

Sports

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Nunes' championship-rich year ends with Ontario gold

Young gymnast delivers fierce finish to secure title

Keanu Nunes' 2004/05 gymnastics season can be summed up with just one word — golden.

Punctuating the year in stellar fashion, the nine-year-old Miltonian upstaged 18 competitors in the Level 1, Under-10 boys division to secure Ontario championship honours in Burlington April 9.

This complements the overall gold-medal efforts delivered at provincial qualifiers in Newmarket and Kitchener-Waterloo.

A member of Mississauga Team Futures, Nunes would have made it a clean sweep if not for a nasty case of bronchitis that kept him out of the third and final qualifier early last month.

The ill-timed ailment cost him three weeks of provincial prep time, making his Ontario triumph all the more impressive.

"I was a little nervous going in, but I did a lot of visualization that I work on with my dad, who's a soccer coach," said the E.W. Foster student. "That helped and it felt really good to win."

Added Team Futures coach Zhao Hui Huang, "We had to play catch-up with Keanu's training, but he works so hard and is very dedicated."

Hopes for winning provincials didn't look so hot at first, as the young Miltonian started with a modest fourth-place finish in the floor routine.

But a fierce finish — highlighted by a victory on the parallel bars and second-place showing on the high bars — allowed Keanu to edge past East York's Cameron Jang by a single point at the wire for all-around gold.

"I ended strongly," said the champ.

Keanu's immediate success in gymnastics has certainly been impressive, though not entirely surprising to mother Jacqueline.

"He's always been naturally flexible and agile. He was swinging from trees and other things from a very young age," she recalled.

