage, Dustin Blair hit Eric Snyder on a sideline pass for 40 yards. Two plays later, however, the Maddogs came up with an interception.

That was the offensive story for Milton. They'd show some promise by moving the ball, but couldn't quite complete the task. Even Steve Lubin couldn't get unglued for more than a couple of big plays, with the Maddogs defense keying on him, apparently aware that he had a shot at the league rushing title.

The defense was outstanding as usual. Will Gearin came up with a big play to stop a fake field goal attempt, David Joseph recovered a fumble, Mark Dow had a sack to go along with a sensational overall game, Adam MacPhail had several monster hits, and Jay MacPhail, Stu Gilbert and Peter Hummell also made big defensive plays.

"It was nice to see the turnout from the town of Milton," said Coach Barry Emo, referring to the biggest crowd of the season, helped out by the Mark Dow and Steve Lubin fan clubs, and despite the rain which ended just before the opening kickoff. "I'm just sorry we didn't put on a better show."

Ironically, just after Emo had congratulated the Maddogs on getting into the playoffs and was talking about the class with which the Marauders represented Milton, the Mega City team came off the field together and tried to pick a fight with the Milton coach, who was on his own after the team had gone to the dressing room. The Mega City coach called Coach Emo, a former CFL lineman, several unprintable names, which fortunately for him was said behind 30 of his players, some of whom attempted to goad Coach Emo into a fight.

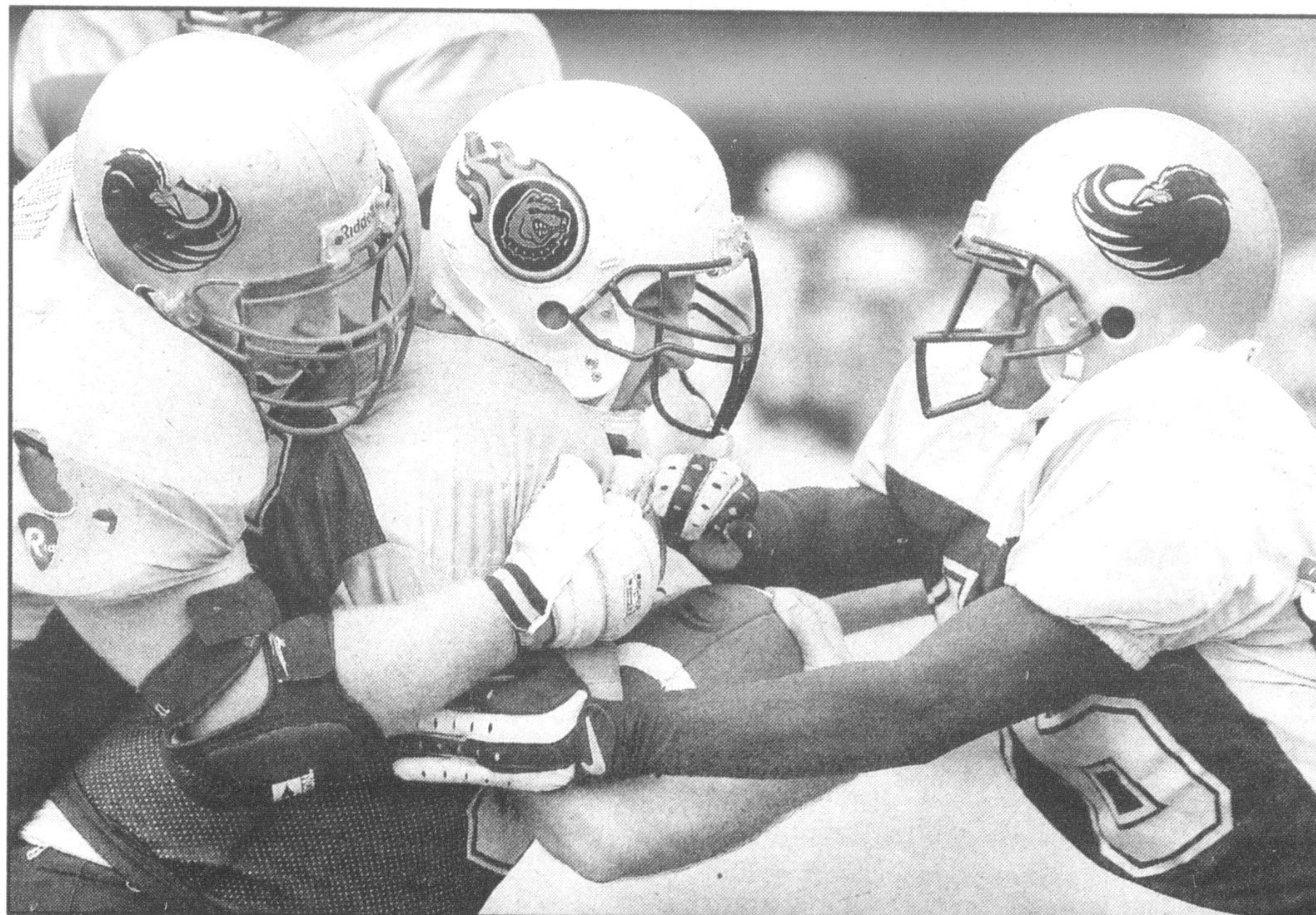


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

**Mega City Maddog Josh Murdock gets stopped by a couple of Milton Marauder defenders in regular season-ending play Saturday.**

He refused to take the bait and provided a good example of what is class and what isn't.

True, Milton could have won this game, as well as several others in which they were close, but the overall season has to be regarded as a resounding success. The Marauders finished with a 2-6 record, after going 0-9 last season. Last season, they surrendered 376 points; this year, they allowed 175, an improvement of 201 points. Offensively, they had 70 points, compared to just nine in their expansion season.

They were only blown out of one game, against Tri-City, and won their opening game of the season over Sudbury, as well as an impressive defeat of North Bay, a team that had beaten them 72-0 last season.

Several players will finish among the league leaders. Lubin is among the top rushers, Joseph is second in the league in tackles and joins Hummell and Gearin among the best in fumble recoveries.

Joseph and Gilbert were at the top of the list in hurries, as was Rayon Walker in the batted balls category. Linder was among the leaders in all kicking areas and his six field goals may put him on top. Statistics released later in the week on the league's Web site at [www.nfcfootball.ca](http://www.nfcfootball.ca) will determine where players finished in the various categories.

The Marauders hit a roadblock midway through the season when they lost 49-7 to Tri-City. From there, they could have plummeted straight to the bottom after the disheartening loss, or they could have picked themselves up, dusted themselves off and got back in the game.

They chose the latter and even though they lost the final game, the level of confidence in the offense had improved noticeably, and the defense dug in and became even more stubborn down the stretch.

Right there may have been where the team scored its biggest victory of the season.

## Charity slo-pitch tourney on soon

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Now two weeks away, the eighth annual showcase — slated for August 8 to 10 at nearby Drumquin and Omagh ball diamonds — is set to include its biggest field to date, with three dozen teams participating.

Aided once again by the Milton Lions Club —

which came onboard in 1999 — the tournament is already filled up, but for those willing to try their luck on deck, a waiting list could offer a few last-minute entries.

Benefiting a host of groups and organizations over the years such as Milton District Hospital, Milton Salvation Army, the Scott Early Foundation and Big Brothers of Halton, the Lesley Wells tournament also includes a home-run derby, a DJ and live bands, a refreshment tent and a silent auction.

Event organizers are always on the lookout for sponsors and volunteers. Anyone wishing to help out in either capacity is asked to call Greg at (905) 876-0164 or Murray at (905) 878-5904.

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