

# Marauders edged by Oakville in spirited rematch

By MURRAY TOWNSEND  
Special to The Champion

It was a war on the field, a war on the sidelines and even a war in the stands as the Oakville Longhorns edged the Milton Marauders 24-21 Saturday evening in what has quickly developed into a great rivalry.

Milton, of course, ended Oakville's 32-game regular season winning streak a couple weeks ago at Milton District High School.

It started out as a defensive battle, with a Longhorn field goal representing the only score until late in the first half when Oakville picked off a Matt MacPhail pass deep in Milton territory and ran it in for the touchdown.

All-star quarterback Domenic Camastro was out of the lineup because of a shoulder injury, giving MacPhail the start in a place that eats quarterbacks for lunch. "Putting Matty in that game, now I know how the Christians felt when they were fed to the lions," said head coach Barry Emo. "He's still a couple years away, and he didn't do a bad job."

Longhorn quarterback Steve Nott hooked up with Theon James for the first of two touchdowns for the gifted wide receiver. "We decided to open the game up a little more and put more pressure on their backs," said Oakville's coach of 20 years, Bruce Gilroy, explaining the change from their initial meeting.

Once again, the Milton defense proved that running against them was futile — with the Longhorns picking up just four yards on 11 carries — and any passing attempts were met by ferocious pressure. The Marauders had six sacks on the game, including two from Kojo Millington. The one downside was a flurry of penalties, mostly offside, that allowed the Longhorns to keep drives alive when it appeared they had been shut down. Milton was penalized 16 times for 135 yards.

The Marauders got on the board when Jeff

Bertrand blocked an Oakville punt and returned it to the seven-yard line. Two plays later, linebacker and short yardage secret weapon Wayne Sliwinski powered it in for the touchdown. A brick wall may have stopped him, but even that's not a certainty.

On Oakville's next possession, James hauled in his league-leading ninth touchdown reception on a 53-yard bomb to make it 24-6 and effectively end the game. Or so it appeared.

Milton fullback Mike Mallot went in at quarterback and immediately sparked the offense. Mallot, who played with the Ottawa Roughriders, hadn't played the position since high school, but had worked out at practice during the week in case he was needed, with Camastro not due back until the playoffs.

Mallot said it took a couple plays to feel comfortable, and he certainly looked like a veteran, but it's not a position he wants to play on a regular basis. "We're confident in Matt (MacPhail), but we sort of threw him into the fire. Hopefully, he will back in there next week."

Starting from their own one-yard line, the Marauders drove the length of the field. Mallot found Andy Taylor for a 30-yard pick-up, and then after big ground gains by Jon Nedeljkovic and Steve Lubin, Crispin Barnes hauled in a pass for his fifth major. A two-point conversion made the score 24-14.

On Oakville's next possession, Millington picked off a pass at the 50-yard line and had clear sailing to the end zone. On the way, however, he appeared to pull a hamstring muscle and almost came to a stop. Somehow he found the resiliency to fight it off and made it just inside the goal line to make the score 24-21 and give the Marauders a shot at an incredible comeback.

The Marauders came up a couple yards short of making a first down in the final minutes and Oakville took a couple knees to run out the clock. Still, it was a moral victory of sorts for

