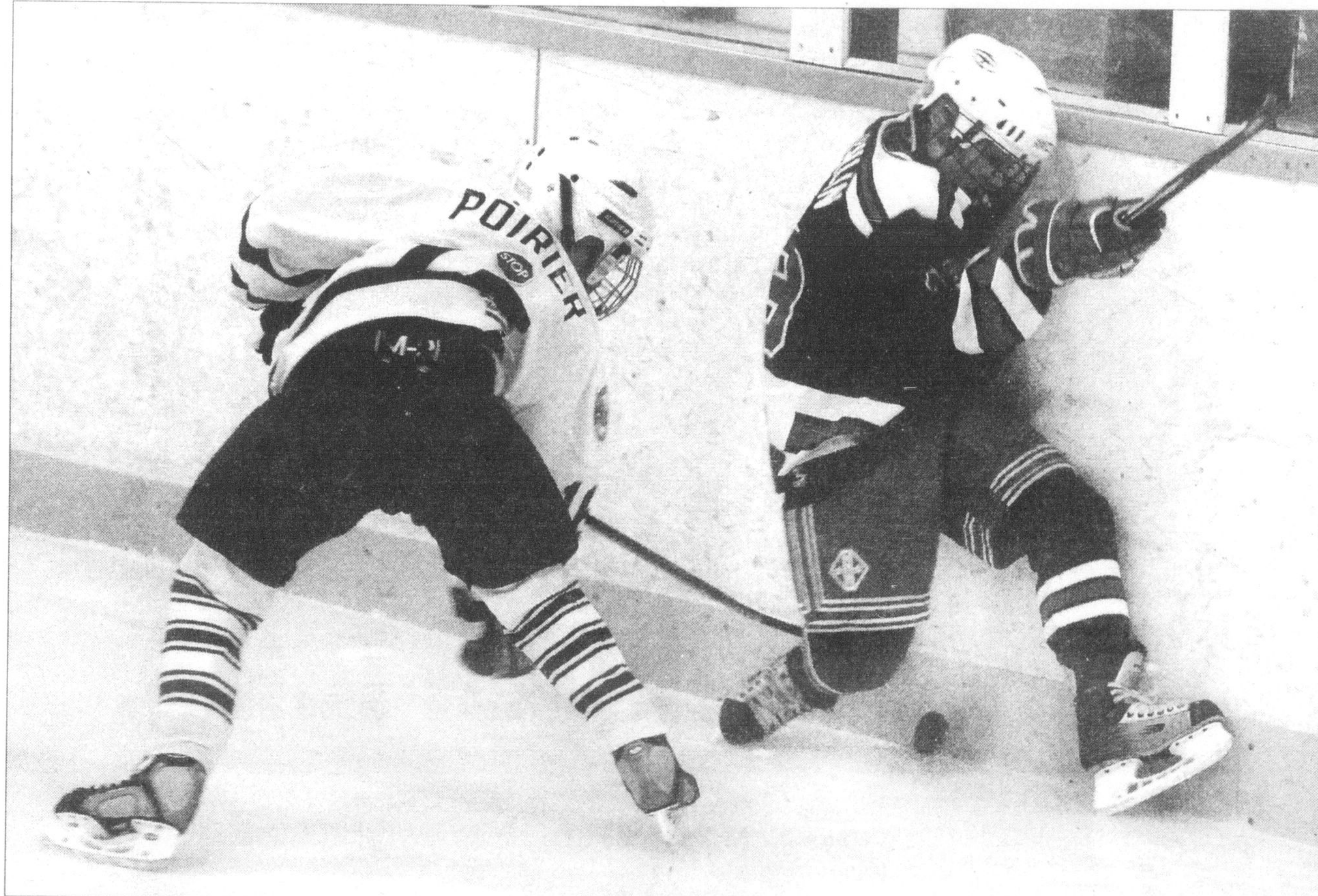


# SPORTS

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

**BOARD MEETING:** Adam Poirier of the Milton Winterhawks tried to dig the puck free as an Oakville opponent struggles to keep his balance in Sunday's OMHA minor peewee AA game at Memorial Arena. Oakville won 3-1 to complete a sweep of the two week-end games against Milton.

