

Local squash star enjoys active and prosperous holiday stretch

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

The Champion

Alisha Turner's holidays were nothing if not hectic.

Over a six-week period beginning at the end of November, Milton's resident squash ace participated in five tournaments — including two overseas.

This concentrated competitive stretch no doubt tested her stamina. But more importantly, it served as a strong tune-up for next season — which will bring a full-time jump to the under-19 ranks.

Recently the E.C. Drury 11th grader got a taste of this higher division with back-to-back events on Canadian soil, starting with the Junior Jesters in Edmonton.

A mandatory meet for the local 16-year-old, who cracked Canada's under-19 girls squad back in the fall, Alisha won three of four matches to secure silver.

She continued her long-time dominance over Winnipeg's Ashley Malenchuck to reach the finals, where she was vanquished in three straight sets by world championship competitor Lauren Polonich of Calgary.

Two weeks later in St. Catharines, Alisha

once again made a big impact among the older girls by going 4-2 to finish fourth at the under-19 Canadian Open.

Her gold-medal hopes were brought to a close by Victoria's Ashley Clackson, who was severely tested by the local teen in the semifinals before prevailing 3-0 (9-4, 9-7, 9-5). "I think I did quite well, considering I was playing up an age level," said Alisha, who's looking down the road to obtaining a university squash scholarship — preferably to an Ivy League school. "The competition is so much better (at the under-19 level). The girls are stronger and have a lot more endurance."

But an intensified training regiment of her own has allowed the multi-time national champ to keep things respectable — and in some cases downright exciting — against her more seasoned opposition.

Noted Alisha, "I've definitely got a bet-



Alisha Turner

ter fitness routine now and that's really been helping with the longer rallies. And when you're in better shape and not as tired near the end of matches, you tend not to make as many mistakes."

That was evident during the U.S. Open at Princeton University, where she went 5-1 and brought home the under-17 bronze — easily disposing of New York's Katie Brewster 9-3, 9-2, 9-1 to take third-place honours.

From there Alisha took her squash skills to the global stage, where she delivered identical 17th-place showings at the Scottish Open and high-profile British Open.

She won four matches at the latter event, which wrapped up last Tuesday, while her only defeat came at the hands of an internationally-ranked foe from Egypt.

In Scotland, Alisha held her own against some stiff competition after drawing and falling to the eventual champ in the first round.

"At the British Open in particular I did awesome. It's a tournament that everybody goes to and that kind of experience should really help me next year," she said.

Surging IceHawks extend winning streak to five games

And the wins just keep on coming.

Continuing a thoroughly successful second half, the IceHawks turned back a couple of offensively-challenged foes this past weekend to extend their current streak to five straight victories.

Now 13-3 since the midway mark of the season, the local juniors gave up just one measly goal over the weekend — thanks in large part to the sharp play of newly-acquired netminder Thomas Lee.

Since being beat in the first period by Bramalea Friday night, the 19-year-old OHL veteran has amassed a 106:48 shutout span that earned him the goose egg — Milton's first this year — against Burlington Sunday afternoon at Memorial Arena.

The Cougars actually had more shots on net, but were denied on nearly three dozen occasions in the 4-

0 whitewash.