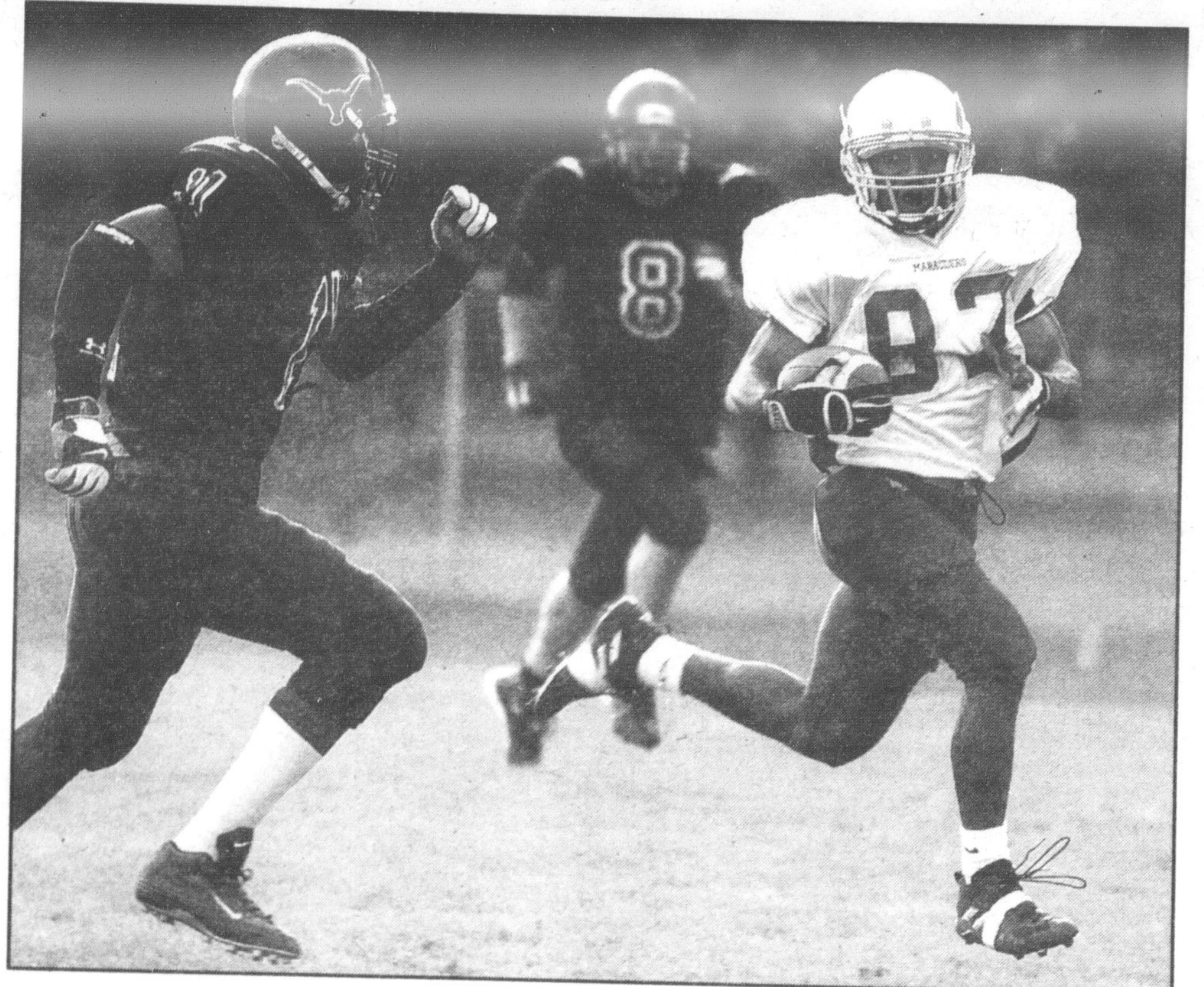


Photo by ASHLEY CAMARA

Marauder wide receiver Andy Taylor looks to out-gun a pair of Longhorn defenders during Saturday's narrow loss in Oakville.

Milton. "I can't say enough about the heart and character of this football team," enthused Emo. "They never let up. It's a character builder for this team, and a big win for Oakville."

After years of winning games by 40 or 50 points, Gilroy welcomes the rivalry and close contests with Milton. "If we step up to the challenge it makes us better because you have to do it at the national level."

