

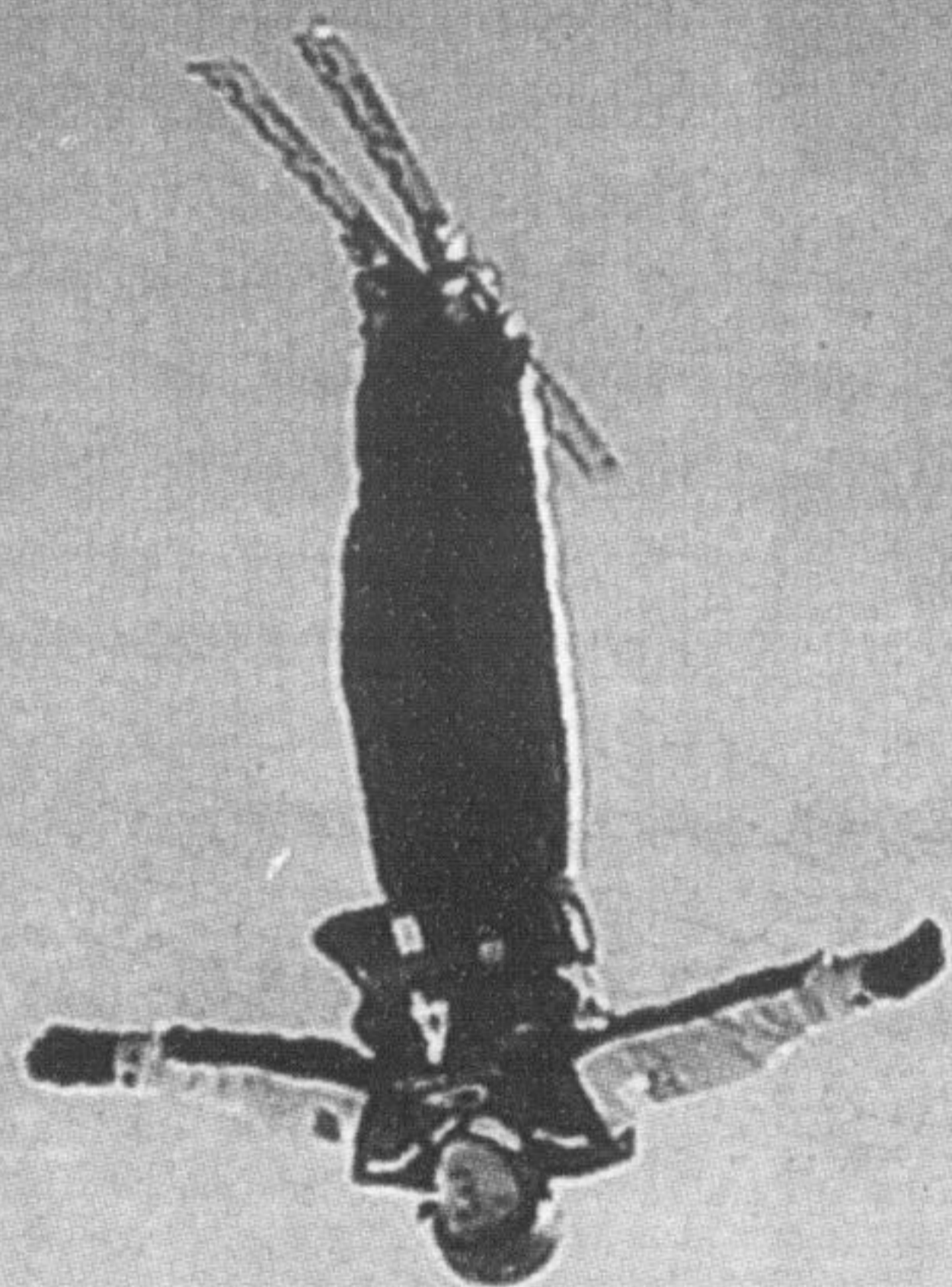
# SPORTS

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## Gerrits takes flight

*Teen part of national aerial development team*

By Herb Garbutt  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF



Nicolas Fontaine was already impressed after watching a 10-year-old Travis Gerrits win a big air competition in Mount Orford, Quebec.

When he found out how far the youngster and his brother Tyler had traveled for the competition, he knew he had something special.

"Wow, they're going out of their way to compete," Fontaine thought.

The Canadian aerials development team coach approached Gerrits to see if he would be interested in trying a new sport. "I had seen it on TV and dreamed of it," said the now 15-year-old Gerrits. "There just were no opportunities to do it."

Those opportunities still are very limited but at least Gerrits no longer has to leave the country. His first training sessions were held in Lake Placid, N.Y. because it was the closest water ramp for summer training. The Canadian Freestyle Ski Association has since built a facility in Le Relais, Quebec, which opened in 2004.

Gerrits has spent his last three summers in Quebec training. It's a sacrifice the Milton District High School 10th grader is willing to make to try to land a spot on the 2010 Canadian Olympic team.

While there may be older and more experienced aerialists ahead of him, Gerrits is not about to let his age hold him back. Late last month in Ste. Adele, Quebec, Gerrits turned in a perfect score on one of his jumps to earn his best ever-finish — fifth — on the Noram circuit,

a North American developmental series. He hopes to build on that this weekend at the next tour stop in Park City, Utah where he'll debut a new jump — a double twisting, double backflip.

