

Marauders gearing up for the nationals

NFC champs trying to remain focused during lengthy layoff

By **MURRAY TOWNSEND**
Special to The Champion

The Marauders are practicing under the lights, preparing for their national championship game just a few weeks away in Edmonton. They're running pass play after pass play under the watchful eyes of the coaches.

The Northern Football Conference champions have met every challenge they've faced this season — and have more hurdles still to clear.

For one thing, Milton has already been off for more than three weeks, which

means it will be nearly a month-and-a-half without a game by the time October 2 rolls around.

"It's hard," said head coach Barry Emo. "They're still playing out west, while we sit here. It's difficult to keep the guys interested and focused."

Some of the players have gone back to their university teams, and some have other commitments with their families, especially with kids being back at school and activities such as hockey starting.

The university players are expected to play in the national championship, but can't make all the practices, which are running three times a week.

Their biggest challenge on the field will be adapting to a three-downs format, instead of the four played in Ontario. "Three-down football is a totally different game," stressed Emo. "We're going to have to throw the ball a lot more, especially on first down."

Another difference is that instead of the offensive line being nose-to-nose with the defensive line, they'll play a yard off, which helps the running game because it gives the linemen more room to make their moves and open the holes.

They'll take all the help they can get in trying to adjust, and Toronto Argonaut line-backer Mike O'Shea — who lives in Milton and worked out with the team in the pre-season — has offered his services. The Argonaut offensive co-ordinator will help with the offense.

The biggest challenge may be off the field (see column elsewhere in today's Champion) where they're struggling to get financing to help pay for the trip out west.

So is it all worth it? You bet, said Emo, who added there's plenty to be excited about: "We're going to play for No. 1 in Canada, and we're going to be representing eastern Canada and Milton."

Condren steers Hellava Hush to big victory in Preferred Trot

Milton reinsman Steve Condren engineered a perfect pocket trip with Hellava Hush and popped out late to capture the \$35,000 Preferred Trot in 1:53.3 Monday night at Mohawk Racetrack.

Trained by William Gallagher for Livingston, New Jersey's Joseph Chnappko, Hellava Hush sat second along the cones through fractions of :27, :55.3 and 1:25.3 before grabbing the lead at head-stretch.



Steve Condren

He prevailed by three-quarters of a length over Son Of Grace and fellow Miltonian Mike Saftic, while Another View and Acton's Trevor Ritchie were a length back in third.

"He's still a fairly young horse," Condren said of Hellava Hush, a four-year-old gelded son of Lindy Lane and Kindava Hush. "He acts like he can play around the 1:53 or 1:54 mark, and he beat some nice horses in there tonight."

"He was good (at the top of the stretch). He came off of cover really, really well and he just kind of sprinted home. He was a little tired at the end because the track is a little bit loose, but it was a very good effort for him."

In 18 starts this season, Hellava Hush has a 5-4-3 record and \$129,990 in earnings. The bay now has 19 wins and \$462,880 in the bank for his career.

Lawn bowling trio hold own at novice provincials

Reach quarterfinals in women's triples play

Milton's lawn bowling ladies certainly set the bar high for next year.

Should they reunite in 2005, skip Linda Baron, lead Donna Coulter and 13-year-old Amanda Wilton would have to reach the final four to trump last weekend's inaugural trip to the Ontario Novice Lawn Bowling Championships in Guelph.

Open to competitors with five years experience or less, the local triples contingent — which included the young female lawn bowler of the 16-team field — was one of the least seasoned groups of the lot.

However, they were also among the elite eight when it was all said and done.

That's thanks to a 2-1 round robin campaign Saturday, with 19-13 and 17-9 victories engineered over Guelph and Midland respectively.

In the quarterfinals, the Milton ladies — who captured the district championship late last month at home — were ousted 20-5 by a powerhouse rival from Burlington that went on to reach the

finals.

"Actually the score wasn't really indicative of the match. It was much closer," explained Baron. "We were missing by inches. We'd rub something and they (Burlington) would just make it through to the hole."

"I'd say we're pretty happy with our performance. Many of the teams we're in their final year whereas it was our first time there. If we go back next season, who knows?"

The local skip said Wilton was particularly impressive in the Midland victory, while her team persevered through a back-and-forth opening round to upstage the hosts.

Their lone round-robin loss came against Woodstock (20-9).

Milton is developing a credible track record at the novice provincial championships. Just two years ago David Mee and Laura Seed each skipped their triples teams to Ontario gold — with fellow Miltonian Marilyn Meyer playing vice on the women's team.



Linda Baron



Donna Coulter



Amanda Wilton

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