

Milton boxer hopes to show strongly at Ringside tourney

Prestigious event set to start tomorrow

Matt Hart Jr. headed south yesterday. Hopefully his in-ring process followed suit.

Milton's 26-year-old welterweight, and only known active boxer, has turned back just about every opponent over the past two years. He's banking on that dominance to transcend national boundaries at this week's American Ringside Tournament in Kansas City, Missouri.

Needless to say, the week-long showcase — which begins tomorrow — presents a stiff challenge for the aspiring professional pugilist. And stamina could be an even bigger requirement than skill this time around, with each competitor eligible for up to five fights — depending on their success.

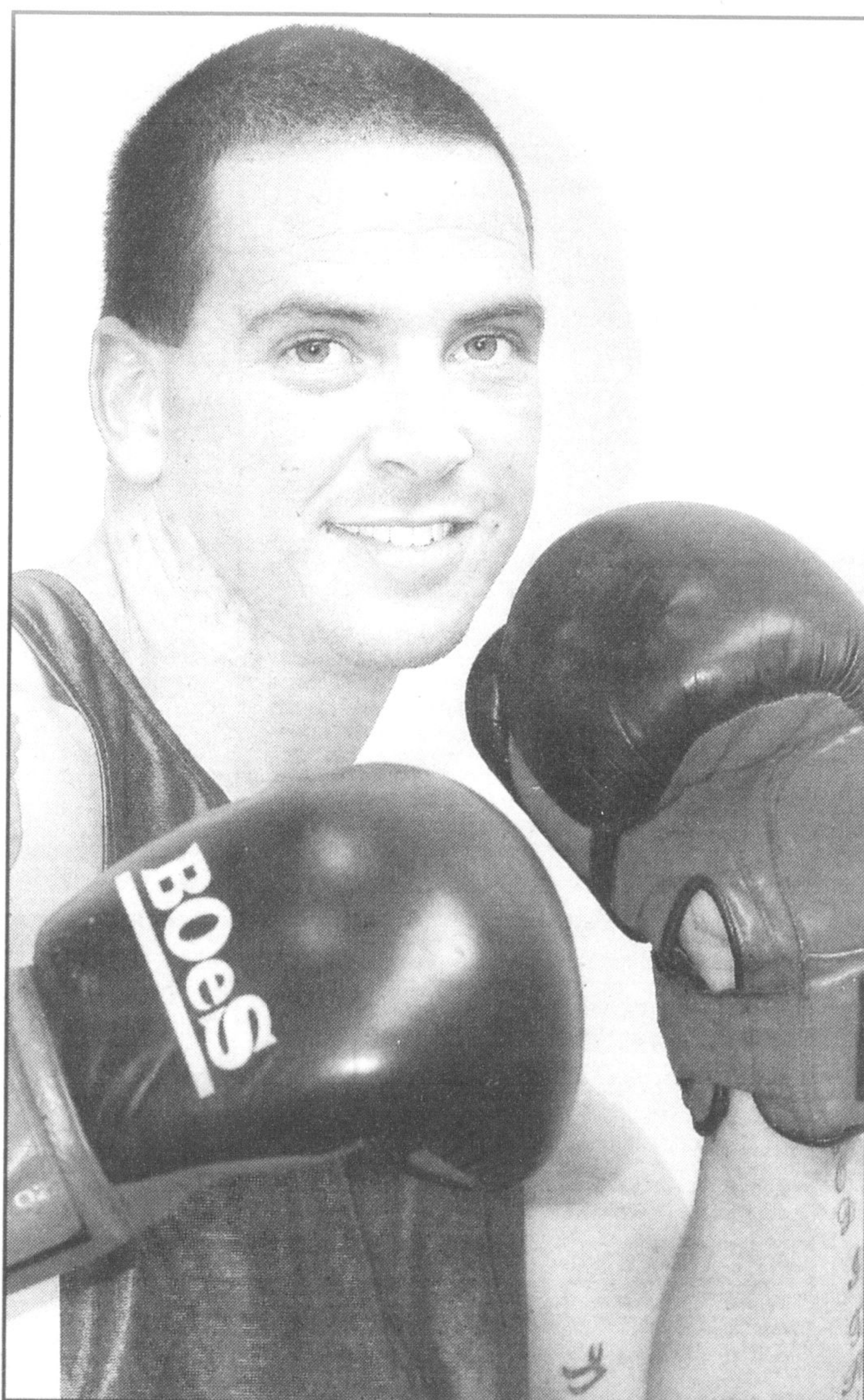
"This is definitely the biggest test of my amateur career," noted Hart Jr., who's currently riding a three-fight win streak and is 13-2 under the tutelage of Bramalea Boxing Club's Billy Martin.

