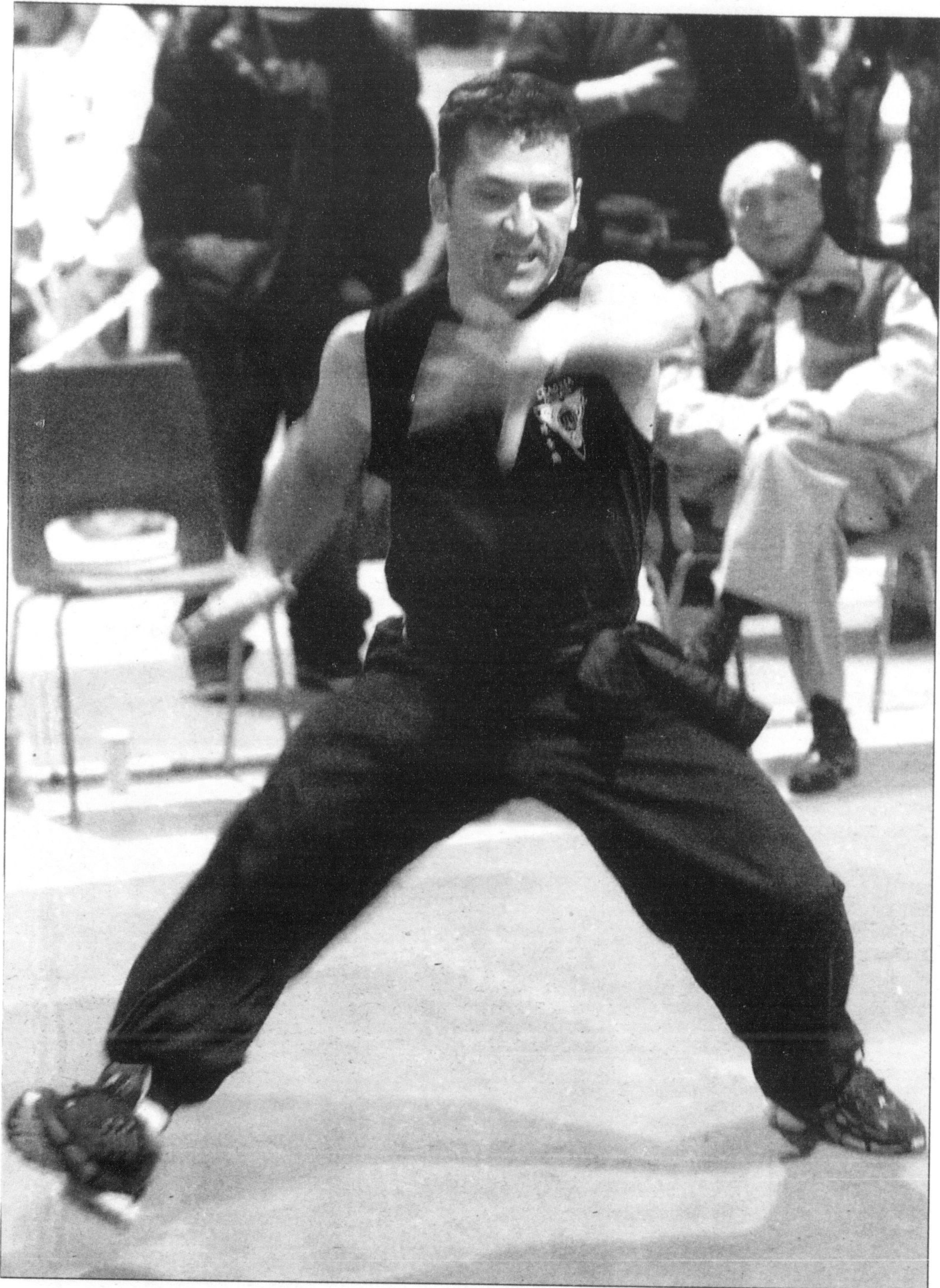


SPORTS

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

IN PERFECT FORM: Locally trained at the Céad Bua Fighting Arts Centre, Elvis Stojko competes in the 18 to 34-year-old traditional kung fu advanced forms at Saturday's Greater Toronto Martial Arts Championships at John Tonelli Sports Centre. Looking on (at right) is his Grandmaster, Sifu Lore King Hong. Stojko won both the forms event and his weapons class, and went on to be crowned grand champion. The event featured roughly 300 competitors — including others from the host club as well as the Milton School of Jiu Jitsu and Fighting Griffin Martial Arts — and raised about \$9,000 for Rose Cherry's Home for Kids. For another photo at the event, see page A20.

Ellison gearing up for Royal Bank Cup

Despite longshot status, host Derbys shouldn't be counted out, says local winger

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Steve Ellison has never been one to put too much stock in what the so-called hockey experts have to say, and perhaps that's just as well.

If he did, the 20-year-old Miltonian would likely be looking upon next month's Royal Bank Cup (RBC) with dread rather than as the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity that it is.

Part of the team that'll host the Tier 2 Jr. A nationals at the Brampton Poweraid Centre May 6 to 14, Ellison and his Streetsville Derbys are being given practically no chance for victory — at least according to talk at local arenas and recent postings on a popular Internet forum. To hear some fans tell, the Derbys hosts won't just fall short of a national title, but will fall embarrassingly short.

At one point there was even some speculation that Streetsville would find itself with a severely depleted lineup by the time the RBC rolled around, with a lengthy layoff causing some players to simply jump ship.

"I don't know where that came from — everyone here knows what's in front of us and what a big opportunity this is," said the third-year right winger, whose RBC hosts are now in the late stages of a two-and-a-half month hiatus before the nationals — having been eliminated in first-round Provincial Jr. A playoff action by Georgetown February 21. "Basically



Steve Ellison

we're just trying to ignore the critics and stay focused."

Ellison need only look back to last spring to throw a giant-size monkey wrench into the naysayers' no-chance-in-hell-for-Streetsville outlook. Much like this year's Derbys, the 2005 RBC host Weyburn Red Wing sat around for two months after being put out in the round one — but brought it all together once the country's top teams hit Saskatchewan.

"Anything can happen at this level, I think the Milton IceHawks going out in the second round proves that," said Ellison, referring to his hometown club's shockingly-early departure from the playoffs. "Anybody can beat anybody. Sure we're not the most talented team out there and we've taken some bumps this season, but if everyone brings 100 per cent, we've got no doubt that we can compete."

That optimism stems partly from personal experience, since the former Halton Hurricane is no stranger to

• see BREAK on page A20

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