

# SPORTS

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**HOME SWEET HOME:** Notre Dame Irish outfielder Mark Surya handily beats the throw home to Milton District Mustang catcher Brandon Banaschewski for the winning run — courtesy of a sixth-inning sacrifice fly by Trevor Woodjets — in Wednesday afternoon's Halton championship at Nelson Stadium in Burlington. The Mustangs were beat 2-0 by the powerhouse Irish to finish out a memorable playoff drive. For full results, see page A21.

RON KUZYK / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

## '06 Marauders have a lot to live up to

*Kick off season tomorrow night in Oshawa*

The problem with being too good is — well — being too good.

Any team as successful as the Milton Marauders knows the feeling. There's nowhere to go but down.

Disgruntled players good enough to start for other teams sit on the bench, egos run out of control, every team in the league guns for you; anything but a championship is a disappointment and newspaper writers find something negative to take from even an undefeated regular season.

The good thing about being good is winning, and that's something the Marauders know how to do — and expect to do again this year.

In a somewhat surprising development, head coach Barry Emo is back with the team after declaring his intention to step down last summer. He listed several reasons, including being less exhausted than he ini-

tially expected, and learning new and better coaching techniques during his time at the University of Guelph.

There's also no doubt that romping through the regular season and then losing to a team in the playoffs they should have beaten didn't sit well with him. Not that he has anything to prove, already with a national championship under his belt.

Even so, this year's Marauders will be run much differently. If players aren't committed to the team, then the team won't be committed to them. "We have a different approach to pretty much everything on this football team," said Emo, whose gridiron warriors kick off 2006 play tomorrow evening in Oshawa. "We're sticking to the team concept. I told the guys that the finished puzzle looks like a championship. We have to fit all the pieces together and if one piece doesn't fit, we'll go out and find another piece that



with MURRAY TOWNSEND

### Out in left field

does fit."

On the field, the Marauders still haven't committed to a starting quarterback. Returning to the fold are both outstanding fill-in Josh Spanick and the man he replaced early last season due to injury — Domenic Camastro. Also on board are Neil Balthazaar, who's played with Tri-City and has CIAU experience at Guelph, and Ryan McGill, the Marauders' pivot in their inaugural season.

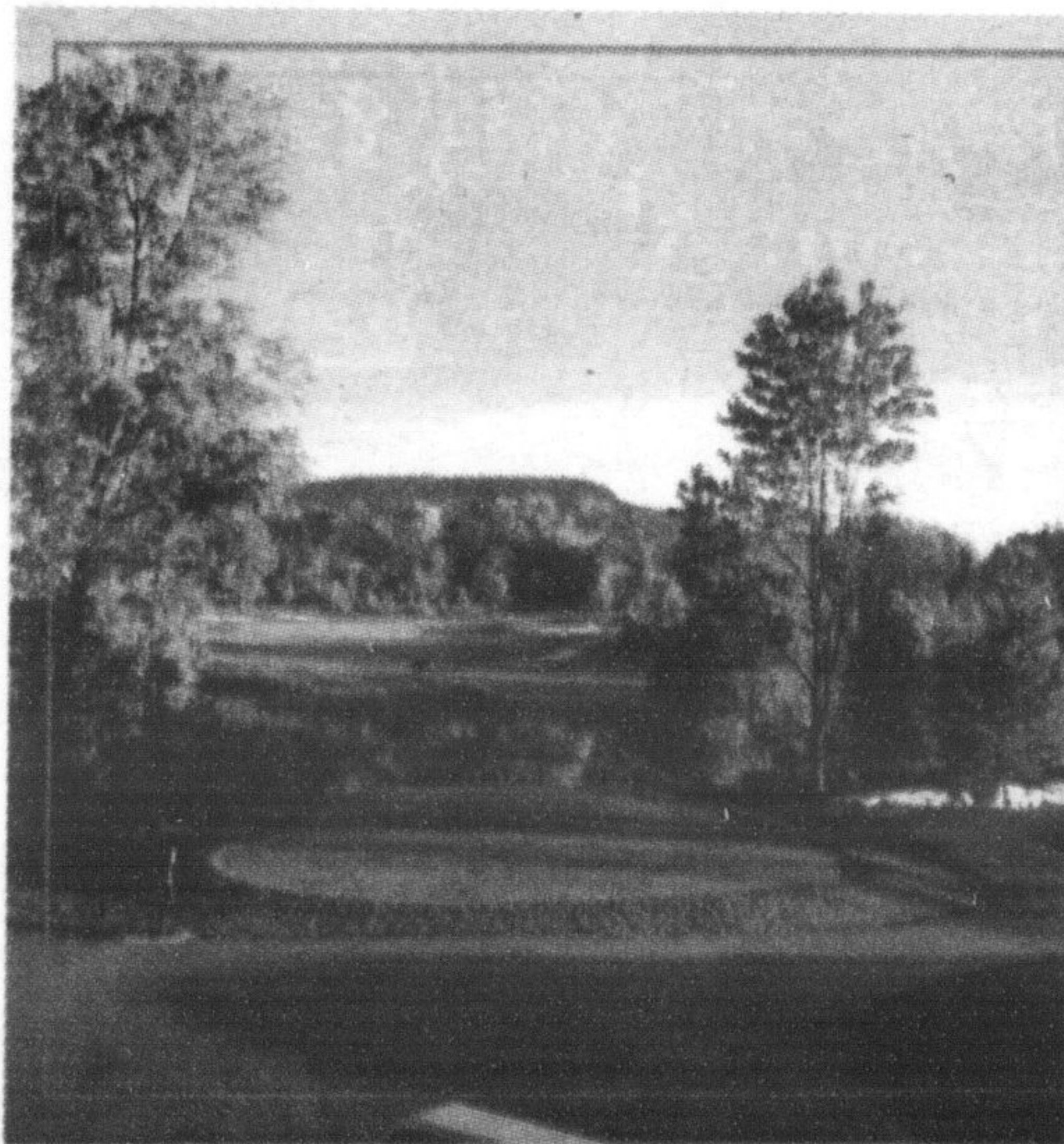
At running back, Steve Lubin has left the team to join the Markham Raiders. That hurts, but the Marauders still have team-

leading rusher Jon Nedeljkovic, plus Chad Kennedy from Oakville and P.J. Williams, who's moving up from the Burlington Braves. John D'Ovidio and Nigel Wilkinson are returnees at the fullback position. Milton's Mike Long is expected to play, and also back is fan favourite Joel 'Mighty Mouse' Guevarra.

The receiving unit will be revamped, with the two leaders in receptions from last season no longer with the team. Andy Taylor has also defected to Markham and Theon James is not playing this year. Jamie Radway has returned and Elvis Moorings, a six-foot-seven-inch slotback has moved over from Oakville. There are a couple of university receivers in camp and returnee Chris Green and Milton's Dan Johnson and Matt MacPhail are in the mix as well.

The offensive line took a huge hit, with most of the starters from last season deciding to hang up the pads, but Emo feels they've recruited well and that the position might be

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