## Unbeaten Royals battle for first place

Senior hoops squad aims for another title shot

By Herb Garbutt  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

They've played nice — sharing the Halton North Division lead all season — but Wednesday will be the end of the pleasantries as the Bishop Reding Royals and Georgetown Rebels meet for the first time this season.

Both teams began the week sporting a perfect 4-0 record and barring an upset in Monday's senior boys basketball action, they'll be playing for first place on Wednesday.

The Royals, Halton finalists at the AA level the past two years, are again serving notice that they will battle for a title. Starters Al Alilovic, Lee Mathe and Lance Codner are back this season and the Royals have also been bolstered by the addition of Aaron Alston, a 6-foot-4 forward who joins Reding after transferring from cross-town rival Milton District. Alston gives Reding two big men for opponents to contend with meaning they simply can't key on the 6-foot-6 Alilovic.

Alilovic had 34 points in Reding's most recent victory a 71-49 triumph over Acton while Stephan Gray had 15 and Alston added 10.

Zac Scholtz and Joey Melo have also stepped into bigger roles, helping offset the loss of veterans Lee Mathe and

•see REDING on page A25

## Local trio named to national show jumping team

By Herb Garbutt  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Ainsley Vince has been a fixture on the Canadian show jumping team for more than a decade but she was still a little surprised by the news that she had been named to the national team for 2007.

"I did not have a stellar year," Vince said from Wellington, Florida where she is training for the upcoming season.

Still, it was good enough to land her on the 20-member Canadian team where she'll be joined by her sister Courtney, Campbellville's Mike Grinyer and former Milton resident Eryn Ballard.

This winter will be especially important for Vince. After a great 13-year partnership with Catch-22, her reliable horse will be retiring from competition and the 30-year-old rider

will be working with two new horses. With Catch-22, Ainsley made three World Cup finals, won the 2001 and 2002 Canadian show jumping championship and helped Canada win the 2000 Nations Cup.

"He's been wonderful. He doesn't owe me anything," Ainsley said of the 17-year-old Dutch Warmblood gelding. "Very few horses are able to sustain success for that long. There comes a certain time, though, where they just do what they used to."

Ainsley did get an opportunity to ride Top Gun, one of the two new horses she will compete with this year, last year in Florida. She will also ride Kantaro II, which like Top Gun, is owned by Caledon's Iron Horse Farm.

"I've been very fortunate," Ainsley said. "When you've got someone willing to help you and back you with two horses, they've been wonderfully supportive."

While there will be an adjustment, Ainsley said the seven-year-old Top Gun should just be coming into his prime.

"It takes a smart horse as well as an athletic horse," she said. "Some have the ability but never pan out because the heart isn't there but he seems to have the whole package."

Parting ways with a long-time ride is not new to Courtney, although the circumstances in her case had tragic consequences. After seven years riding Jasper, the horse became ill and died.

"It's hard because there's a lot of emotional attachment," Courtney said.

Since Jasper's death two and a half years ago, Courtney has been riding Nalla, a 11-year-old Dutch Warmblood mare.

While Nalla lacked experience, they reached the Grand Prix level in the second year together. This fall, Courtney and Nalla

got some more valuable experience competing in Europe. She was to compete just twice but then earned an invitation to a competition in Belgium.

"It's one of the hardest places to show. The courses are bigger and more difficult than at home and there are a lot more horses and a lot more riders," Courtney said. "But it helped a lot. Every time you make a mistake you learn from it or you get confidence (if you don't make a mistake)."

Grinyer, who owns and operates his own stable in Campbellville, turned in a third-place finish at the Kubota Cup final and a ninth-place finish in the Canadian championships at the Royal Agricultural Winter Fair in Toronto in November.

Grinyer, who has had much success aboard Alcatraz, introduced a second horse, Garth, at the Grand Prix level last season.



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