The Longhorns will face several challenges

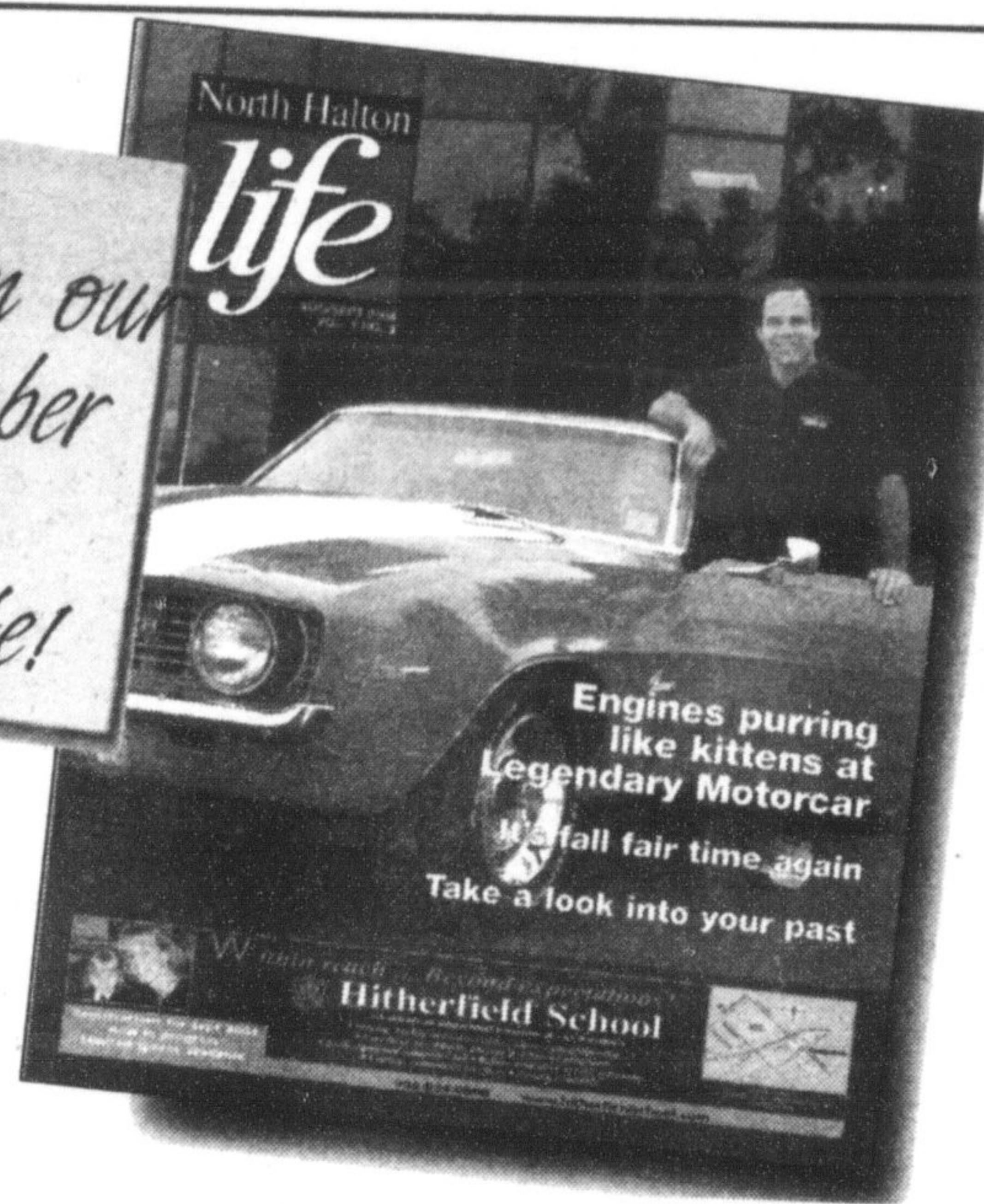
before getting to the national championship game. They're tied for first place with Oshawa and play them next week on the road, with the winner getting a first-round bye.

Milton's record is now 4-3 and they've clinched a playoff berth for the first time in team history. Their opponent will be determined after tomorrow's regular season finale against Markham at Milton District. Game time is 3 p.m.