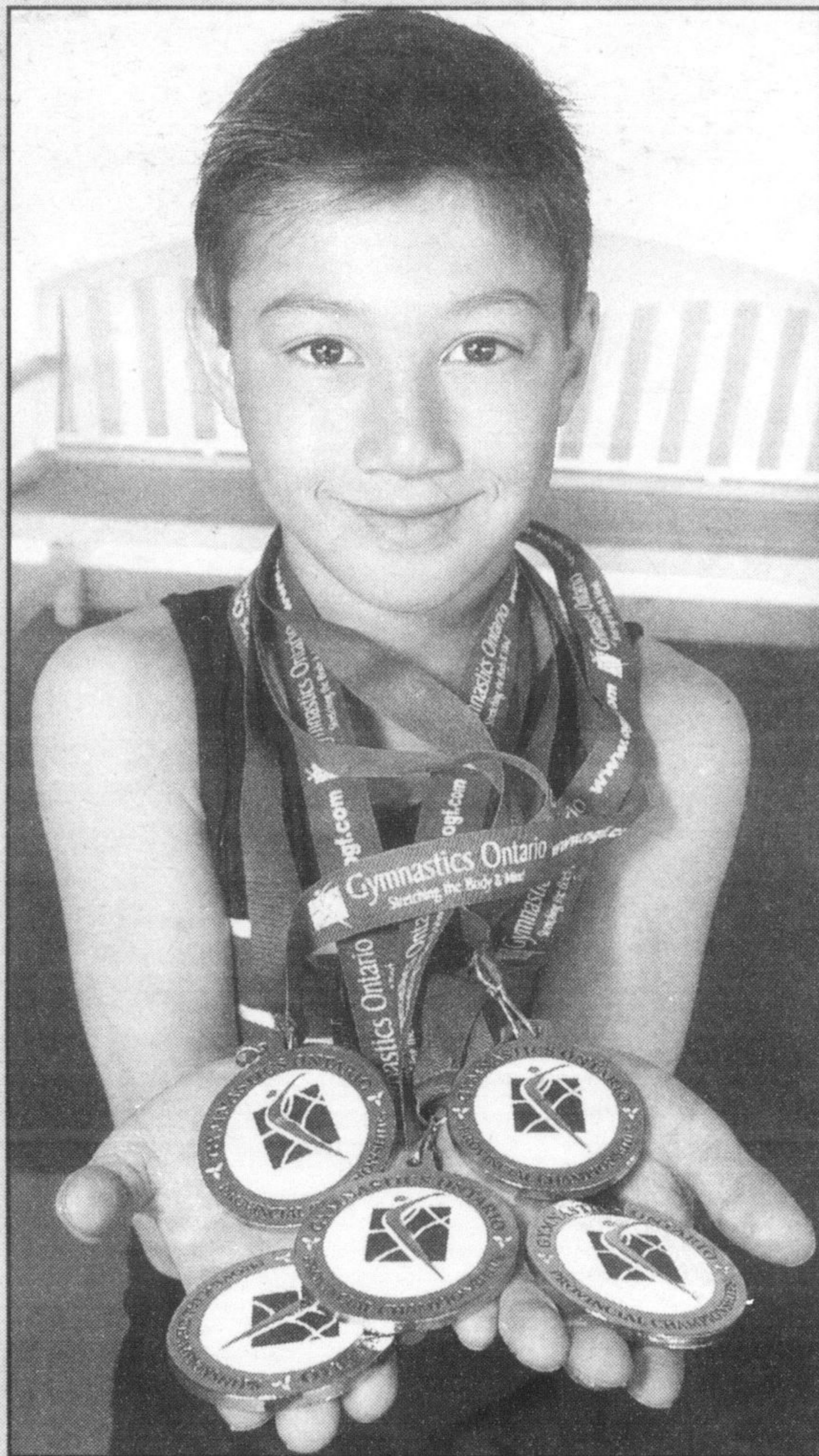


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE
Keanu Nunes shows off his provincial medal haul.

Bertoli's Titans sweep round 1

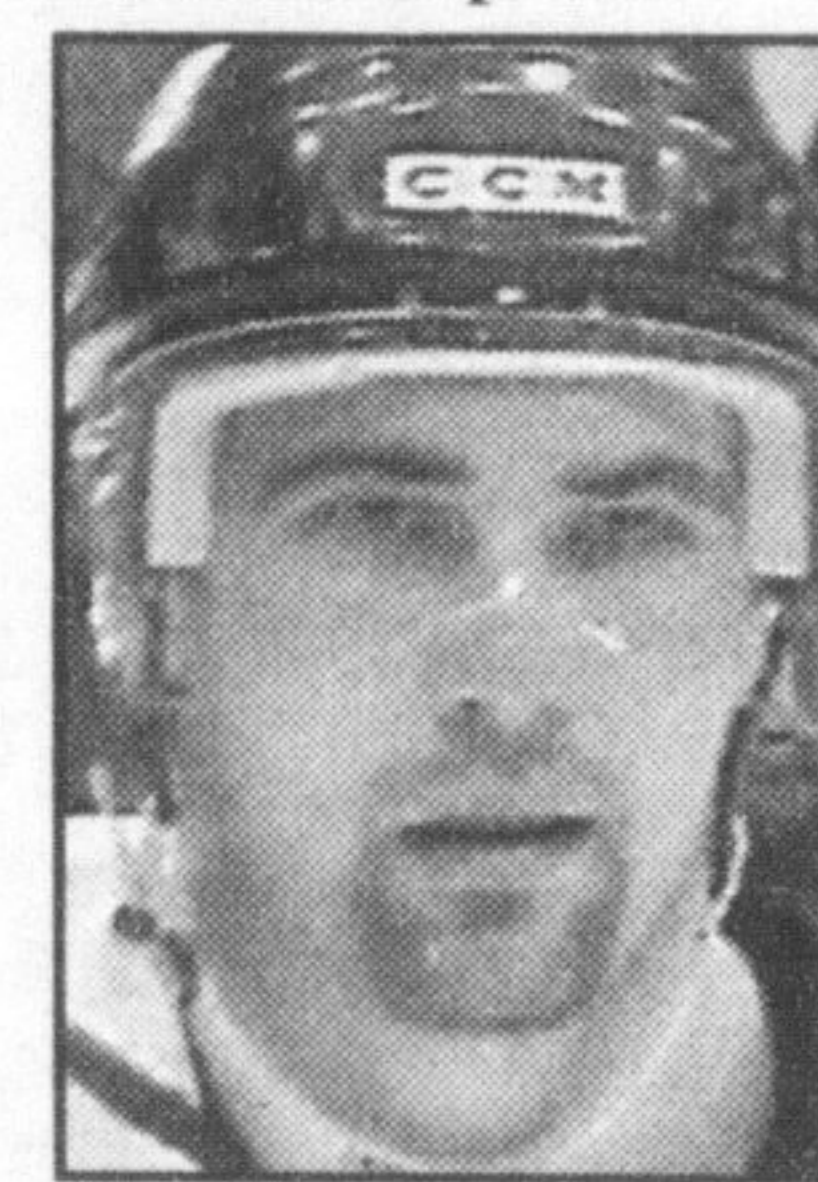
Move on to face Reading Royals

Scott Bertoli and the Trenton Titans' red-hot streak continues.

