

Sports

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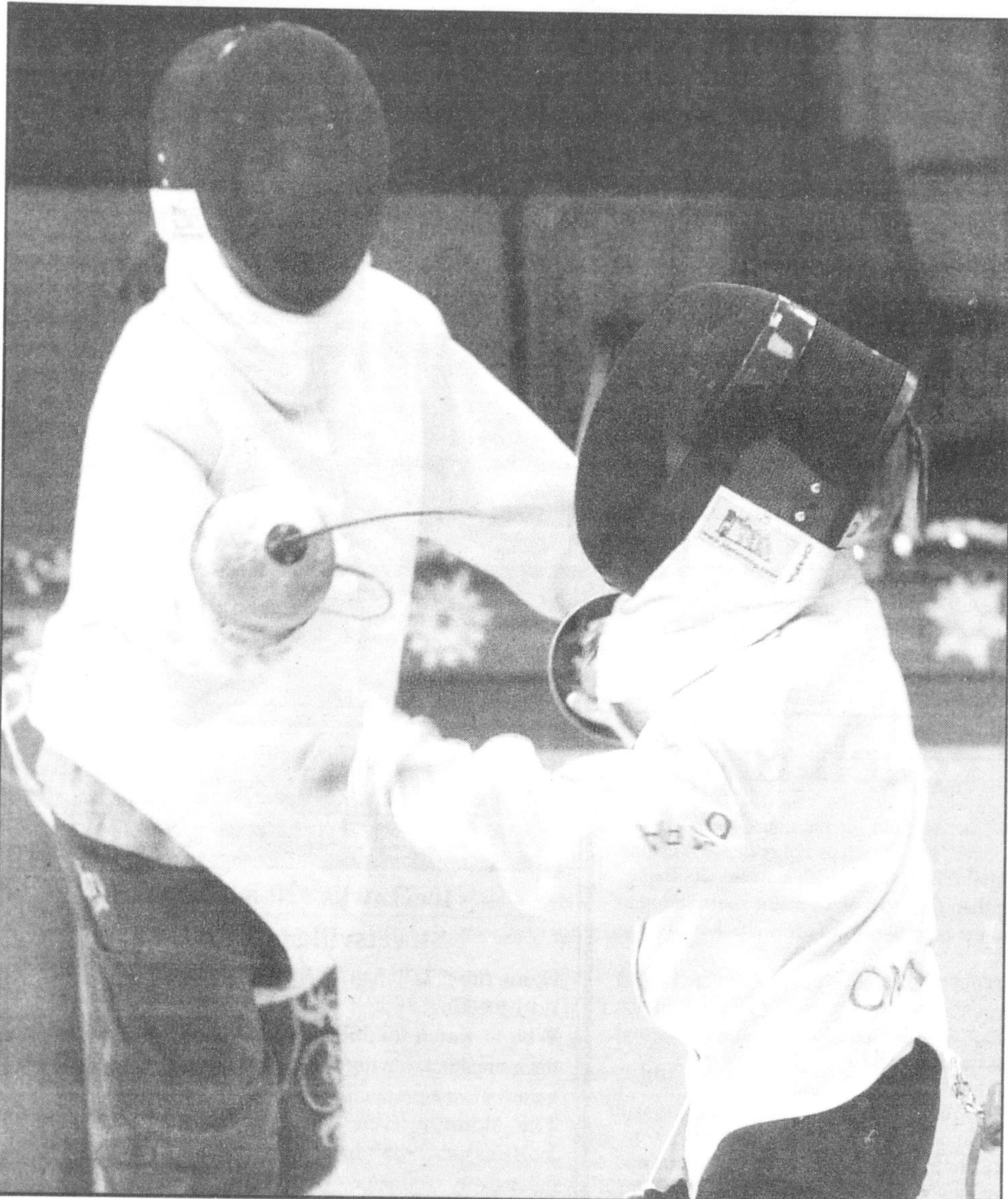


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

En garde

Thirteen-year-old Matt Pitman (left) fences off against Jackson Galipeau, 8, during round-robin action of last weekend's pentathlon competition at the Milton Seniors' Activity Centre. It was the first pentathlon of the season for the Milton Fencing and Pentathlon Club, which will also hold competitions in February and May. Patrick Slaine won the junior division, with Garret Maruk finishing second and Guillaume Lavoie placing third. In senior, Lianna Doherty was victorious, followed by Mark Warena and Stephen Willson.

Rogers seeking title to cap junior career

Miltonian enjoying success with Raiders

By **JON KUIPERIJ**
The Champion

After years of frustration, Dan Rogers appears poised to finish his junior hockey career on a high note.

The 20-year-old Milton native is enjoying a fine season with the Georgetown Raiders, helping the Provincial Junior A Hockey League club to a 25-3-0-1 record (entering last night's contest with the Brampton Capitals). Such success is long overdue for the physical defenceman, whose teams have not advanced past the opening round of the playoffs the past four years.

"I'm really excited. My whole junior career, all I've wanted to do is win, and unfortunately I haven't had that opportunity with the teams I've been on," Rogers said earlier this week. "I don't care if I score another goal or get another assist. I just want to be on a winning team in my last year of junior."

Coming off a three-year stint in the OHL, where he played for the Owen Sound Attack and Belleville Bulls, Rogers is already assured of a lengthy postseason run with the Raiders.

Georgetown will host the Dudley Hewitt Cup next spring, meaning the club has an automatic entry into the Central Canada championship tournament.

With a guaranteed spot in the Dudley Hewitt, Rogers admits it has been difficult at times for the Raiders to maintain their focus this season.

However, the 6-foot, 200-pounder realizes the value of using the regular season and league playoffs to prepare for tougher competition ahead.