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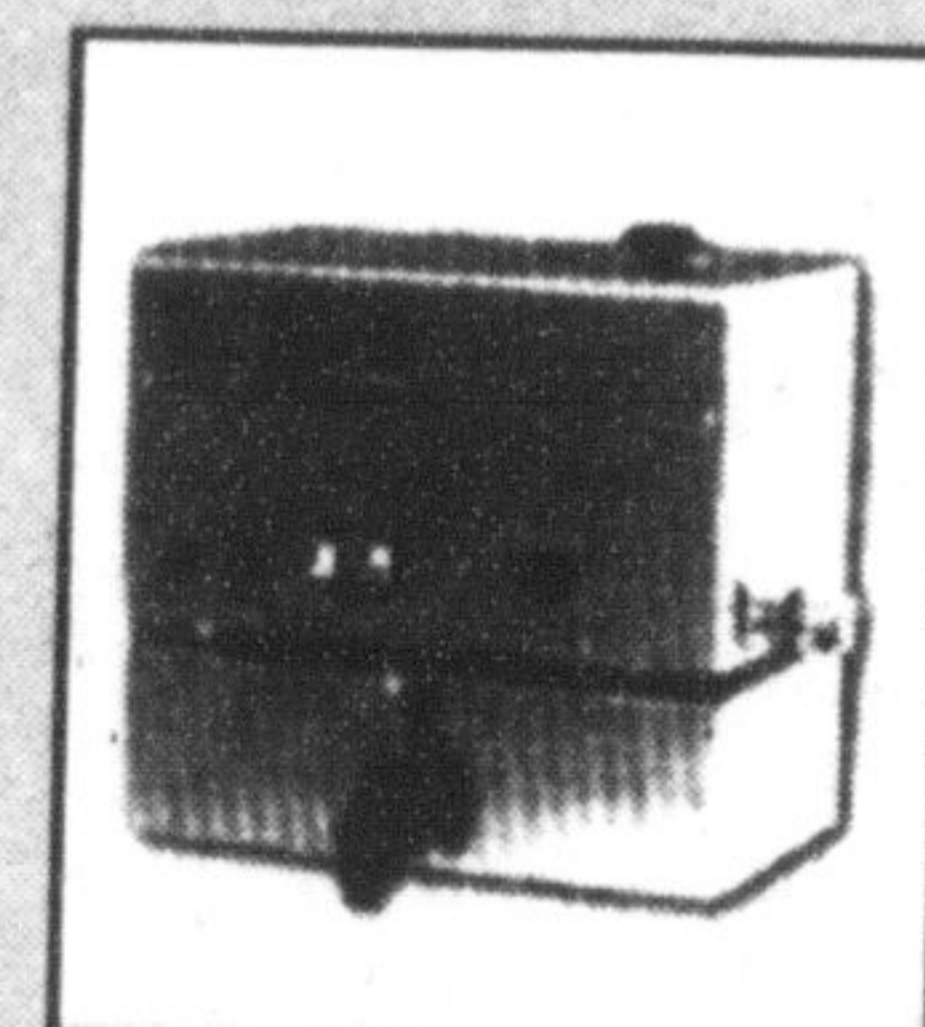