The local fighter said he's been training particularly hard for this cross-border event and hopes that a solid showing will be a springboard to provincial championship success this fall in Windsor.

A top placing there could equal a spot on the national team, which would be a crowning jewel in his amateur career.

But first Hart Jr. has to shine down south. And to do that — he stressed — simply means staying the course.

He remarked, "I've just got to keep doing what I have — being fast and busy in there. I've got to step it up to another level. Ultimately it's only Matt Hart that's going to beat himself."



File photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Matt Hart Jr. is eager to compete at this week's Ringside Tournament in Kansas City.

Jr. Sox outdistanced in COBA title clash

Shortstaffed lineup and late errors too much to overcome

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

From feast to famine.

The Junior Red Sox captured basically every championship available to them last year.

But this summer — which with an equally-talented roster held just as much promise — all four title defense bids fell heartbreakingly short.

At Clarkson Park Saturday afternoon, Milton had one remaining shot at securing some hardware with a one-game, winner-takes-all clash with the Mississauga North Bengals for COBA gold.

Missing several key players — who were either injured or had returned to university — the Red Sox were no doubt the underdogs for the season-ending showdown.

Third-inning surge

Nevertheless, hopes of salvaging the year with a league playoff victory looked bright when the Roxul Red Sox hit around in the bottom of the third to take a 5-4 lead.

However, cracks in their defensive armour would soon show through — and prove costly.

Mistaking the fifth-inning out total to be three instead of the actual two,

catcher Mike Austen allowed a Bengal base-runner to take third and eventually score the tying run on an impressive home-plate steal.

Meanwhile, Nate Perrott — patrolling third base for the first time this season — made two crucial errors after some masterful fielding earlier on. His second miscue brought home the winning run.

Mississauga North would score twice more and prevail 8-5.

Quiet down the stretch

A lack of clutch hitting down the stretch was just as big a stumbling block to victory, as the Red Sox managed just two singles — both by Perrott — through the final four frames.

Overall Milton had eight hits on the day — the biggest of which was a bases-clearing double by Mike Volpe, who pitched the last one-and-two-third innings.

Other RBI were recorded by Evan Jeans and Jeff MacLeod, while runs were scored by Austen, MacLeod, Evan Jeans, Jordan Jeans and Conan O'Brien.

Starter Mike Grabauskas took the loss on the mound.

Other titles Milton's juniors failed to defend this summer include the COBA regular season and Ontario 'C' championships, as well as the Wallaceburg Tournament crown.

Meanwhile, Milton's Senior Red Sox will wrap up their season this weekend at the Ontario 'B' championships in Cortwright.

Steve LeBlanc can be reached at sleblanc@haltonsearch.com.

I got bowled over — literally — on local greens this summer

Looks as if I found yet another thing that I suck at.

I was pretty sure that lawn bowling was going to break my streak, but it's a little more complicated than it looks. Same as everything else.

Mike Comba was my host at the Milton Lawn Bowling Club last week to help me learn about the club, learn how to play, and then actually play in a game.

Donna Coulter invited me originally, then conveniently ducked out of town when I agreed. "I guess you're stuck with me," said Mike. It would have been more accurate had I said that.

Mike showed me the ropes and I didn't think it was too difficult. Those balls curve on their own, though, which I didn't know.

There are two sides to the ball, and the 'little part' which I'll call it because I forget the actual name, has to go on the inside in order for it to curve inward. Otherwise it goes out and right off the 'playing field' which I'll call it because I forget the actual name.

"A lot of people forget which way to hold it at first," he advised.

Not me Mike, I'm no idiot, and I catch on quickly.

The first ball I threw in the game, I held the wrong way and away it went.

Oh, okay, duh, I've learned my lesson. The second ball, the same thing. Okay, so I'm like a lawn bowling dunce.

Apparently, when you do that, you're supposed to buy everyone a drink afterwards, but I'd be broke before long, so I ignored that rule.

Later, at least one of the balls I threw went right into the next playing field and knocked one of their balls.

The Milton Lawn Bowling Club was built in 1909, at pretty much the same location that it's at now on Commercial Street. At that time, it was a sport for the upper class. You can see how much that's changed, if I'm playing.

Lawn bowling has a lot of the same elements as curling. We played with three players to a team, but they can play with four, two, or one. Mike was the skip, Linda was the vice, and I was the lead. We were up against Tina, Betty and Ray. They just pick the names in a draw so that players have different teammates each time.

