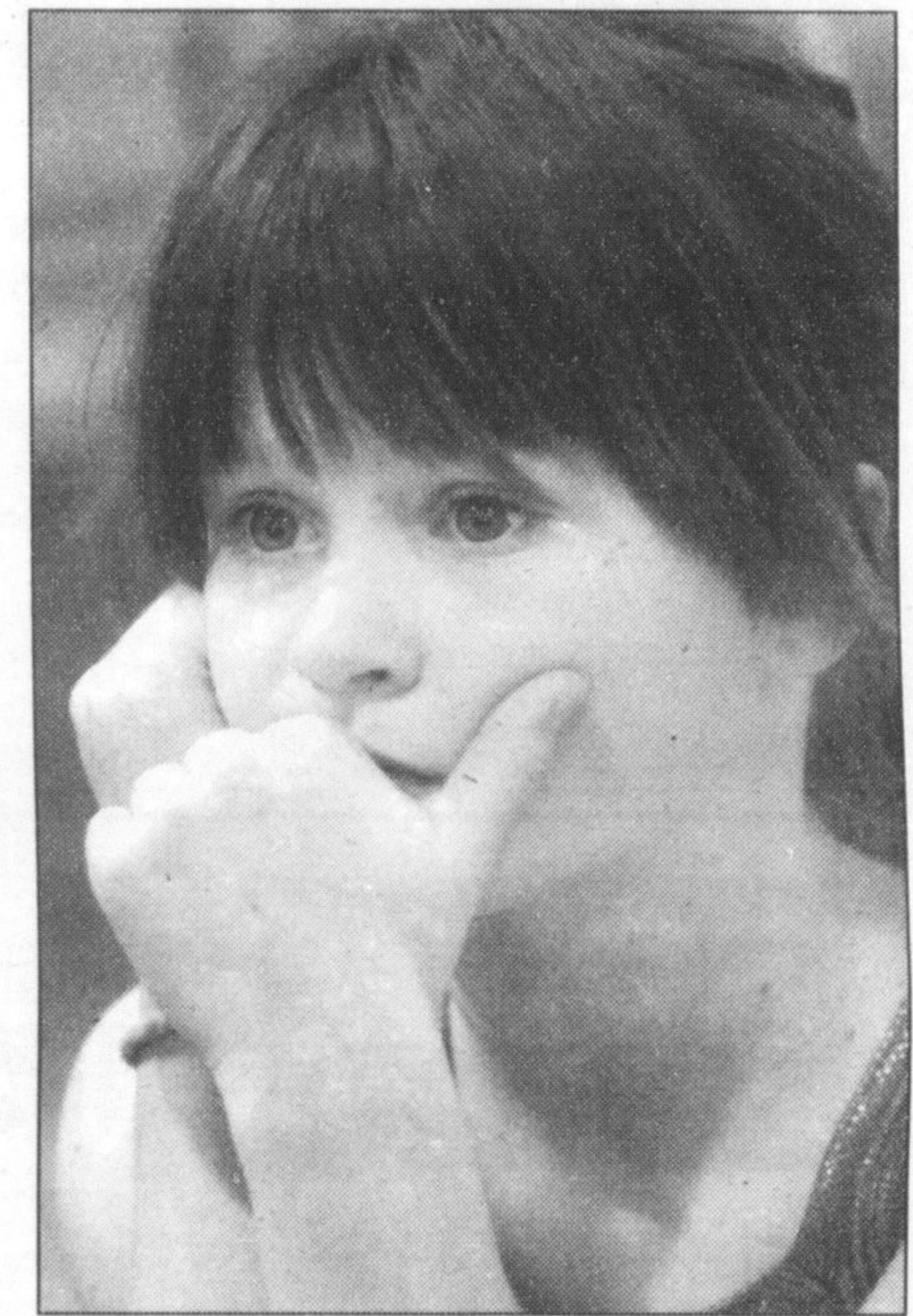


# SPORTS

SPORTS EDITOR: STEVE LeBLANC e-mail sleblanc@haltontsearch.com



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

**SKILLFUL SHOWCASE:** Ten-year-old gymnast Heather Sadler performs a handstand atop the highbar (above) as part of her uneven bars routine and then sticks her landing (top right) during the Milton Springers' annual Gymstrada showcase Sunday. At right, fellow Springer Keira Brodie studies some of the older gymnasts.

## IceHawks suffer game-three humbling

*First loss for Milton in own barn this season*

By Herb Garbutt  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

As the IceHawks' fan filed out of Memorial Arena Wednesday night — having just witnessed their team come out on the losing end at home for the first time all season — there was an eerie silence.

