

# Sports

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## There's 'snow' stopping Milton Runners

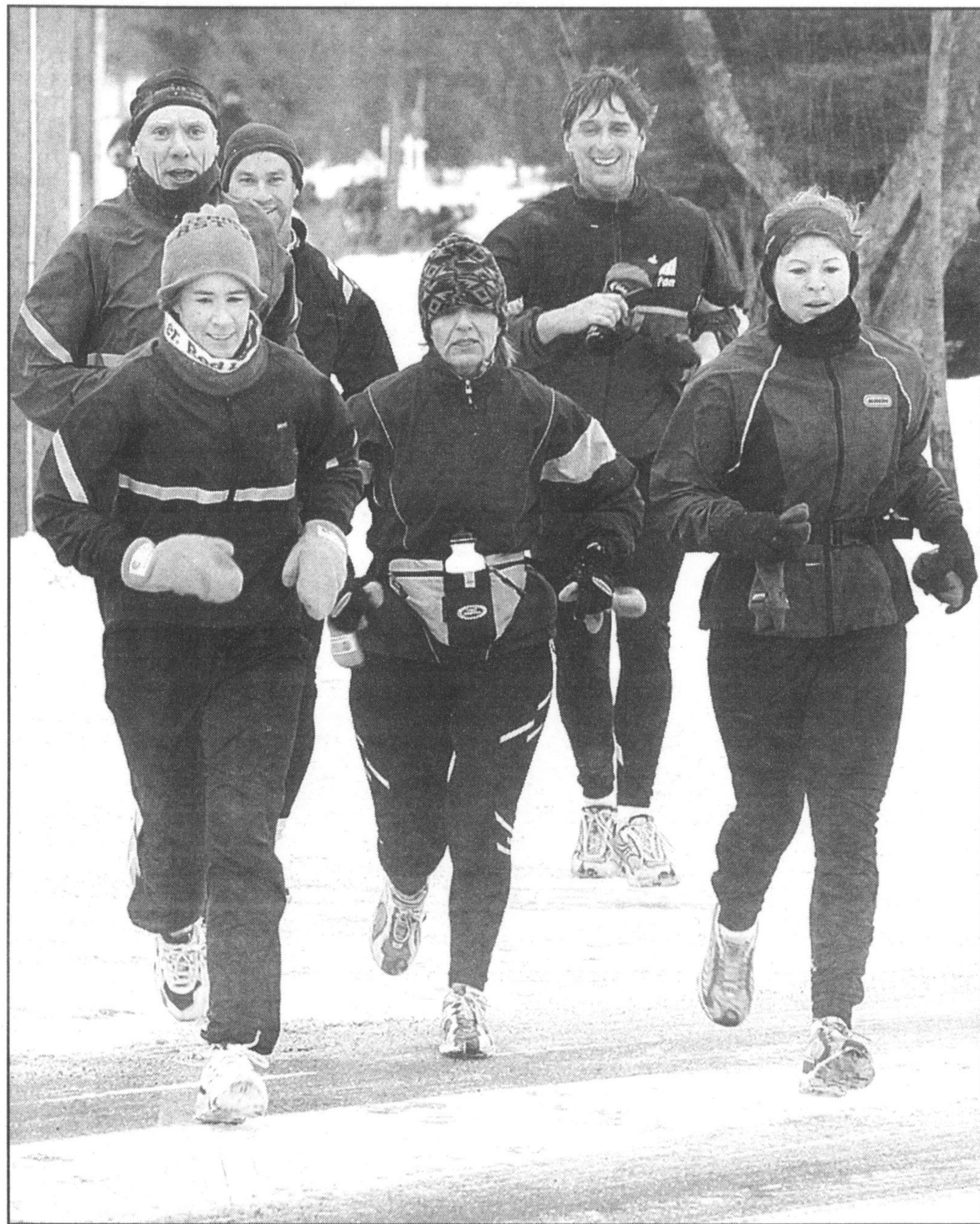


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Members of the Milton Runners head out on one of their recent Sunday morning runs, braving the cold and snow.

### Snow, bitter cold no match for local racers' dedication

By **STEVE LeBLANC**  
*The Champion*

**F**or the Milton Runners, there's no such thing as an off-season.

Even during winter's nastiest stretches like the ones experienced back in January, the club's entire complement can be seen braving the elements and toughing it out throughout town.

So they were hardly about to go into hibernation when old man winter returned for a final shebang last week.

"Sure I'm looking forward to the spring, but it (return of snow) was actually kind of fun — one last kick at the can," said long-time Milton Runner Trigg Hall, who did about 14 kilometres in the bitter cold Wednesday.

That level of commitment is common-place among the group's core members, just about all of whom are currently gearing up for May's Flying Pig Marathon in Cincinnati.

"Yeah, the snow and cold are a little annoying, but it's never stopped me," noted Nancy Cole-Hryciw, who's also preparing for next month's Boston Marathon and is hoping to place top five in the 50-59 women's division. "You just bundle up with heavy socks and thick gloves."

While extra layers of clothing helps get them through week-day training, it's camaraderie that really fuels the fire Sunday mornings — when club members religiously meet at the Leisure Centre for their weekly group run.

"The social aspect really helps," said Cindy Johnston, who did 12 km Wednesday and is one of numerous Milton Runners who've completed over 30 marathons. "You chit chat for a while and before you know it the time has flown by."

Added Hall, "Running together is what makes it bearable, especially on those really cold days."

That fellowship can be particularly essential at times when slippery sidewalks present a legitimate hazard and frozen water bottles no doubt have some members questioning their almost obsession-like commitment to the sport.

"You just joke about how it could be worse — like if it were freezing rain instead of just freezing," quipped Johnston.

#### Hard work pays off

The Milton Runners' teamwork and discipline has certainly paid sizable dividends in recent years. A number of group members have successfully tackled the dreaded ironman — a grueling 3.8km swim, 180km bike, 42km run course — on more than one occasion, while Cole-Hryciw was recently named Triathlon Canada's Female Masters Athlete of the Year for long-distance triathlon racing.

Needless to say, that success can be largely attributed to the club's winter warrior ways.

"It really helps to be weather adapted," said Cole-Hryciw, who earlier this month was first among 236 masters women and fifth overall among 690 female racers at a 5km run in Toronto. "Doing so many events throughout the year, it's important to be prepared for anything."

Agreed Hall, "Training in winter definitely helps with the mental aspect of racing. During those competitions when you find yourself struggling, you just remember back to those really cold days and push yourself through."

The Milton Runners' Cincinnati excursion follows their trip to Panama City this past November, when all 10 members successfully completed Ironman Florida — eight doing so in record-setting times.

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