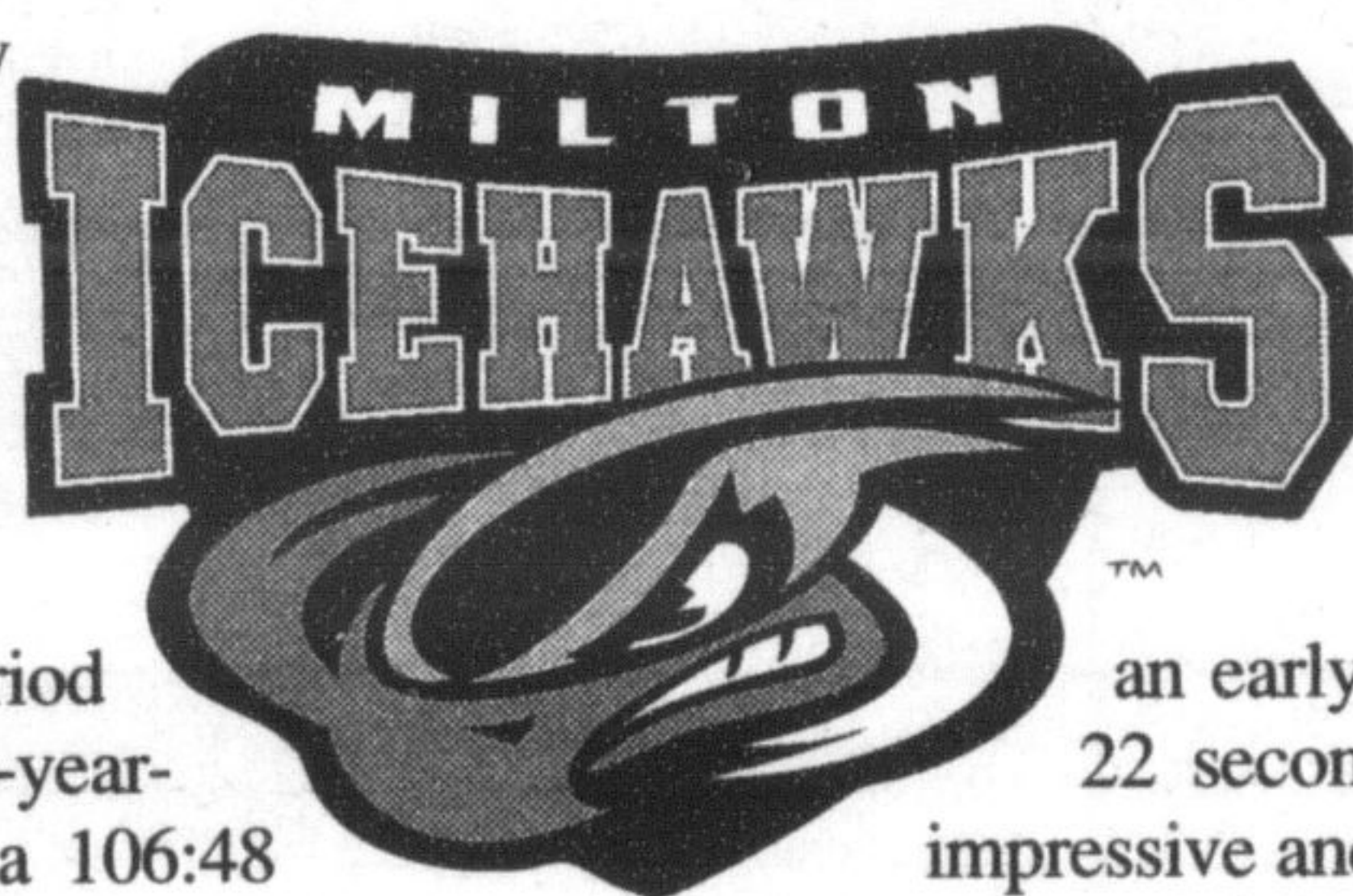
Jonathan Ormelas, Mike DeMarchi, Andrew Bonello and Matthew French all scored in the second period, while Dean Strong and newcomer Brett Robinson each drew three assists.

Strong and Robinson would also provide standout performances two nights earlier at Bramalea's Victoria Park Arena, each tallying twice and adding an assist to sink the Blues 4-1.

The IceHawks spotted their hosts an early lead before wiping it out a scant 22 seconds later and cruising to a fairly impressive and decisive win. With Robinson and

Adam Pileggi deleted from its lineup, Bramalea wasn't able to mount much in the way of offensive punch.

Lee stopped 33 shots for his first win as an IceHawk. Jeff Caister and Nick Dzieduszycki drew single helpers over the weekend.



Jr. Mustangs win consolation crown with comeback victory

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

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Milton District's junior cagers weren't quite able to win the big one at their tournament this past weekend.

But then they didn't come away empty-handed either.

Regrouping after a tough first-round defeat at the hands of Oakville's Q.E. Park Friday afternoon — which knocked them out of the championship picture — the host Mustangs scored straight victories to take the consolation crown.

The secondary title was clinched with a 44-41 squeaker over Georgetown's Christ the King Saturday afternoon. Overcoming some spotty play through the first half, big gun Aaron Alston poured it on at the end to dispose of the Jaguars.

His 18-point total was complemented by eight-point efforts by Dan Von Cube and Mike King. A perfect 6-for-6 performance from the foul line and some fierce defense by sparkplug Nick Ferguson factored heavily into the win as well.

The Mustangs trailed for much of the second half before going ahead to stay with just over two minutes remaining.

They delivered an equally exciting finish against Q.E. Park.

Down 16 early in the fourth quarter, MD fortified its efforts and threw a legitimate scare into the Eagles — drawing within four points twice — before finally being vanquished 56-50 in round one's most competitive clash.