But while the fans were reacting as though they had just attended a funeral, the players were far from rolling over and playing dead.

"We weren't expecting to roll through the playoffs undefeated," said Aaron Lewicki, whose team still holds a 2-1 lead over the Oakville Blades in the best-of seven Western Conference semifinal. "It's tough to lose at

home, but we're still in the driver's seat. It's not the end of the world."

Still, for a team who went 27 straight games at home without a loss, a sound 7-2 thrashing was a stunning way for its unbeaten streak to come to an end.

The IceHawks didn't do themselves any favours, digging themselves into a 3-0 hole in the first period. But as they have done so many times this year, they responded.

Just 37 seconds after Daniel Borges' short-handed goal gave Oakville a three-goal cushion, Chase Langerap scored on the same powerplay. With the IceHawks still enjoying a five-on-three advantage, Matt Price cut the lead to one and it looked as though the TSN turning point was unfolding before the Milton fans.

That defining moment came early in the second, but it was provided by Oakville captain Lane Moodie, who scored with the man-advantage.

The Blades' Brendan Taylor then restored the three-goal lead midway through the period, chasing Milton starter Zach Kleiman as the air of invincibility slowly seeped out of Memorial like a deflating balloon.

While the IceHawks certainly didn't pack it in — they fired 17 of their 46 shots at Oakville netminder David Scamurra in the third period — former Milton forward Brendan DeFazio delivered the knockout punch 5:34 into the final frame.

"They had their backs against the wall and they played really desperate hockey," Lewicki said. "They had the hot hand in net. Their goalie stood on his head. But we're still confident here. We just went nearly 30

games without a loss here and they still have to beat us two more times here."

The IceHawks will have to be aware of more than Matt Beca. While Milton punished the conference MVP at every opportunity — they took two penalties on one play for a pair of slashes on him — they have to be aware that Oakville has other players capable of scoring. While they held Beca to a single assist, the Blades had seven different goal scorers.

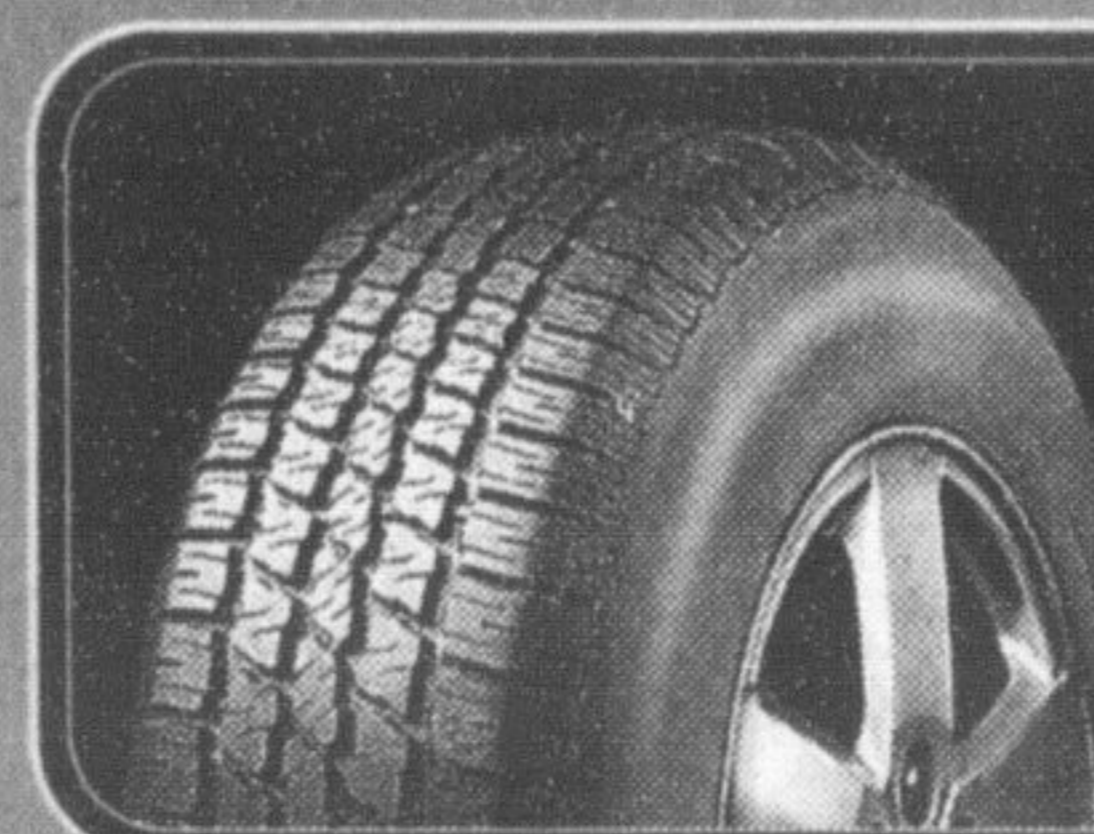
They'll also have to improve on the powerplay. Apart from the pair of five-on-three goals, the IceHawks were 0-for-11 with the single extra attacker.