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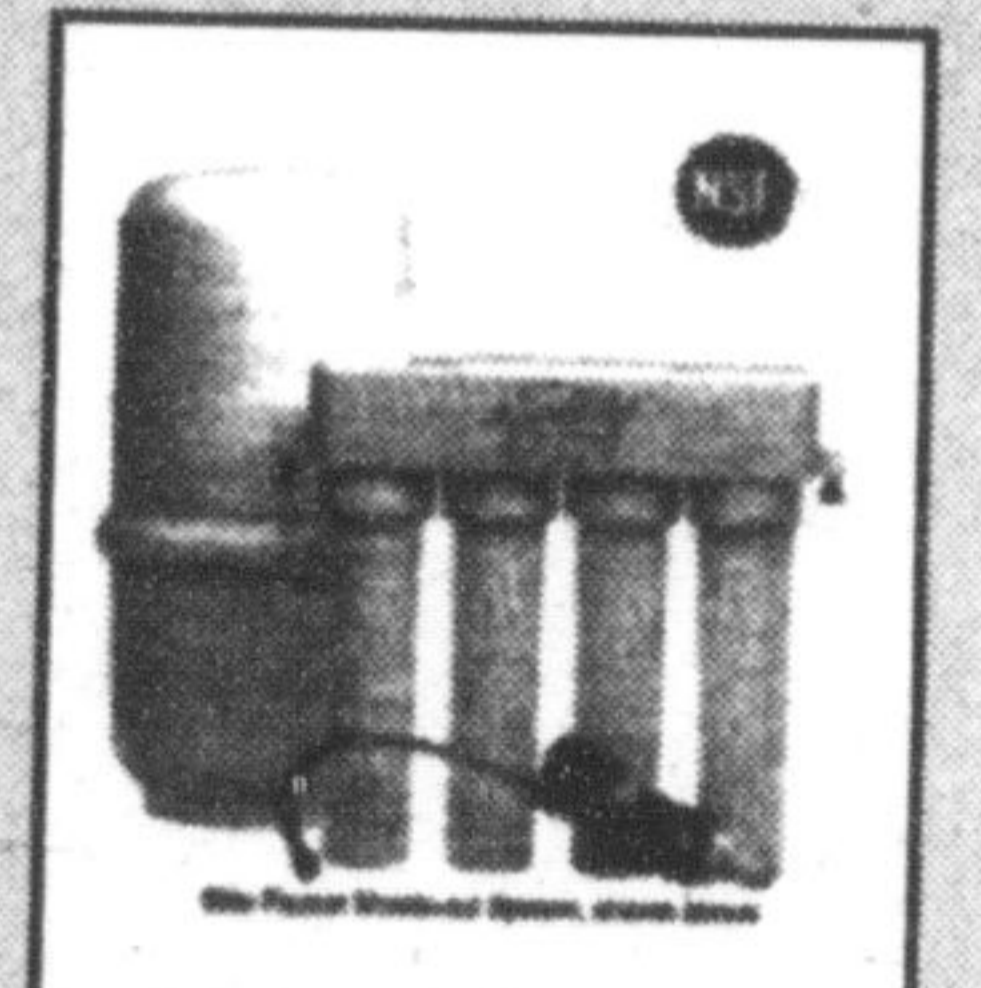
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