Fontaine said Gerrits has been working on it for a while but the coaching staff hesitated to have him perform it in competition. That changed after Gerrits earned a perfect score — one of only three or four Fontaine has seen this season.

"You don't want to penalize him because of his age but we want him to go slow — make sure he's learning the basics — but he wants to follow the others," said Fontaine, a four-time World Cup aerials champion. "When he got the perfect score, I said, 'I think he's ready'."

Gerrits, despite being two years younger than any other member of the development team, has already compiled an impressive resumé just five years after taking up the sport. He won the junior nationals last year, improving on his second-place finish from the previous year. This year on the Noram circuit, he has improved with each event, from 11th to ninth to fifth.

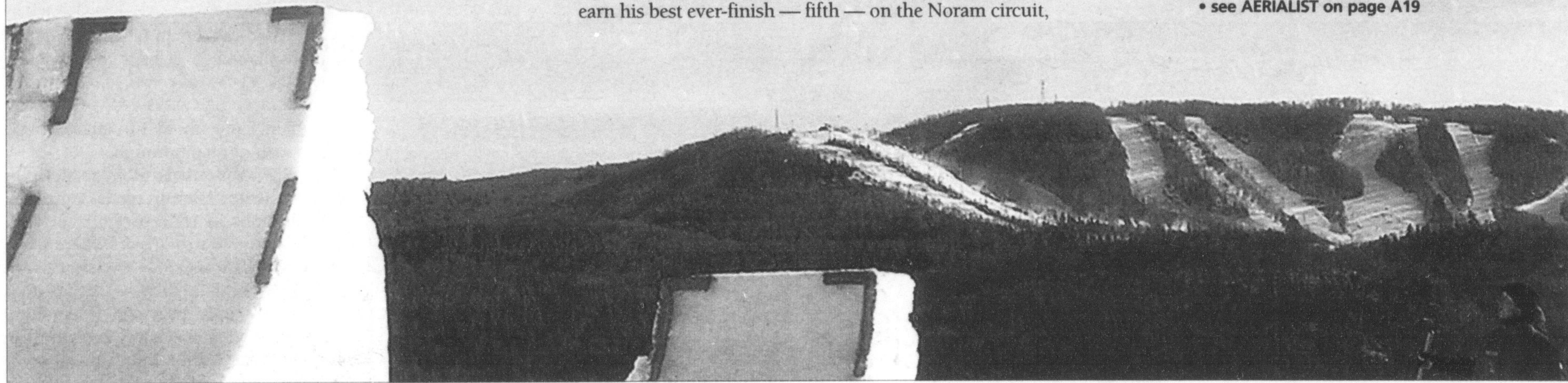
"Sometimes we forget he's so young because he's so good," Fontaine said. "He's really on the young side but his progression has been the same as the others."

Having skied since he was six, Gerrits also had a strong background in gymnastics, a sport from which many aerialist competitors have been recruited. He competed at the provincial level on trampoline and though he no longer competes, he still has a trampoline at home and uses it as a training tool.

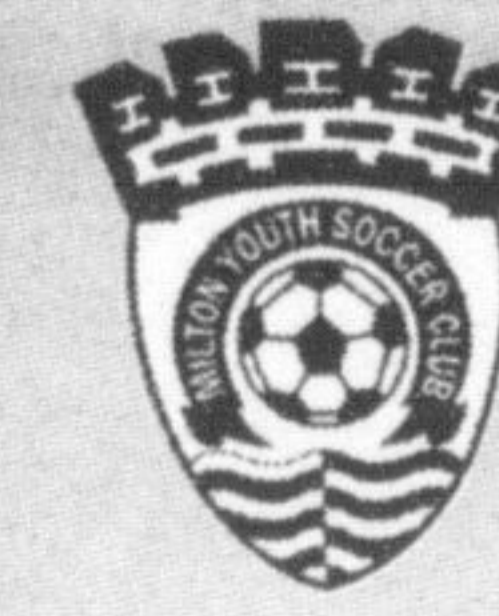
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**HANG TIME:** Travis Gerrits catches some air during competition at Mount Gabriel, Quebec.

ROB GERRITS /  
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION



### MILTON YOUTH SOCCER CLUB OUTDOOR SUMMER SEASON 2007 REGISTRATION DATES



*The Milton Youth Soccer Club Is The Only Ontario Soccer Association & Peel Halton Soccer Association Sanctioned & Insured Youth Club In Milton Bringing Great Soccer To The Youth Of Milton Since 1980.*

#### MILTON LEISURE CENTRE

Saturday February 10, 2007  
11:00am-5:00pm

Sunday February 11, 2007  
12:30pm-2:30pm

#### MILTON MALL

Saturday  
February 17, 2007  
10:00am-4:30pm

#### MYSC Now Accepting ALL STAR COACHES APPLICATIONS For 2007 Season

Applications may be dropped off to the office mailbox located at the Milton Leisure Centre to the attention of the President or mailed to the Club address.

All applications must be received by **Wednesday February 7, 2007**, to be considered for a team for the upcoming season.

Any questions may be directed to [headcoach@miltonmagic.com](mailto:headcoach@miltonmagic.com)



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