

IceHawks' top gunner provides both creativity and consistency

High-flying winger Matt Read rarely held off the scoresheet

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Banking on the IceHawks to win has been a pretty safe bet this season. So too has the expectation of production from their leading scorer.

While Matt Read's on-ice artistry and electricity have no doubt delighted local fans, his real value these days lies in his consistency. As offensively reliable as any Milton Jr. A player in recent memory, the 5'10", 175 lbs. right winger has recorded at least one point in 19 of 23 games, has scored in 13 of them and has put together nine multi-point performances — the most recent coming in a two-goal, two-assist night against Bramalea Tuesday.

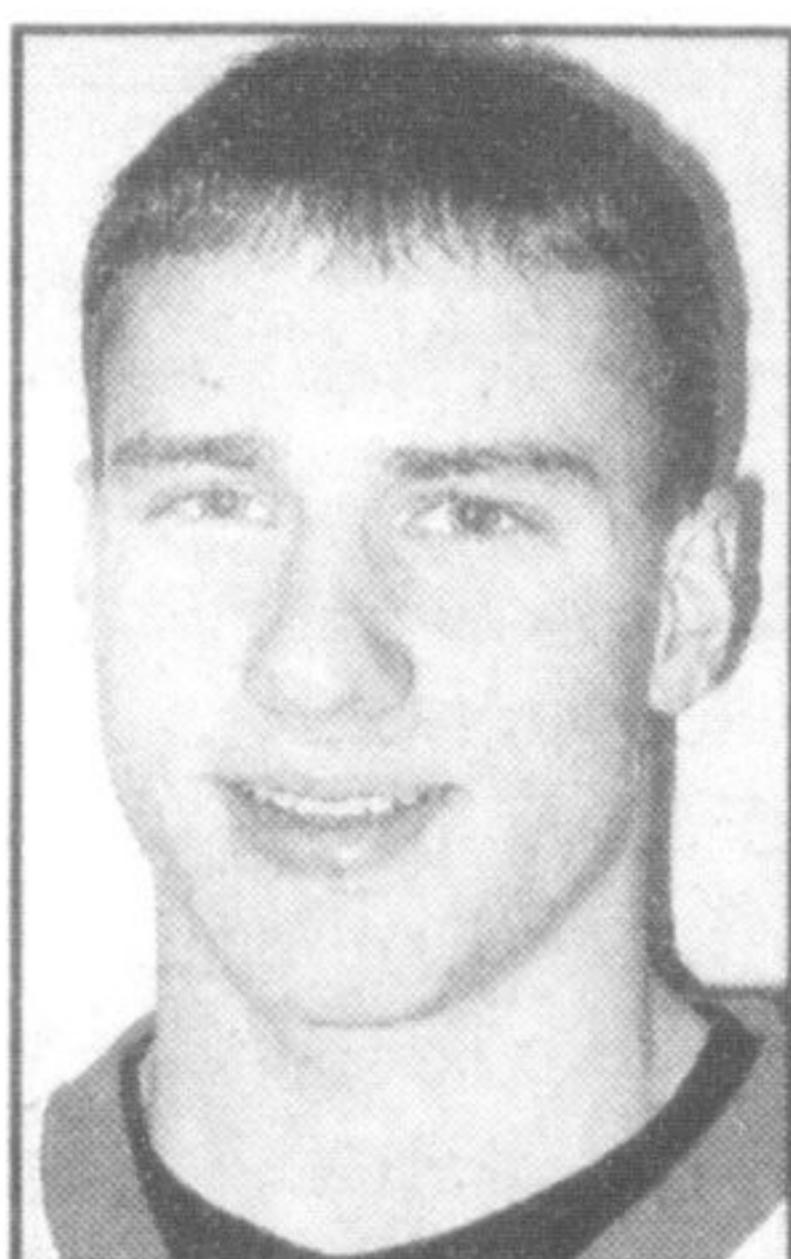
Not too shabby for someone who was playing Jr. D near his hometown of Ilderton just two years ago.

"After this summer's Chowder Cup Tournament in Boston, we realized Matt could challenge for our scoring lead," said head coach/general manager George Dupont of his top producer — who has 20 goals and 17 assists. "I've said it before and I'll back it up that I think Matt's the best player in this division."

Read has made a compelling argument for that claim with a first half of the season that's included an 11-game point streak, during which he lit the lamp nine times and added 10 helpers.

Quickly reestablishing his productive ways after being held off the scoresheet in Oakville November 12, he's now riding a three-game point streak — with back-to-back four-point efforts in his last two outings.

"No, I certainly wasn't this consistent last year," admitted 19-year-old Read, who ran a little more hot and cold while amassing 52 points and being named to the rookie all-star game with last



Matt Read

year's St. Mary's Lincolns of the Western Jr. B League.

While his numbers can be largely attributed to above-average speed and exceptional vision, the IceHawks' biggest offensive threat isn't about to take all the credit for his smooth transition to the Tier 2 Jr. A ranks.

But then as part of one of the best front-line attacks in the league, it would be hard not to pass along some praise to his fellow forwards.

"My linemates are great and we've just got a lot of chemistry out there," noted

Read, who has at least a point in all 13 Milton home games so far. "When we're in front of the net the puck usually finds one of our sticks."