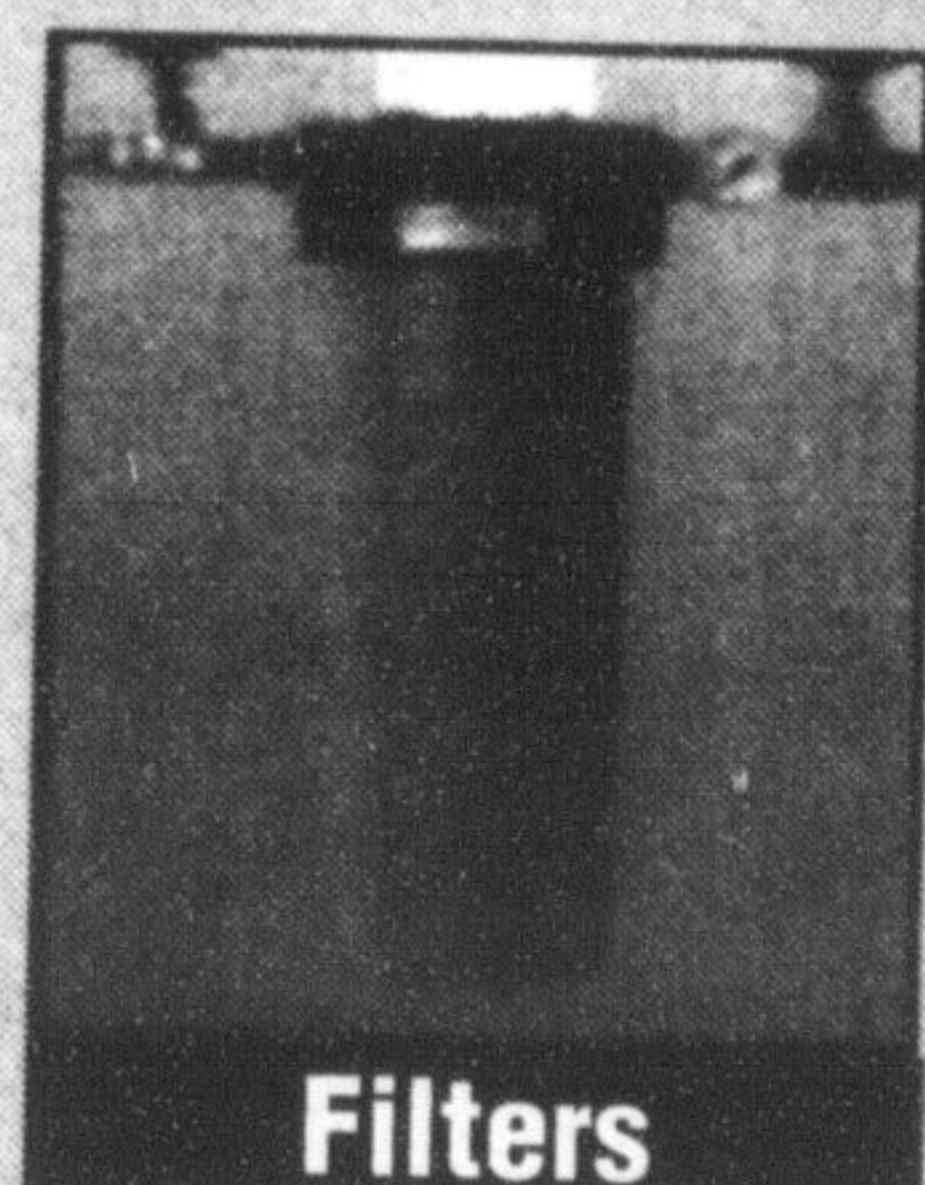
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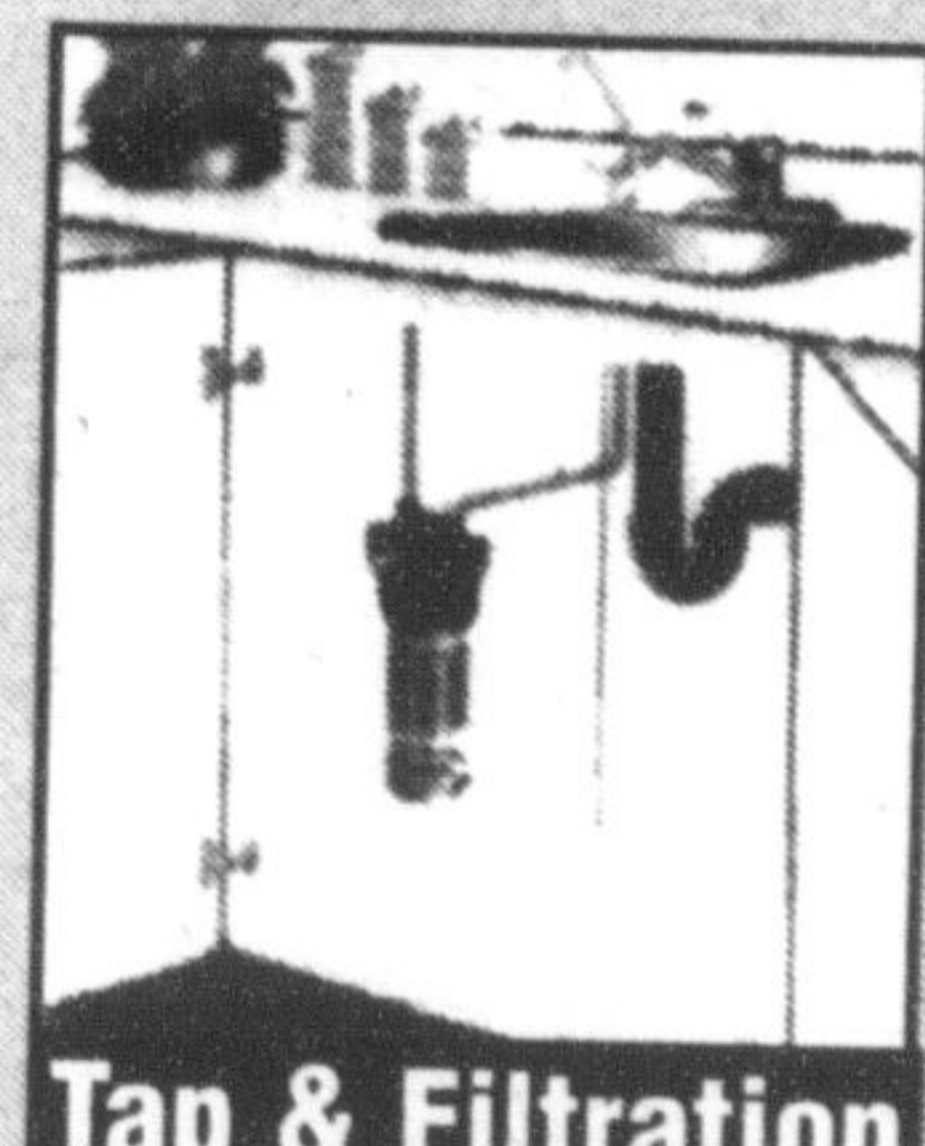
