

# SPORTS

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## Spartans reclaim OFSAA championship

*Moffat, Shermet golden as Drury wrestles team title back from Hagersville*

By STEVE LeBLANC  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

**B**ack on top. Re-establishing themselves as the premier wrestling contingent in the province, the E.C. Drury Spartans took back the OFSAA team title in Sarnia Thursday afternoon — securing it for a sixth time in seven years with an overall 131-119 decision over defending champion Hagersville.

While that point differential was wider than Drury's previous three victories, head coach Larry Jaroslowski — Ontario's most accomplished high school wrestling instructor — said this year's win was arguably the most hard-fought since the dynasty began in 2000.

"We won it with our depth and by everyone looking after their own business and not worrying about things out of their control," remarked Jaroslowski,

whose Spartans have now captured nine consecutive team medals — two more than any other school in OFSAA history.

With two-time champion Gary Ferrier losing in the semifinals and fellow medal hopeful Kevin Iwasa-Madge missing a trip to the top six, it looked as though Jaroslowski's troops would have to once again play second fiddle to Hagersville.

But Drury eventually outdistanced its chief rivals with three out of four wins in the finals — including gold-medal triumphs by Alan Moffat and Kyle Shermet. The OFSAA veterans each went 5-0 over the three-day provincial meet and reached the top of the podium with tough title wins.

Upgrading last year's bronze, 17-year-old Moffat scored two pins and a couple of superiority victories to make it to the 57.5-kilogram finals — then upstaged Thorold's Adam Bartlett with one of his trademark clutch performances.

"I got behind him with about 20 seconds left and forced him out of bounds for the last point," recalled the 12th grader, who'd only surrendered two points en route to the gold-medal showdown and battled hard to avoid a seemingly-certain pin to Bartlett in round one. "It was a back-and-forth match and it was pretty amazing to win and secure the gold. That's been my goal for four years and to finally achieve it feels great. I was really focused this year and that was the big difference."

Having a more difficult time on the way to gold, 18-year-old Shermet had to rally from first-round losses in his first



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

**FRUITS OF THEIR LABOUR:** Above, Spartans (from left) Alan Moffat, Bobby Fillman and Kyle Shermet proudly display their individual OFSAA medals, while (inset left) Drury's 13-member OFSAA contingent pose with the team championship banner and trophy.

two matches. He'd then employ some superb defence to blank both his quarterfinal and semifinal opponents before edging Jamie Buck of Ottawa 1-0, 3-2 for top spot among the 83-kg. combatants.

"I shot in to grab the first point and basically just wrestled smart the rest of the way," said the fifth-year Spartan.

Shermet's gold-medal win represented the biggest improvement for any of Drury's OFSAA returnees — since he'd finished fifth last year in Brampton.

But his championship victory was hardly a shocker, not after some sensational efforts leading up to OFSAA.

"The expectations were kind of high since I'd been wrestling well lately. I'm pretty euphoric about this (OFSAA win), but at the same time I'm not sure it's completely sunk in yet."

Rounding out the Spartans' individual medal haul was rookie Bobby Fillman, who with poise and technical proficiency beyond his years took bronze in the 41-kg. division.

Rebounding from a narrow defeat in the quarterfinals, the Spartan youngster reeled off four straight wins — including a pin-fall over Port Credit's Kevin Gibson in the battle for bronze. That gave him his 11th medal of the season and made him only the second Drury freshman to ever reach the OFSAA podium.

While Ferrier's fourth-place showing was no doubt disappointing for the two-time gold medalist, the fifth-year wrestler holds the distinction of being the only Spartan to finish top-six at OFSAA four years in a row.

Iwasa-Madge and sophomore Blake Elliot cracked the top eight. Iwasa-Madge lost a close three-round decision to eventual champion Tommy Carroll of Heart Lake after two early wins, while Elliot's 4-2 showing was a pleasant surprise for Drury and bodes well for his future.

Placing top-12 were Mac Fillman and Chris Flannigan. Drury's OFSAA squad also included J.D. Davies, Matt Ganpat, Ranbir Hans, Matt Mantin and Jared Robb.

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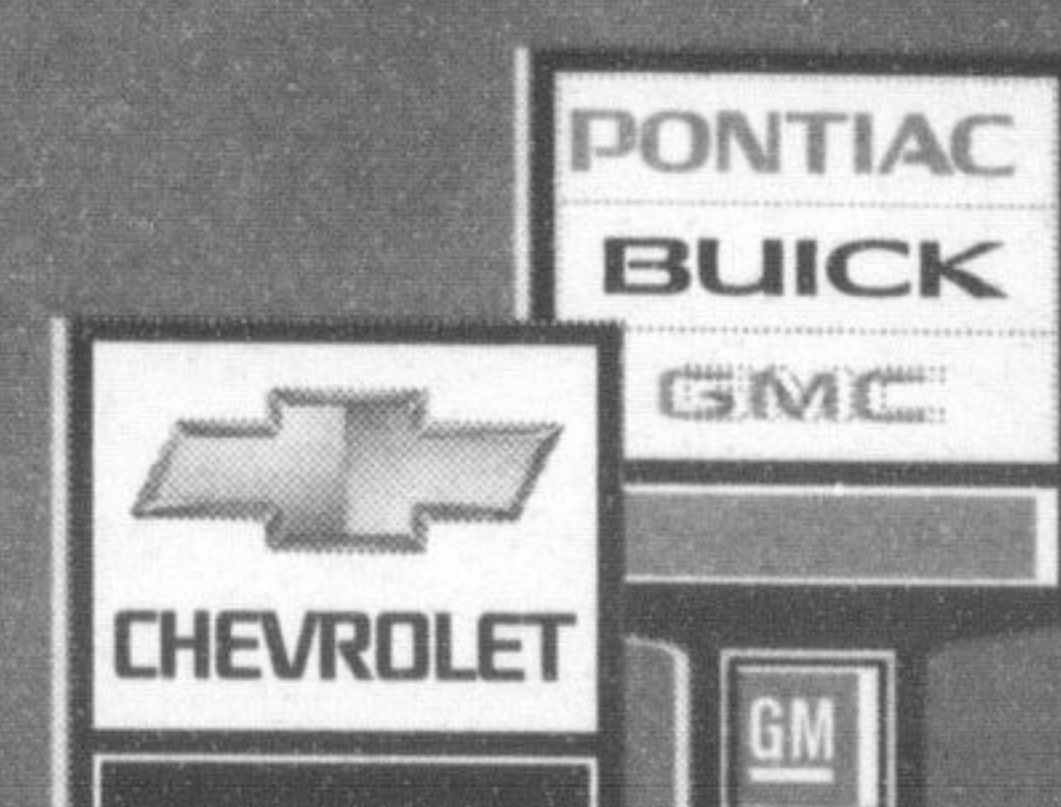
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