Pushing their win streak to seven games in Atlantic City Sunday afternoon, the 28-year-old Miltonian and his ECHL club punctuated a three-game sweep of the Boardwalk Bullies in the Northern Division semifinals — winning 4-3 with an overtime deposit.

Bertoli factored into the golden goal, grabbing a loose puck off a turnover and setting up doorstep marksman Nick Deschenes.

"It was a d-to-d pass and the puck somehow just came right to me, which surprised everyone including myself," recalled the local left winger, who also scored a second-period powerplay goal in the series clincher. "I slid it in front to Nick, who was all alone and just slipped it home. Their goalie didn't have much of a chance."



Scott Bertoli

Sunday's sudden death victory — the second in as many games — capped the final battle of New Jersey, with the Bullies set to relocate to California this summer.

Bertoli also stood out in game one's 4-2 decision with a couple of assists. The series win was even sweeter in that Atlantic City had swept Trenton in both 2002 and 2003.

The Titans will look to keep things going tonight, when they begin another best-of-five series for the Northern Division title. Standing in their way are the Reading Royals, who finished with an identical 93 points but grabbed home-ice advantage by virtue of their one extra win. Trenton won the season series 7-3 and will host games three and four.

Meanwhile, fellow Miltonian Darren Haydar also kicked off the post-season in impressive fashion.

Recently returning from an ankle injury that sidelined him for about a month, the 25-year-old AHL right winger had three assists Wednesday night to help lead his Milwaukee Admirals to a 4-2 decision over Cincinnati in game one of their first-round series.

Finishing the regular season with 24 goals and 26 assists in 59 games, Haydar's set-ups all came in the second period — the last of which was on Ryan Suter's eventual game winner.

The best-of-seven showdown continues tonight in Cincinnati.

W.I. Dick boys prevail in wild North Halton Tier 2 final

By STEVE LeBLANC

The Champion

Eric Cowan just kept playing the hero's role until it finally stuck.

With North Halton Tier 2 championship honours on the line Tuesday afternoon at E.C. Drury High School, W.I. Dick's eighth grade cager made three potential winning baskets in the final two-and-a-half minutes of regulation time.

While each of those leads was wiped out by the determined Brookville Bengals, Cowan simply wouldn't be denied the spotlight. With just two-and-a-half seconds remaining in overtime,

he sank a couple of foul shots to give his Wildcats a 29-28 victory — capping the most suspenseful title match in recent memory.

"It feels really good, but it wasn't just me that won it," stressed the modest graduating player. "Everybody came through. It was a real team effort."

Brookville led for most of the third quarter and established three separate leads in the extra session before finally being vanquished, while neither side led by more than four points at any one time during the see-

saw encounter.

Bengal Mike Sgarbossa stepped up his efforts while teammate Sean Koopmans struggled through the early going and led with a dozen points overall, including a jump shot in the final minute of overtime that appeared to be enough for a Brookville win.

Koopmans would eventually find his scoring touch and collect eight points, while Wes Lindinger was among the other scorers in the deciding frame and finished with six

points.

Delivering a big second-half uprising, Cowan enjoyed the lion's share of the scoring pie for the champs with 10 points. Todd Campbell and Cam Freelen had eight and seven respectively.

In a far less dramatic Tier 2 final, the Sam Sherratt girls dropped a 25-10 decision to Acton's M.S. Bennett Tuesday afternoon.

The Shamrocks kept things competitive through the early going, but just couldn't measure up in the second half. Vicki Kiriakopoulos had six points, while Tori Pickering and Sarah Stockall sank one basket each.





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