

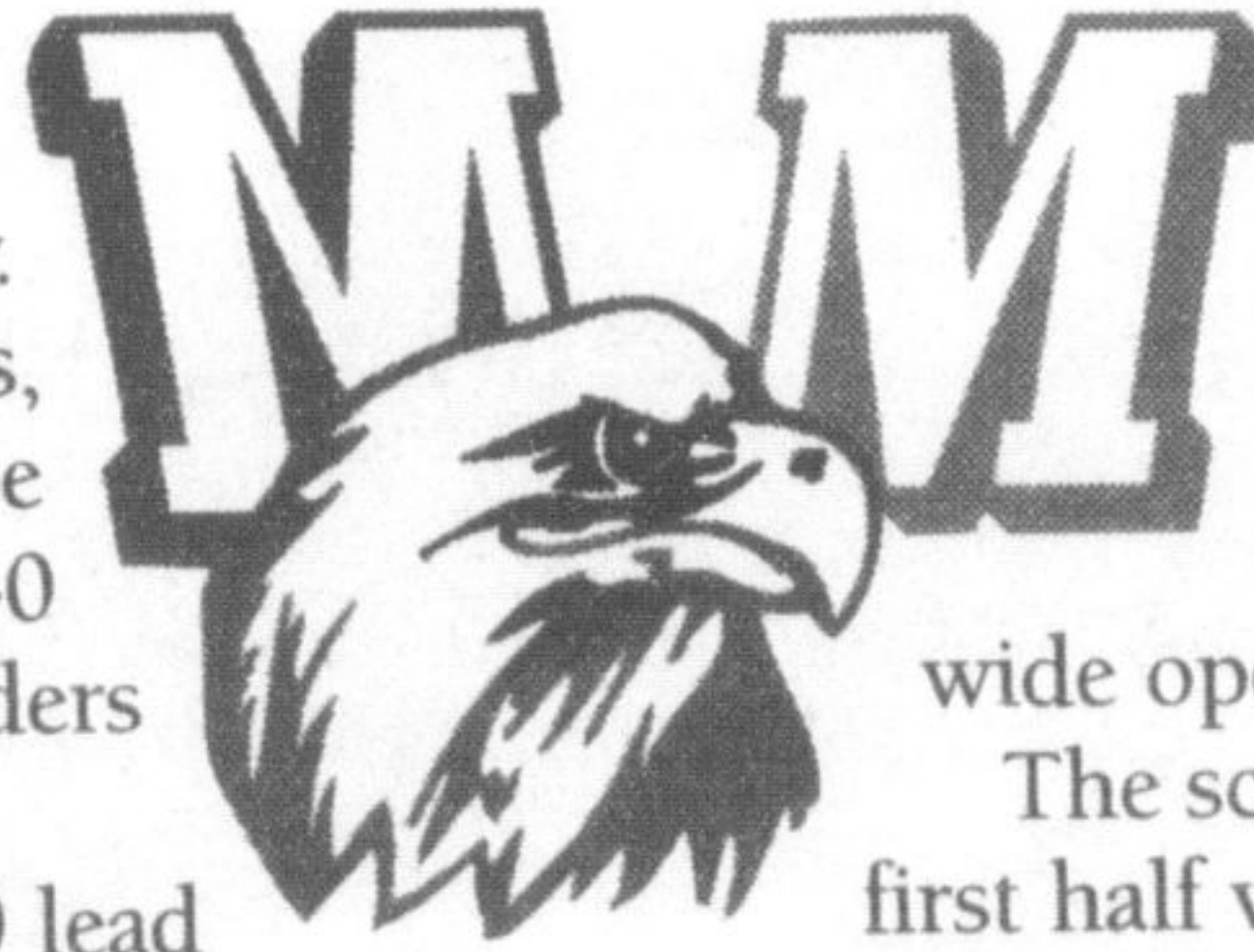
Marauders take small, but significant, step forward

By Murray Townsend
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Better. Much better. However, the Marauders still lost 32-6 to the Toronto Raiders at North York's Esther Shiner Stadium Saturday.

The game was closer than the score indicates, although early on it looked like it could be another blowout like the season-opening 49-0 loss. On their second play of the game, the Raiders connected for a 75-yard pass play.

The kick was blocked to give Toronto a 6-0 lead three minutes into the game, but that's the way it stayed, as the teams traded field position for the rest of the first quarter. The Raiders appeared ready to strike again in the second quarter when former Marauder Andy Taylor caught a pass and scampered 80 yards before being brought



down by a saving tackle from Mike McLeod.