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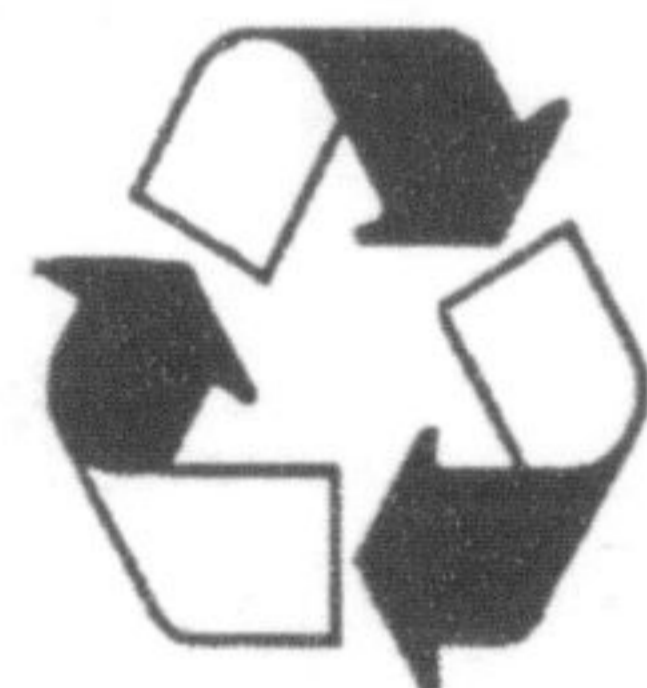
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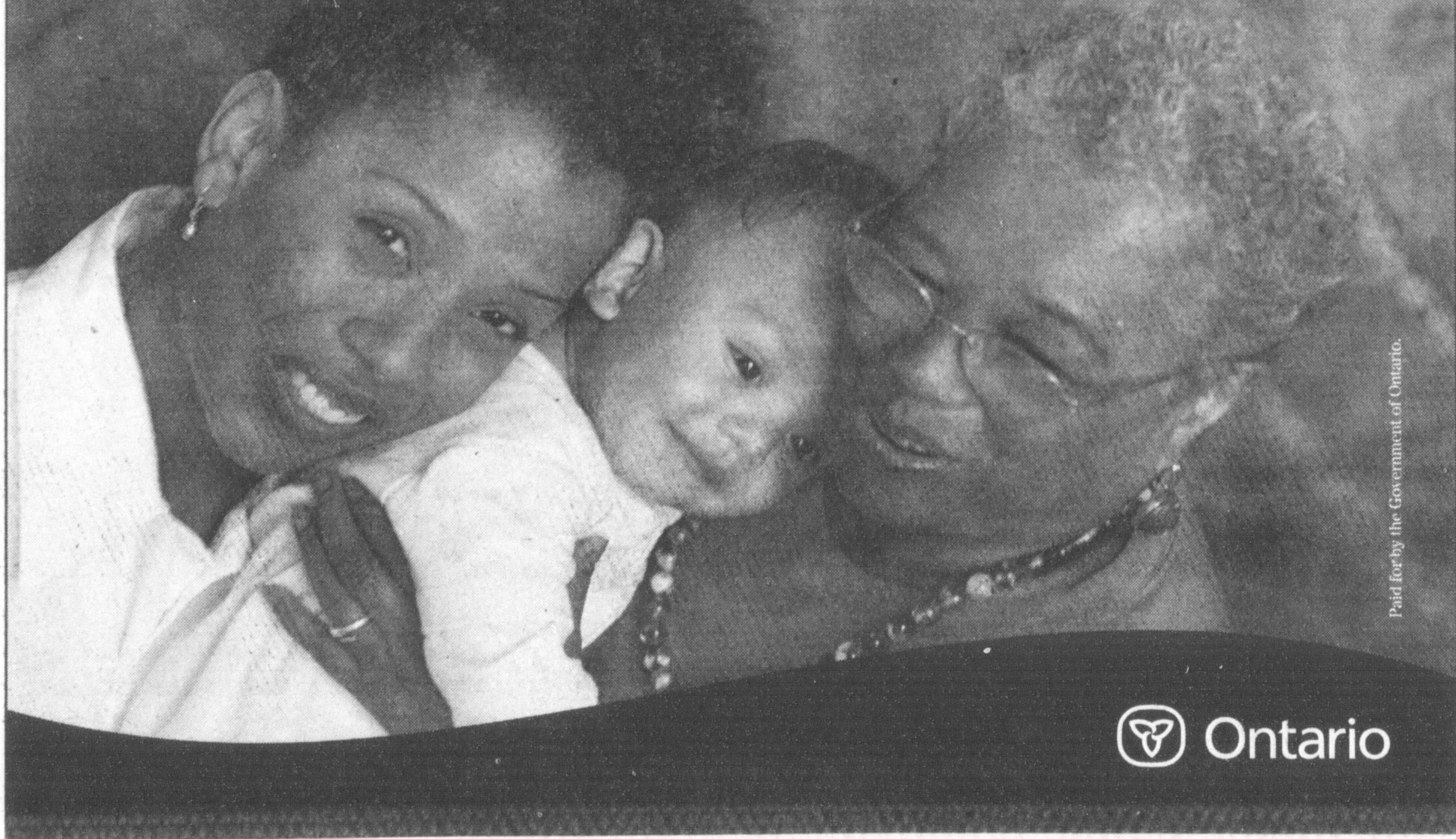
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