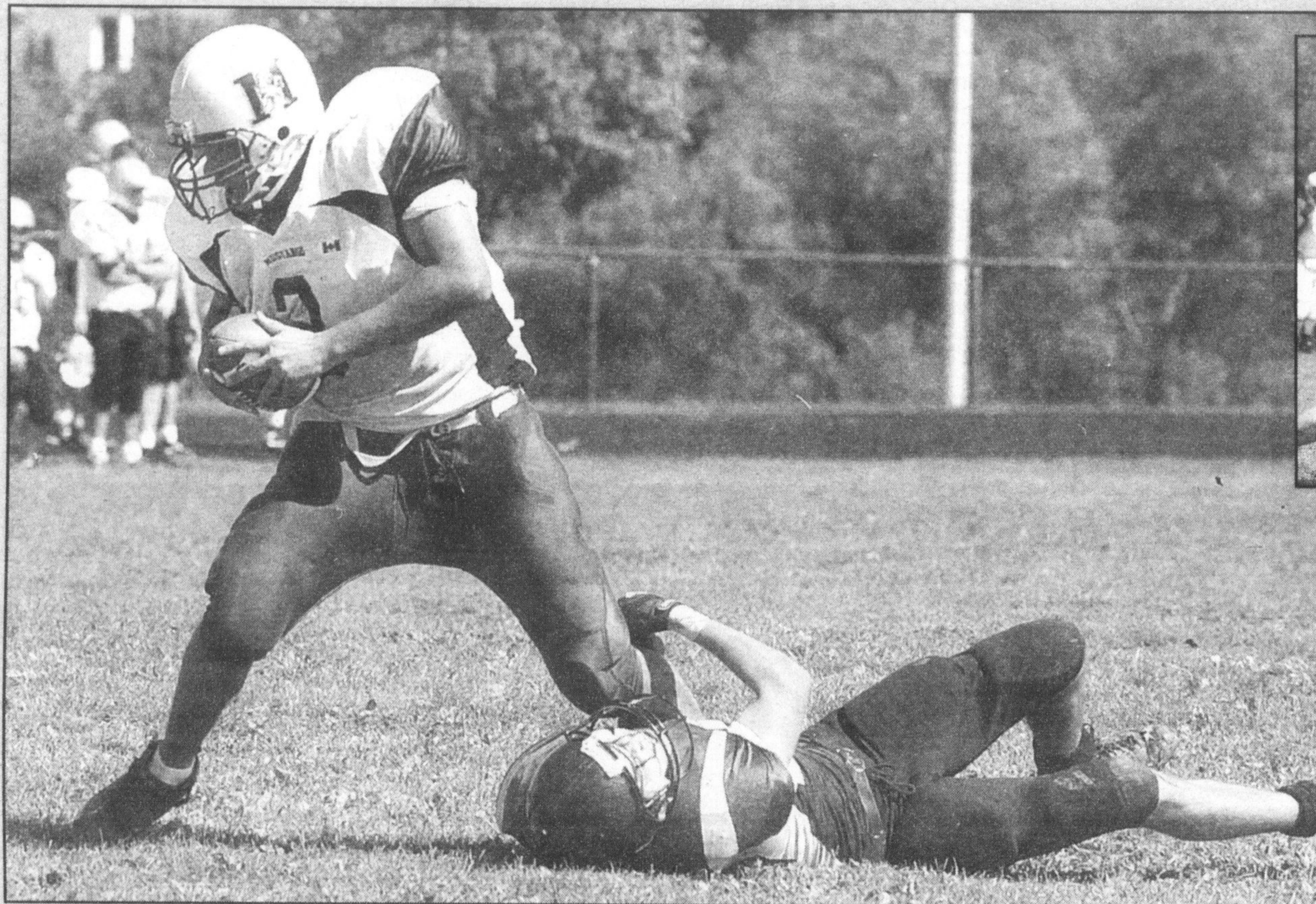


Sports

sleblanc@haltontsearch.com



The run stops here

Milton District senior quarterback Aaron Alston found there was only so far to run before being hauled down by a Mayfield tackler in last Friday's controlled scrimmage. The Mustangs begin the regular season at home Thursday against Oakville's St. Thomas Aquinas.

