

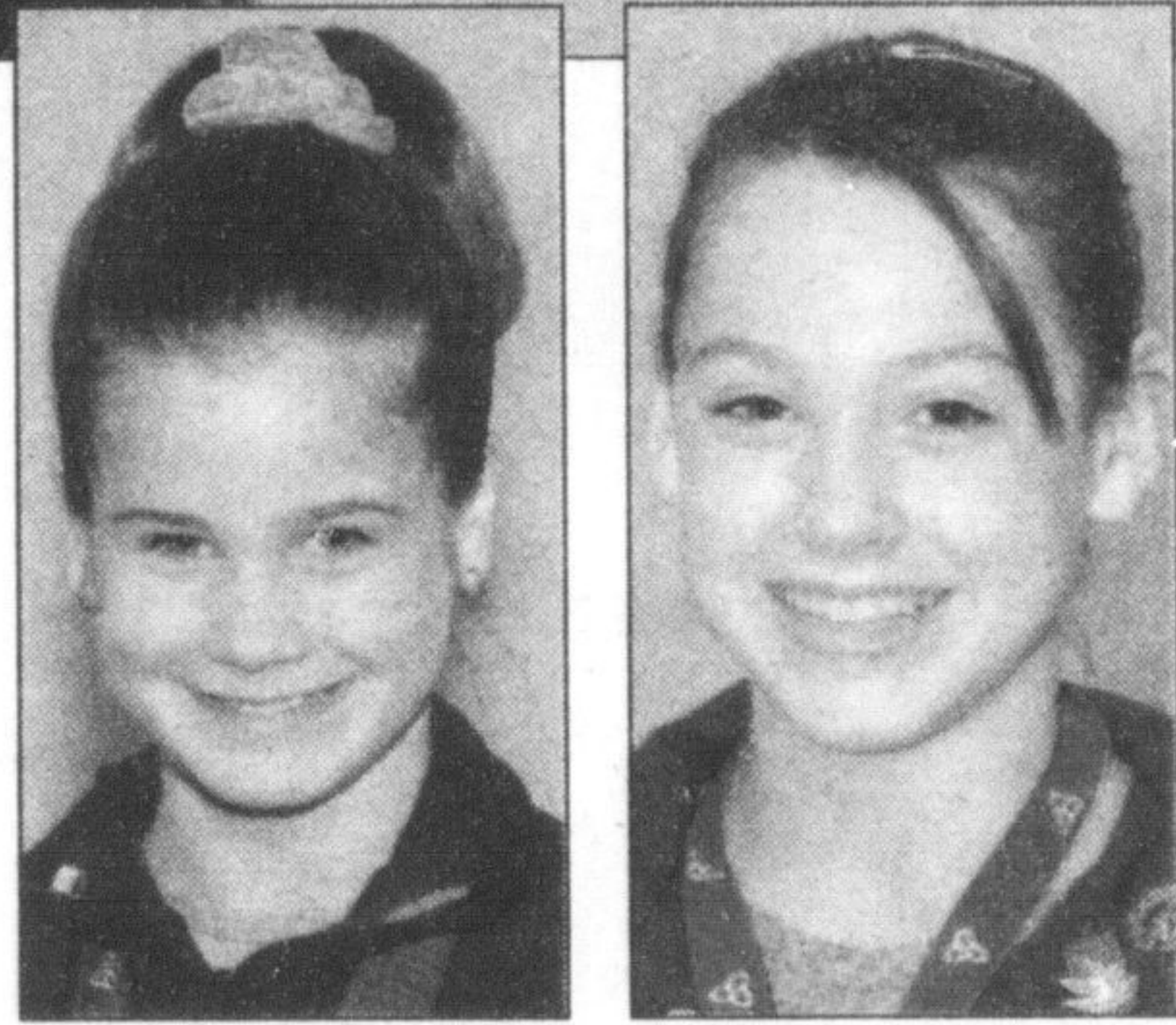
SPORTS

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OFF TO PROVINCIALS: Above, Milton Springers Gymnastics Club's Emily Homer, 11, proudly displays the medals she earned during an overall golden performance in Level 5 at the third and final provincial qualifying meet recently at Base Borden. Club-mates Victoria Peetoom, 9 (right) and Heather Sadler, 12 (far right) placed third in Level 5 and sixth in Level 7 respectively. Emily and Victoria will compete at the provincial championships May 3 in Niagara-on-the-Lake, while Heather will be part of Elite Ontario in Hamilton April 25.

GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION



How sweet it is!

Price and Eagles win national title

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

It had been nearly 18 hours since his Boston College Eagles clinched the national title, but Matt Price's elation had yet to subside.

"It's unbelievable," the 19-year-old Miltonian told the *Champion* Sunday afternoon, just moments after touching down in Beantown. "This is so special. It's been a long wait since last year."

The speedy sophomore left winger was referring to the sting of a 3-1 (with empty netter) defeat to Michigan State in his freshman season — the second straight NCAA championship loss for Boston College.

Refusing to be three-time bridesmaids this past weekend in Denver, Colorado, the Eagles dispatched North Dakota Fighting Sioux 6-1 in Thursday's semifinals and then capped their title drive with a 4-1 decision over the Cinderella Notre Dame Fighting Irish Saturday night.

In front of a capacity crowd of 18,632 at the Pepsi Center, Boston College struck for three goals inside a six-minute span in the second period en route to its third-ever national championship.

Having gone through the agony of such a high-stakes loss just last year and missed the chance for a title drive with the 2005-06 Milton IceHawks — who despite being ranked first in the country for most of the year were ousted in the second round — made the win extra sweet for Price.

"Being on the other end last season, I think you appreciate it more. The flight back wasn't nearly as long as last year."

The Eagles finished out the year on a nine-game winning streak, which began early last month with a 4-1 regular season-ending win over the Northeastern Huskies to secure home-ice advantage for the first round.

Since then the eventual champs were unbeatable — with their stiffest test coming in a 5-4 triple overtime triumph against the favoured New Hampshire Wildcats in the Hockey East semifinals.

"With so many guys back this year I think we always knew we had the team to do it, but that win (over Wildcats) really pulled it all together," said Price.

The only Ontario player in this year's Frozen Four final, the former IceHawks stand-out has developed into a reliable two-way contributor for the Eagles. Along with recording 11 points this season — including two in the NCAA play-downs — Price has been a pivotal part of a highly-effective shutdown unit that helped kill 45 of 47 penalties in Boston College's last nine games.

"That's something I'm especially proud of. Special teams play is so important in the play-



CELEBRATION TIME: Matt Price is all smiles while holding the NCAA's Division 1 trophy.

offs," he said.

Price could very well find himself back in the title picture next spring, as the Eagles will have most of their core players back — including starting goalie John Muse and national scoring champion and Frozen Four MVP Nathan Gerbe.

But for right now he's just basking in the glow of this year's championship, which among other perks will include a meeting with President George W. Bush early next month.

"There's a lot of stuff lined up for us. It's going to be a pretty hectic week."

Price is the first Miltonian to win a Division 1 title since Craig Brush did so with Cornell during an unbeaten 1969-70 campaign.



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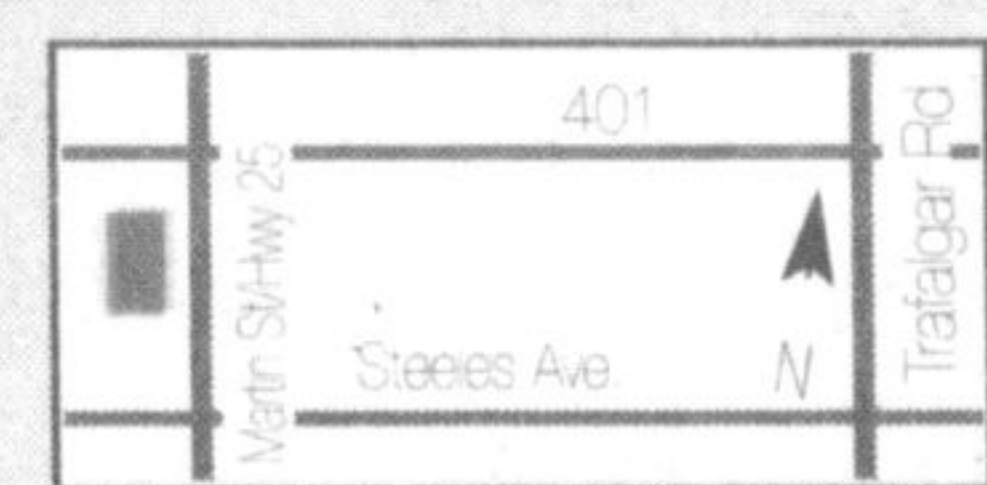
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