"We don't want to go into the Dudley Hewitt at half speed. We want to be peaking at the right moment," said Rogers, an alternate captain with Georgetown. "We're fortunate enough to know we're going to be playing when other teams aren't, so we've

got to use our games as practice tools."

Rogers, who also played for the Raiders during the 1999-2000 season, decided to return to Georgetown after being cut loose by the Bulls as an over-ager. His lone OHL playoff appearance came in 2002 as Belleville dropped a seven-game series to the Toronto St. Michael's Majors. The Bulls then struggled to a 15-44-8-1 record last season, one of the worst marks in the entire Canadian Hockey League.

"There are some situations where a team loses and guys are called losers, but there are winners on the team," said first-year Georgetown coach Dan Cameron.

"Dan Rogers is a winner in the way he conducts himself. He is very proud of his family, he's accountable, and he's easy to coach because he does everything right. Athletically, he's a tower of strength. He's physical, yet he's got a good offensive flare to him."

Those offensive skills have been on display this season as Rogers, one of the catalysts of the Raiders' power play, racked up 16 points in his first 24 games. He has also helped Georgetown post a goals-against average of 2.00 this year, lowest in the 35-team league.

Defence wins championships

"That's really important. That's what's going to win us a championship," Rogers said of the Raiders' defensive play. "Last year (when the top-seeded Raiders were upset in the conference final by the Oakville Blades), they might have been a little too focused on offence. That won't win you anything, it will just get you on the highlight reel."

Rogers hopes to continue his hockey career next year while studying criminology at Dalhousie University, and Cameron believes the blueliner is eventually capable of playing the game professionally.

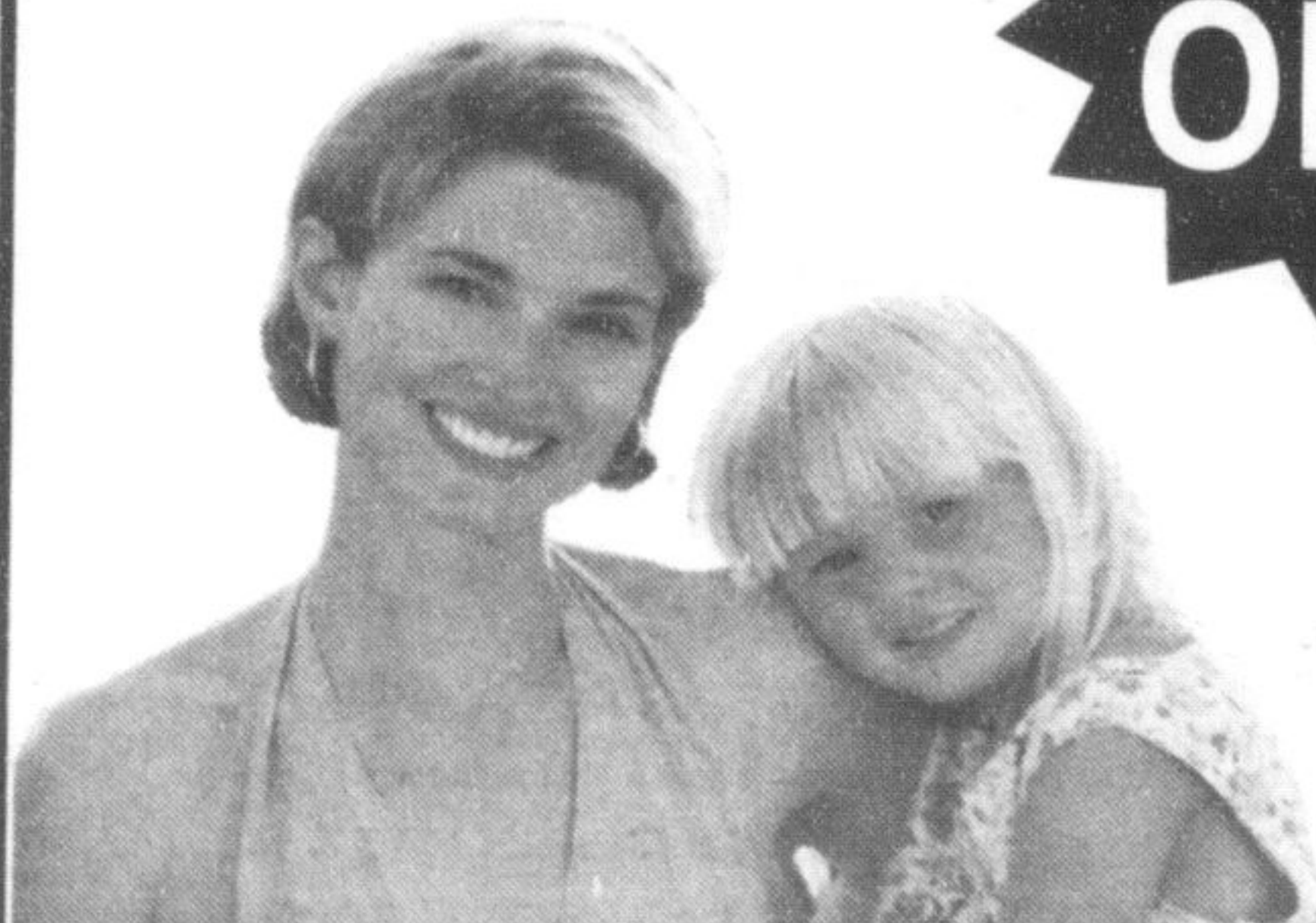
"He's just a flat-out good hockey player. He can skate, shoot, handle the puck... and he's a good passer," the coach said. "He's the real deal."

Dr. Henry Lau, M.D.

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