Game three goes tonight in Oakville at 7:30 p.m., while the teams return to Memorial Sunday at 3 p.m. for game five. If necessary, game six will be played in Oakville Monday at 7:30 p.m.

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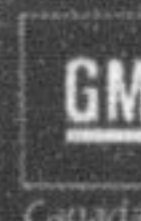
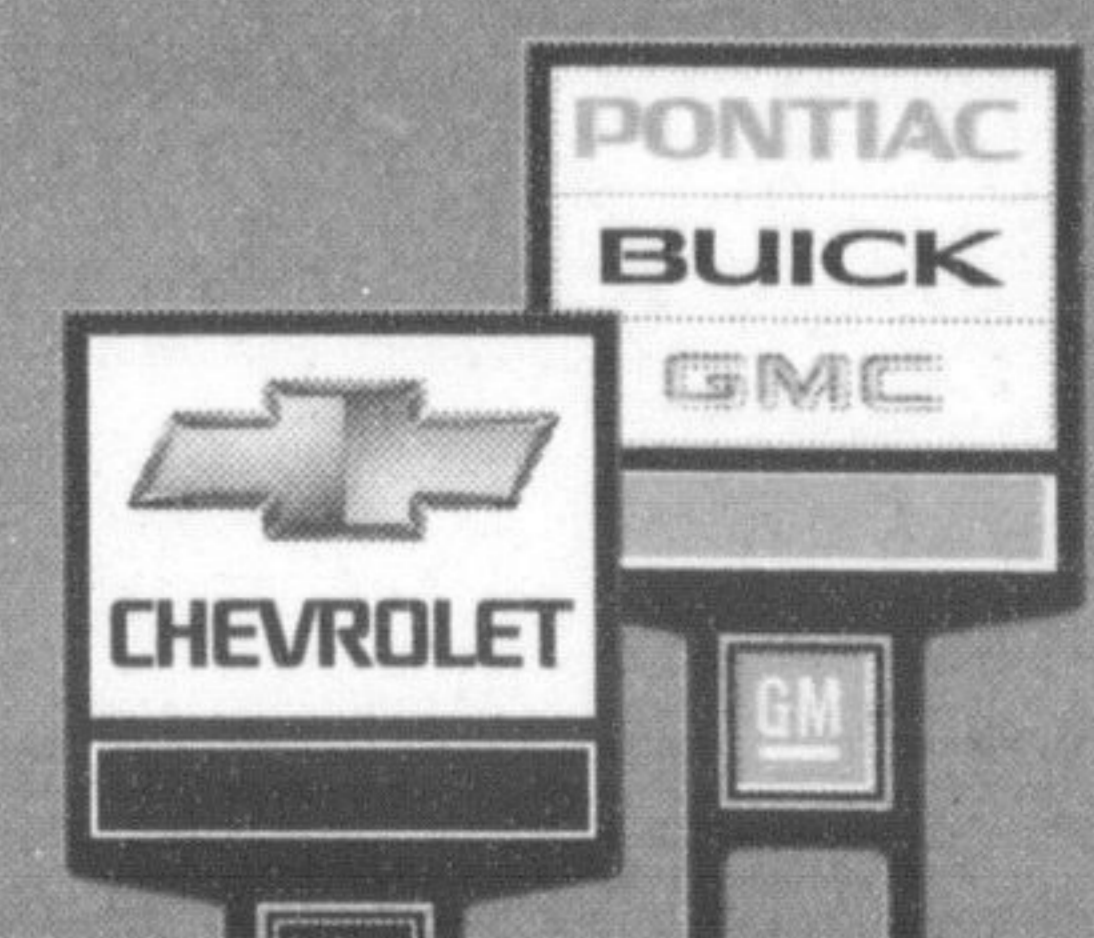


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