Deep in Milton territory, a pass attempt was picked off by last season's interception leader, Antoine Bridge, who took it to the sidelines and raced 80 yards for the touchdown to give the Marauders their first points of the season.

Instead of going for their first lead of the year Milton opted for the two-point conversion which slipped through the hands of a wide open receiver.

The score remained tied until the final minute of the first half when a Milton punt was returned 75 yards.

Throughout the first half, the Milton defense, led by Craig Davoren, was exceptional. Toronto had just eight rushing yards on nine carries, and Marauder defenders were more likely to turn a rushing play into a loss than a gain. This despite the absence of Mark MacGillvary, the linebacker

who made such a positive impression in the first game. The secondary was on the money most of the game as well, with five interceptions, two by Damian Hannaford.

Offensively, however, the Marauders couldn't sustain any drives, although credit has to also be given to the Raiders defense. Ryan McGill, who hasn't started at quarterback since Milton's first season, did a credible job holding the fort until Stuart Schiassi was ready to roll. The plays ran smoothly but the Toronto defense just shut them down.

The Raiders didn't score again until the fourth quarter when former Marauder and Milton resident Steve Lubin went to work, breaking off several big gains to score his first of two touchdowns.

Part of the problem for Milton is roster depth, forcing several players, such as Hannaford, to play both ways.

"We're getting there," said coach Ken Lashley, "we just didn't have enough bodies to finish the game. We just ran out of gas."

Running back Roger Tomlinson broke his leg in the first quarter, another player was ejected, and several players were on the sidelines but unable to play. The remaining players earned a lot of respect from Lashley.

"I love these guys. Guys limping around and playing out of position, still gutting it out. Once we get the number situation fixed — once we get these guys on the field — we'll be really competitive."

The Marauders host the 1-2 North Bay Bulldogs Saturday at Milton District High School. Game time is 3 p.m.

Fletcher continues his dominance in Barrie

There's just no beating John Fletcher at the High Line.

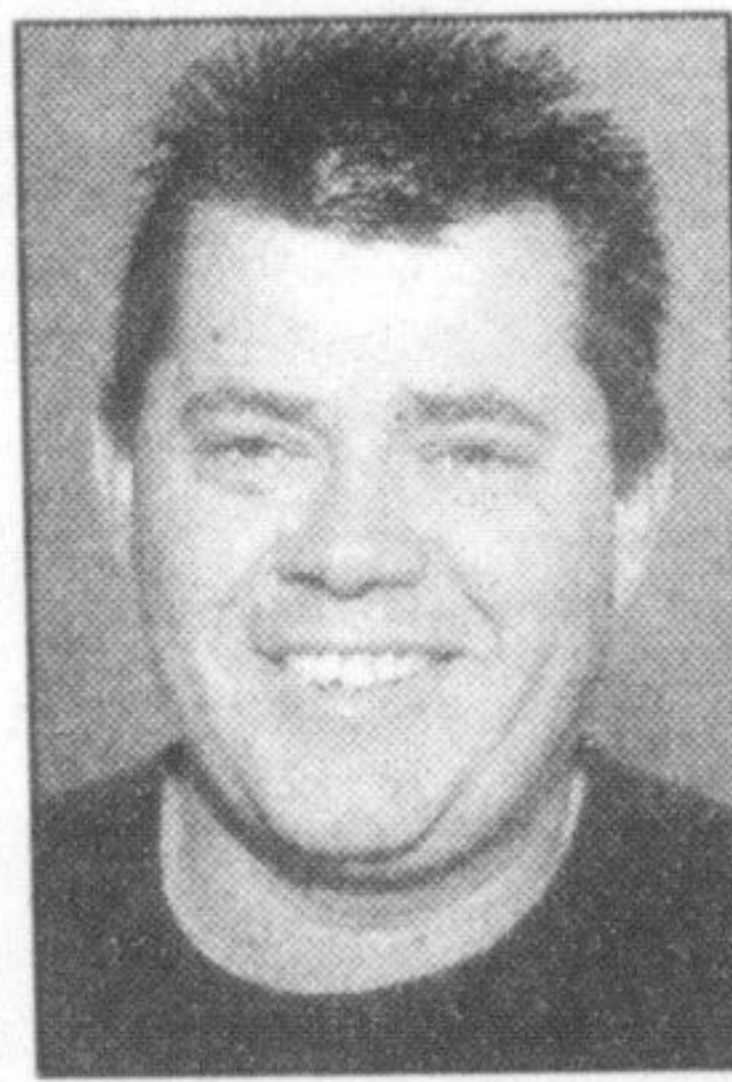
At least that's been the case in recent outings to the Barrie track, where Milton's 40-year-old driver and his JNE Consulting team are now three-for-three after grabbing the checkered flag Saturday.

