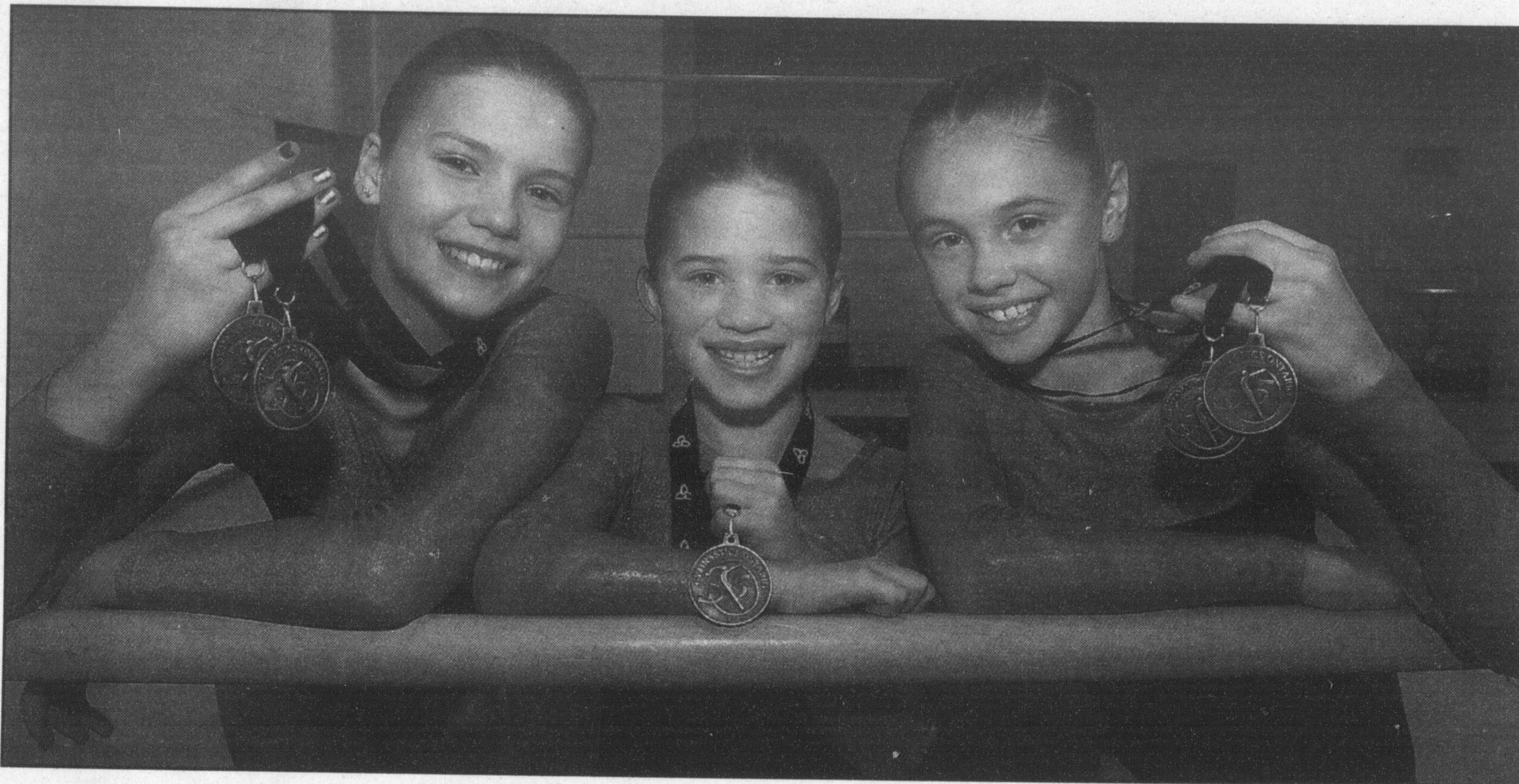




# SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY DECEMBER 12, 2003



## Springer trio shines

Milton Springers Gymnastics Club members (from left) April Chappell, Josan Pineau-Levman and Maddy Bannock display the medals they earned recently during the first provincial qualifier of the year. Chappell was golden on bars and earned bronze on vault, Pineau-Levman was first on bars with a 9.4 out of 10 performance and Bannock secured a gold and bronze on vault and bars respectively. Teammate Brittany Schrader secured silver on vault, while Litsu Sotiriou came out of semi-retirement and off an injury to compete as well.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

# Porenta powers way to personal bests

## Freestyle record swims highlight national campaign

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

**J**ennifer Porenta's Olympic hopes continue to improve as her endurance does.

Currently benefiting from an intensified training regiment at the University of Toronto, Milton's 18-year-old swimming ace seems to have more and more in the proverbial gas tank these days for the late stages of competition — an encouraging sign as the 2004 Summer Games draw closer.

Her fierce finish was evident late last month at Quebec's University of Laval, where she established personal bests in both the 100m and 200m freestyle at the short course Canadian Open.

The longer of these two races appears to be Porenta's best shot for a trip to Athens next summer, especially now that she's dipped below the two-minute mark.

While Porenta's 1:59.55 performance wasn't quite enough to secure a medal, it does put her in serious Olympic contention — even after factoring in conversion to the long course pool.

"It's (two minutes) a big barrier for me to break," said the local swimmer, who shed one-and-a-half seconds off her previous record in the 200m and placed fourth in Laval. "They (Canadian Olympic team) can take up to six girls, so my chances are looking pretty good."

One day earlier she set the first of two individual benchmarks — clocking in at 55.69s to capture bronze in the 100m freestyle. Much like during the 200m, Porenta enjoyed a particularly strong finish and was within striking distance of gold.

While remaining merely a darkhorse contender in the 100m, the three tenths of a second trimmed from her old standard did improve her odds — if only slightly.



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**JENNIFER PORENTA**

Recalled Porenta, "It was probably the best finish I've ever had (in the 100m). It's surprising because I usually die at the end, but this time most of my energy was at the finish. Another 10 metres and I would have definitely challenged for the gold."

Individual records weren't the only ones to fall in Laval. Porenta began the national championships by helping her Toronto All-Stars shatter two Canadian relay marks — in the 4x50m freestyle and 4x100m freestyle.

Collective finishes of 1:41.10 and 3:41.79 knocked significant time off the old standards and left opposing foursomes far behind.

The All-Stars' Milton representative swam second in the shorter distance and first in the longer one, clocking in at 25.35s and 56.09s to help fuel the gold-medal sweep.

All told, last month's results certainly increase the likelihood of the local pool shark counting herself among an elite fraternity of Milton Olympians next summer.

"Things are looking good," said Porenta, who begins a winter training session with UofT in Florida later this month before starting a hectic run to the July Olympic Trials. "With the longer-distance training these days, my endurance has definitely improved."

Meanwhile, fellow Miltonian Kristin McIlroy also competed in Laval — highlighting her national campaign with an 18th-place effort in the 200m backstroke (2:19.02) and a 24th-place showing in the 100m backstroke (1:05.14).

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