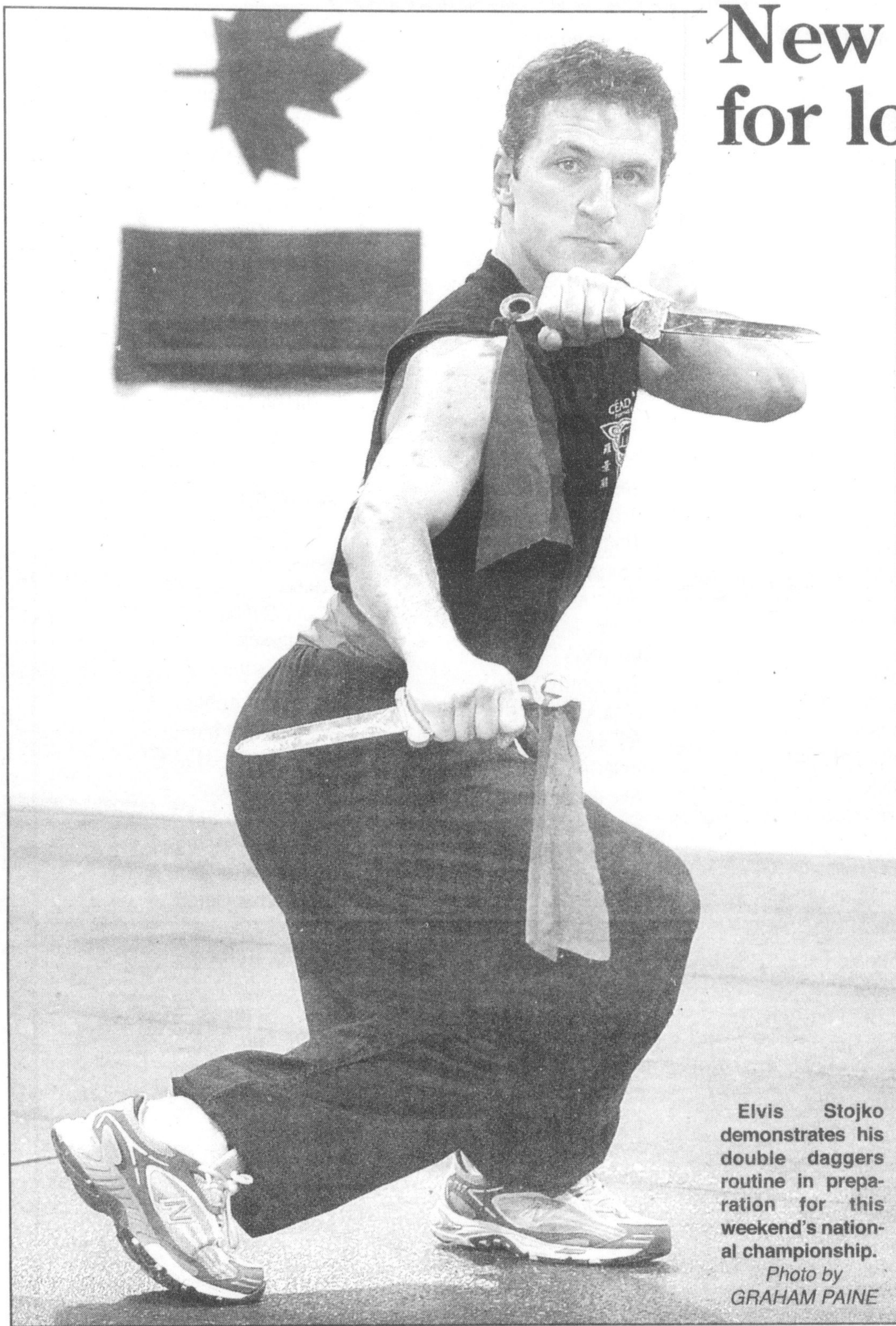


Sports

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New challenges to meet for locally-trained Stojko

Now focused on kung fu competition, Elvis eyes world championship berth

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Elvis Stojko no doubt gained his share of local fans during a wildly-successful figure skating career.

Now Miltonians have even more reason to cheer him on, since his latest athletic endeavours bring him to town on a regular basis.

Training locally for the past several months with longtime friend and kung fu instructor Sifu Glen Doyle — who recently opened up Céad Bua Fighting Faction on Main Street — 33-year-old Stojko is set to make his national championship debut in martial arts this weekend in Hull, Quebec.

Competing in open hand forms and weapons, using double daggers, he's part of a three-member Céad Bua contingent hoping to secure top-five honours and a subsequent berth to November's W.K.A./I.A.K.S.A. World Championships in Niagara Falls.

That's a lofty goal for a first-timer at nationals, although Stojko's anything but a newcomer when it comes to martial arts — which he's been studying since the age of 10. "Some people are probably saying 'Oh look, he wants to be known as a martial artist now,' but it was ingrained in me from a very young age," explained the three-time world champion skater, who also teaches at Céad Bua when not on one of his North American skating show tours. "Martial arts was never just a hobby with me. It's a part of my life."

Stojko received his black belt in karate at age 16, but would eventually grow tired of that discipline.

"I found it limiting, like I was treading water. I was stagnant and bored."

Waiting in the wings was a 1989 meeting with then Toronto-based Sifu Doyle — through brother Attila — and subsequent cross-over to kung fu, a more aggressive and combat-oriented martial art form that's held Stojko's interest ever since.

He was even able to incorporate many of Sifu Doyle's techniques into his skating, much like a number of other elite-level athletes have done with their own sports.

Stressed Stojko, "I was very fortunate to meet him."

That admiration goes both ways, particularly since under Sifu Doyle's tutelage the world championship hopeful is showing as much passion and dedication as he ever did in figure skating.

"He's focused and ready to capture a world championship in a totally new field," said the Céad Bua owner and operator. "I'm 100 per cent sure he'll qualify for the Canadian World Team this weekend. Elvis has the experience and elite confidence to go right to the top."

Stojko concurs with his mentor's assessment, adding that he "knows the formula for what it takes to be successful," which has allowed him to jump forward quite quickly in kung fu.

That was evident earlier this spring, when he took top honours in open hand forms and finished a close second in weapons in national qualifying competition.

Stojko said he's not really feeling the pressure he once did before a world championship or Olympic figure skating event, but feels he doesn't really need it anyway.

"I've always been self-motivated, and after you've competed for so many years you know how to bring your best performance when you have to," he said. "I think my chances are pretty good (to reach worlds). I know I can do it."

Elvis Stojko demonstrates his double daggers routine in preparation for this weekend's national championship.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE



MILTON MINOR HOCKEY ASSOCIATION

P.O. Box 37 Milton, ON L9T 2Y3

Milton Minor Hockey Association Annual General Meeting

Date: Wednesday, May 25th 2005 at 7:00pm

Location: Banquet Hall at the Milton Sports Centre

Proposed amendments to the MMHA Constitution will be voted upon. Copies of the proposed constitution are available in the "Forms Download" area of the MMHA website www.miltonwinterhawks.com or copies are available by contacting Craig O'Neil at the MMHA office 905-875-8340.

Nominations for a position on the Board of Directors may be submitted to the Secretary, in writing, prior to the annual general meeting of from the floor during the meeting. Written notification should be addressed to the MMHA Secretary, via mail at PO Box 37, Milton, ON L9T-2Y3 or may be hand delivered to the MMHA office in Rink B at the Milton Sports Centre.

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