Starting the evening's main event on the outside pole, last year's OSCAAR Outlaw Super Late Models series champ — and winner of both High Line weekends in 2006 — took the lead

early and never looked back en route to his first feature win of the season.

But that's not to say he had an easy time of it.

Fletcher faced severe pressure by both series standings leader Glenn Watson and perennial rival Rob Clarke, who was right on



John Fletcher

his bumper early on but ran into engine problems during a caution on lap 15.

Sitting third in the overall points race, Fletcher will look to build on this past weekend's victory June 30, when he and the Outlaw field head to Cayuga Speedway for the ninth annual Don Biederman Memorial.



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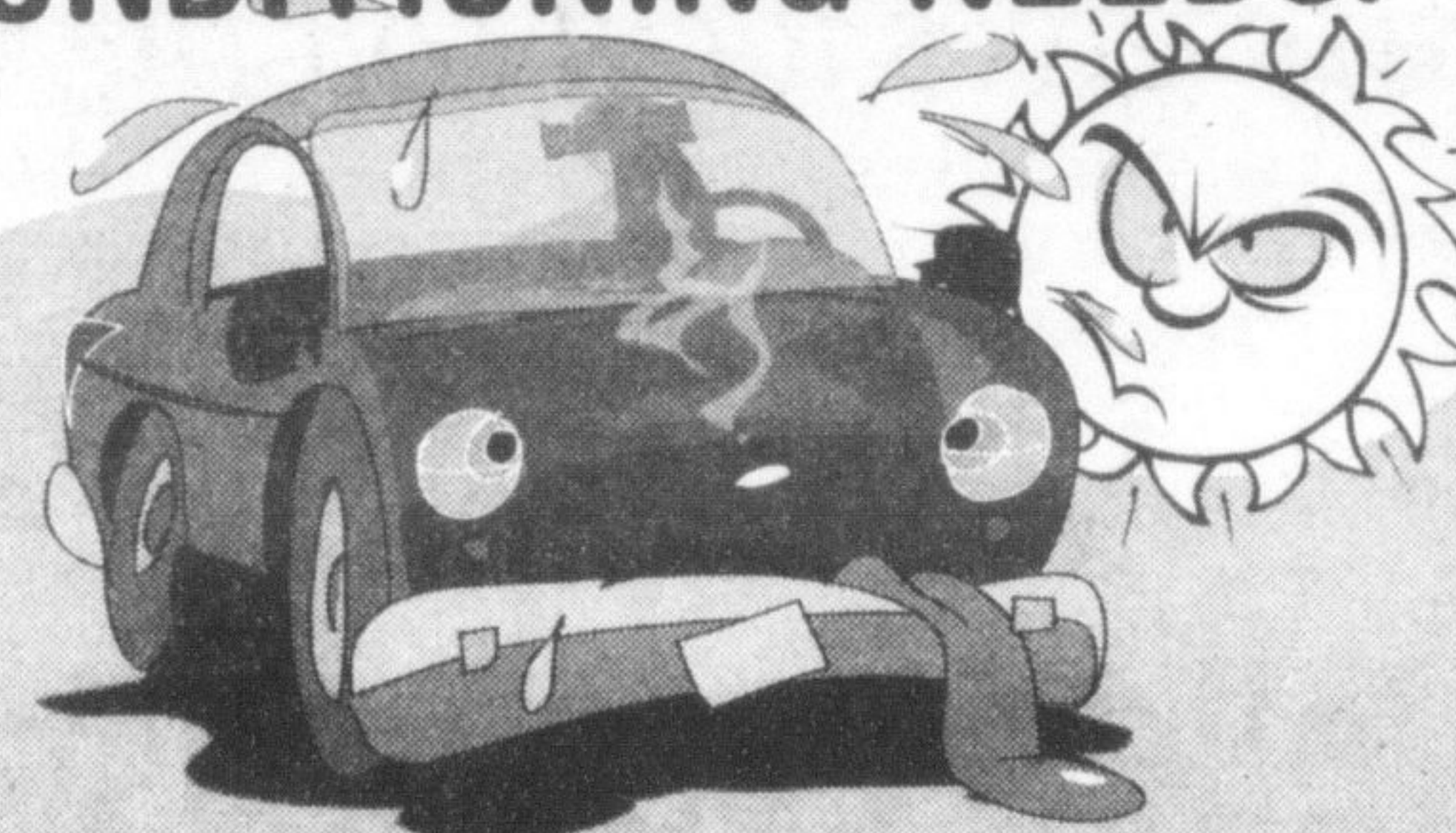
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