Photos by GRAHAM PAINE

Semi-pro locals express concern over lockout

An NHL-less season could be particularly damaging for young Haydar

By STEVE LeBLANC
The Champion

It's widely believed that a hockey player's best years are his mid-to-late twenties.

That notion certainly wasn't lost on Darren Haydar in the wake of this week's NHL lockout, which officially took effect at midnight Wednesday but had been all but a foregone conclusion for months.

Fast approaching his 25th birthday and fresh off

a championship playoff drive with the AHL Milwaukee Admirals — during which he led league scoring with 26 points — Milton's NHL hopeful knows this fall could well have represented his best opportunity at reaching hockey's innermost sanctum.

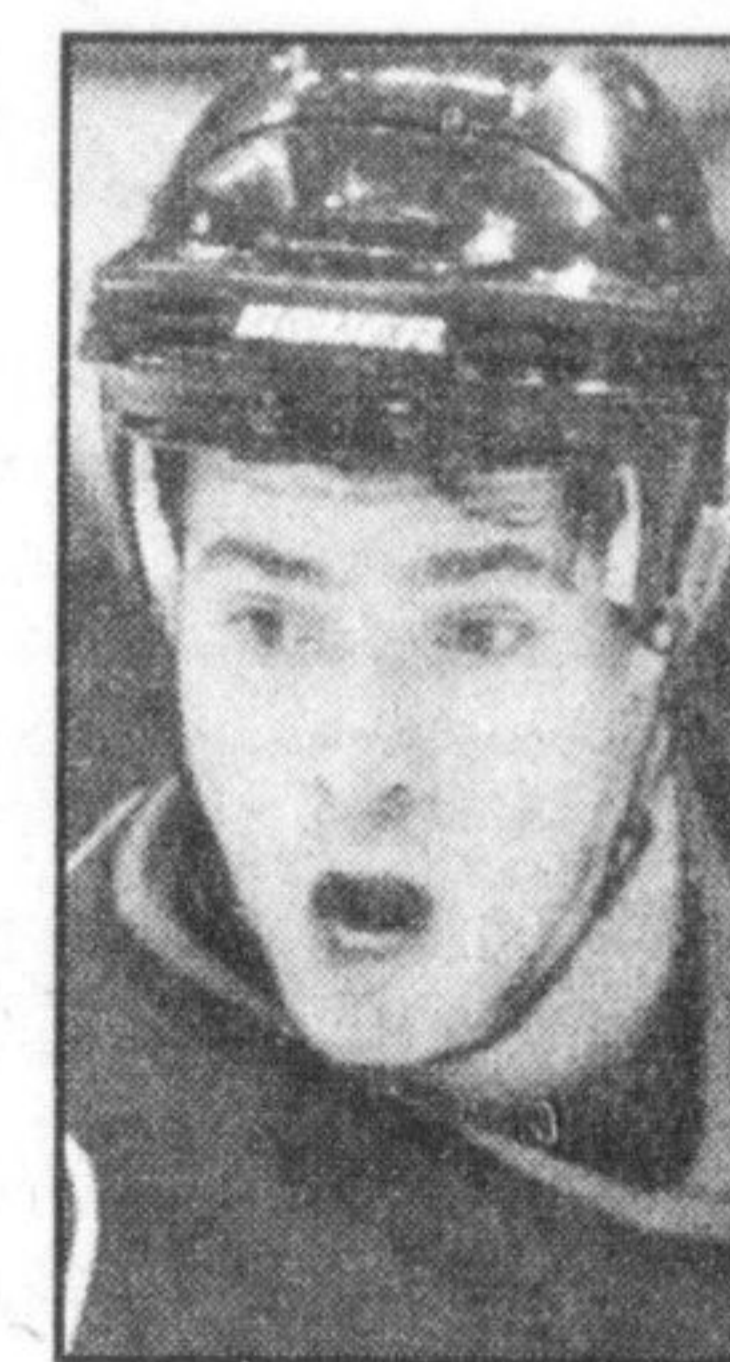
"Yeah, it's crossed my mind," admitted Haydar Wednesday afternoon. "After that strong playoff run in Milwaukee, it would have been nice to at least have a shot at playing in the NHL this year. But I guess that's reality. It hurts because my personal value is probably at its highest right now."