Alston led with 19 points, while Von Cube also stood out with a dozen.

From there, the Mustangs trounced E.C. Drury 67-32 Friday evening in the consolation semis.

Drury — still winless in league play as of yesterday afternoon — were pounded 63-33 by Oakville's T.A. Blakelock in the opening round and finished up with a 40-38 decision over Acton in one of two friendship games.

Oakville's White Oaks outdistanced Q.E. Park 47-44 for the championship Saturday evening.

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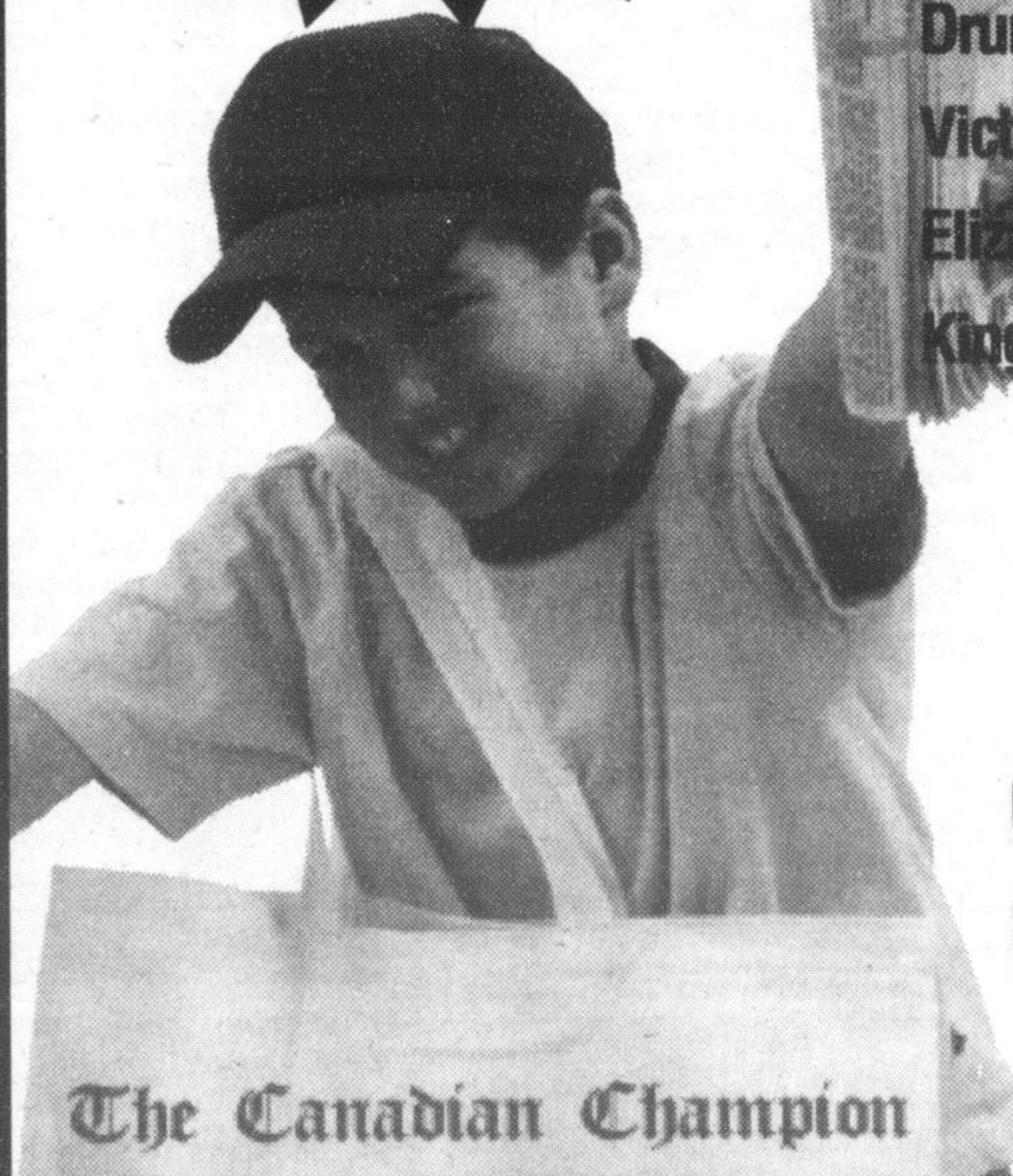
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