Each end starts when the lead from the team that scored most recently throws a little white ball called a jack down to the other end.

Then, the skip centres it right in the middle. You don't have to wear whites, those are reserved for tournaments, and even there it has relaxed some.

Our team was up 6-0 after two ends. No thanks to me. All the balls I threw were out of play very quickly. Mike had some excellent shots to get us the points.

Betty was very helpful to me, even though she was on the opposing team. Every time I did something wrong, even if I did it 10 times in a row, she'd still be encouraging and giving me pointers.

Lawn bowling has a reputation of being a sport for older people. The average age at the club was 69 a couple years ago, but now it's 55. On the



with **MURRAY TOWNSEND**

Out in left field

night I'm playing, 12-year-old Amanda Wilton is also playing.

The youngest member is 10-year-old Brandon Wilton, and the oldest is 91-year-old Fanny Clements.

There are 45 members currently in the club. They work hard at attracting young bowlers through schools and camps, part of the reason being that they know if they can get them out, they'll be hooked and want to continue to play.

There are tournaments and activities from May to October at the club. Membership is cheap at \$100, \$75 for new members, and \$25 for the juniors.

Even though our team took an early 6-0 lead, we blew it and were losing 8-6 by the ninth end. My only contribution had been to the other team. For about five ends in a row, I threw the balls right through to the gutter.

Poor Betty was beside herself trying to be helpful, while at the same time probably trying to figure out how one individual could be such a lawn bowling idiot.

But, then something happened. I became slightly better than useless and I actually counted a point for our team. And in the tenth end I got another.

Kind of a double miracle. I had stopped throwing it into the gutter or into the next game and had a few decent shots. Not Hall of Fame material, mind you, but no longer Hall of Shame either.

Anybody could show up at the club on a Monday or Thursday and play for free, at least a couple times until they decide to become a member. Better to call the club first and get the information, or better yet learn when they have an instructional night.

Our team ended up winning 11-8, and when it was over I was disappointed. I wanted to keep playing.

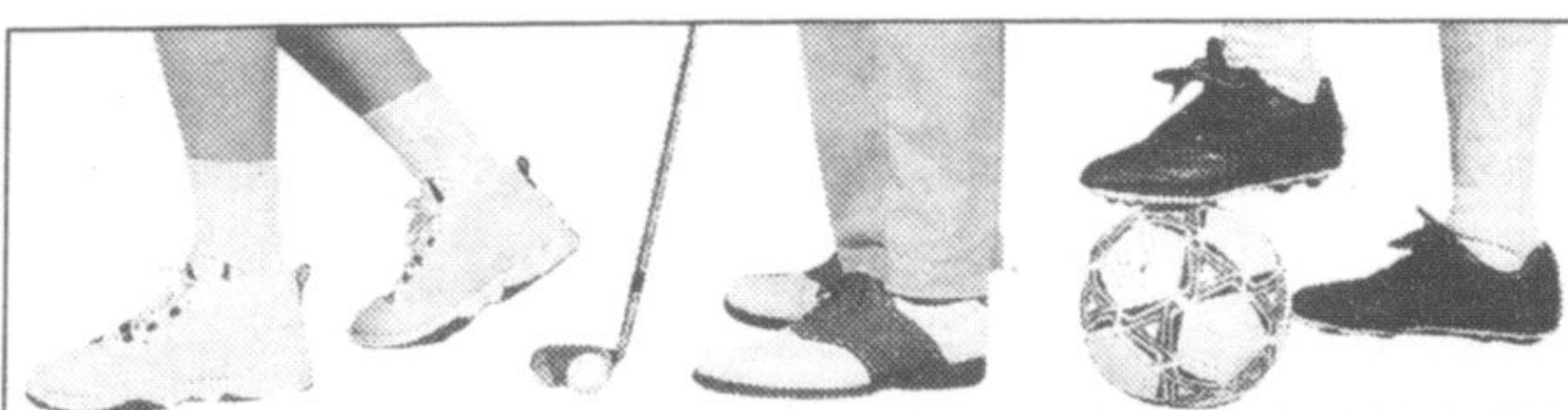
It's a fun game to play for any age, although not that many people seem to know it.

Correction

A sports story in the August 12 Champion contained incorrect information.

The article stated that Brad Mewhinney had backstopped the bantam Mavericks to three tournament championships this season, when in fact late-season addition John Grant was in net for two of those three wins.

The Champion regrets this error.



Click Here
HaltonSearch.com

An idea whose time has come.