And if worst-case scenario prognosticators are right, a good chunk of his prime playing days could be over before NHL players and owners resolve their differences.

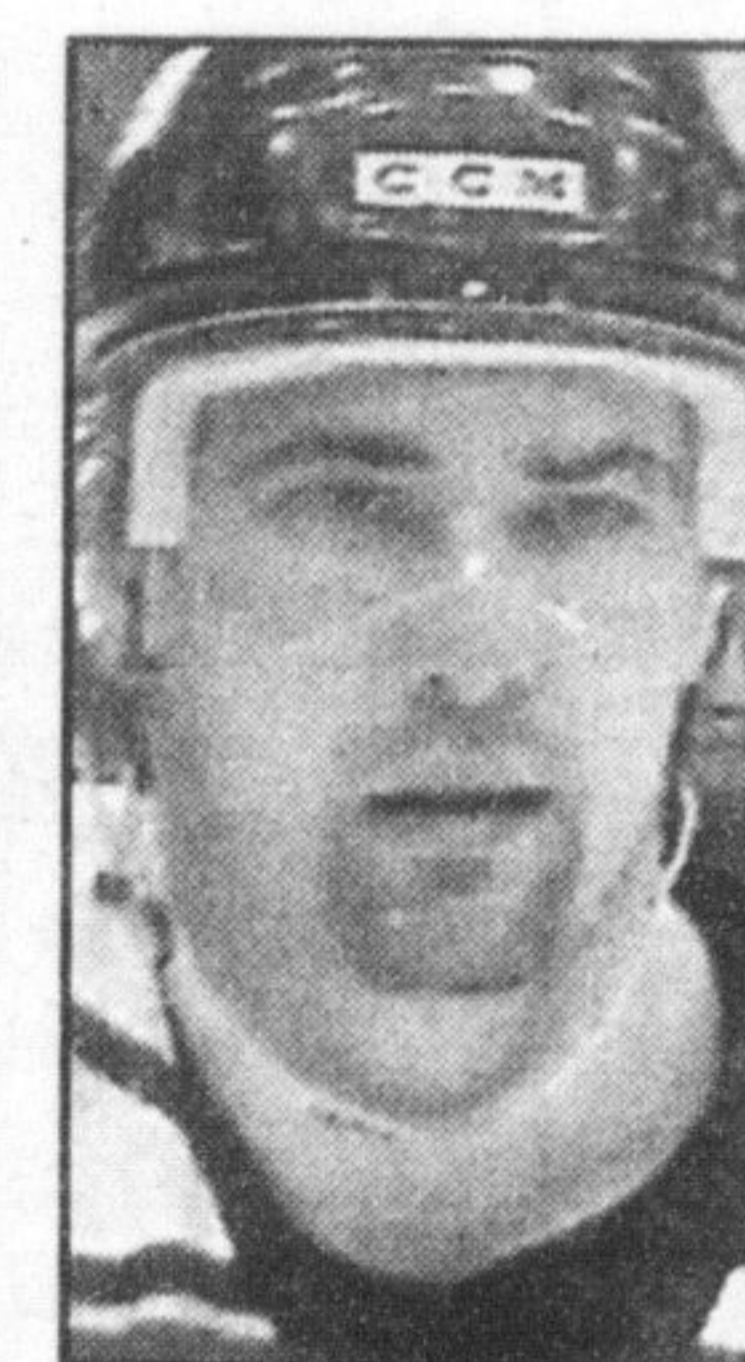
"It definitely hurts the younger guys," he said.

As far as motivation is concerned, Haydar said the opportunity to compete against more NHL-calibre players in the AHL — with stars like Dominik Hasek and Jason Spezza toiling in Binghamton, for example — should offset the fact that there'll be no chance for call-ups to Nashville this season.

• see LOCKOUT on page 26



Darren Haydar



Scott Bertoli

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