



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

FRIDAY DECEMBER 19, 2003

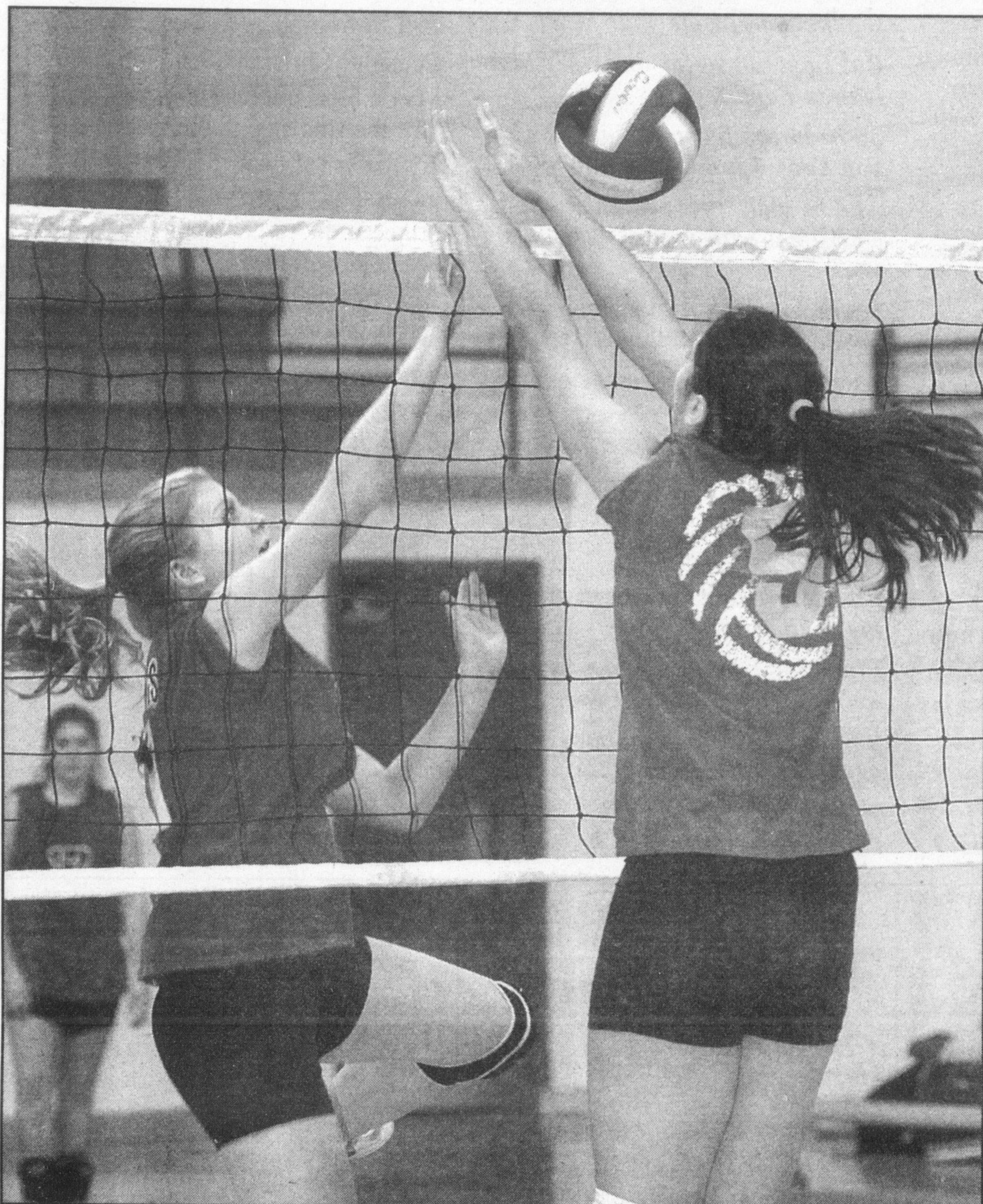


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Hands up

Mustang Shannon Laing (left) attempts to put one past a Nelson opponent during junior girls volleyball play at Milton District High School Monday afternoon. The Mustangs put up a spirited fight, but lost 25-16, 23-25, 15-12 and dropped to 3-1 on the year. The senior Mustangs managed to stay unbeaten, improving to 4-0 with a 25-19, 25-11 over Nelson in the afternoon's latter showdown.

Fatigued IceHawks dumped by Derbys

Hectic schedule takes its toll in Streetsville

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

The IceHawks didn't so much wrap up their most hectic season stretch as limp to its conclusion.

Closing out a four-games-in-five-nights run at Vic Johnston Memorial Arena Tuesday, Milton's blatantly fatigued juniors had little to no oomph up front — and no saving grace between the pipes.

The end result was a 5-1 defeat at the hands of the steadily-improving Streetsville Derbys, who to their credit stuck to an effectively simple and physical game plan en route to bumping off yet another top-four opponent.

Nevertheless, the IceHawks' depleted ranks and diminished energy level had as much to do with the lopsided verdict — which dropped them to 21-14-0-1 and further hindered waning hopes for a top-three finish.

Adversely affected by a lack of work early on and the generally-drained aura that plagued his team, Kain Tisi just wasn't up to par in his most recent appearance. Coming off a superb effort in Burlington Sunday, he looked shaky on goals one, three and four — the latest of which prompted his exit with just under five minutes remaining.

Offensively, Jonathan Ornelas was the lone marksman — scoring for the fifth straight game to knot things up midway through the night. Drawing assists were Jeff Caister and Brad Snetsinger.

The Derbys would restore their lead on the powerplay five minutes later — catching Tisi out of position on a lengthy rebound — and then put things out of reach in the third.

While banged-up captain Lee Swallow is now back from a much-needed respite, the IceHawks were still going with just three

forward lines as workhorse centre Dean Strong began nursing an undisclosed upper body injury.

Milton had plenty of close-range opportunities Tuesday, but suffered equally from a lack of finish and sharp cage work by Nunzio Presta. The IceHawks also took about a handful of ill-timed penalties and were repeatedly muscled off the puck by a Derbys team that boasts about as much physical prowess as they have in several years.

Former Milton director David Dermo — now the general manager of Streetsville — was on the opposing bench Tuesday in replacement of vacationing owner/head coach Randy Gumbley.

Dermo's Derbys have now won their last two meetings with the IceHawks, who close out 2003 regular season play tonight at home against Hamilton.

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



TONIGHT'S TICKET

IceHawks (21-14-0-1) vs. Hamilton (24-7-1-2)

Game time: 7:30 p.m. at Memorial
Last meeting: Hamilton won 7-4.

Who to watch: Veteran defencemen Matthew French and Chris Cloutier will need to use every bit of their size and strength to neutralize the reloaded and revitalized Kilty Bees.

The skinny: Despite making significant strides recently, the IceHawks' momentum and desire probably won't be enough to overcome their depleted and banged-up ranks against a well-stacked team like Hamilton.

Champion's pick: Hamilton by two

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