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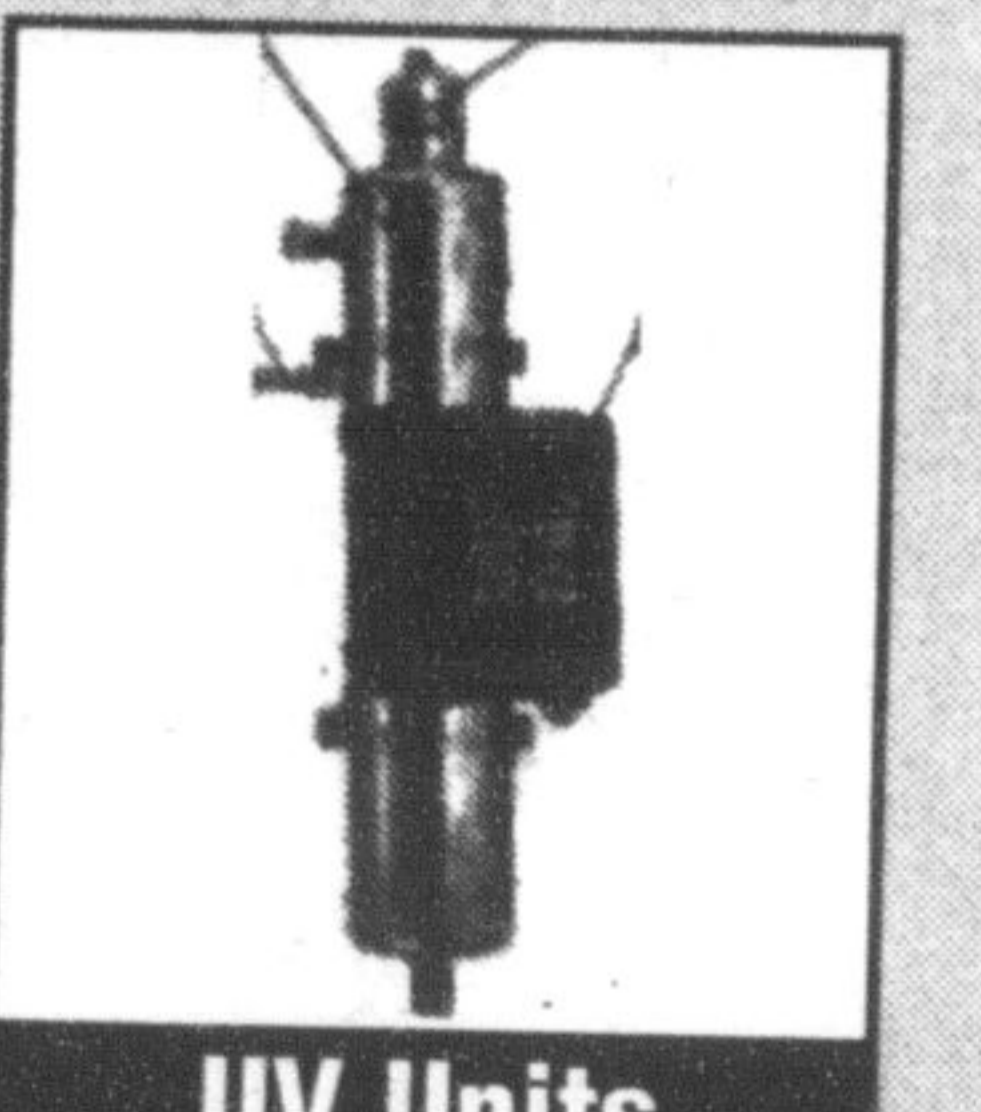
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