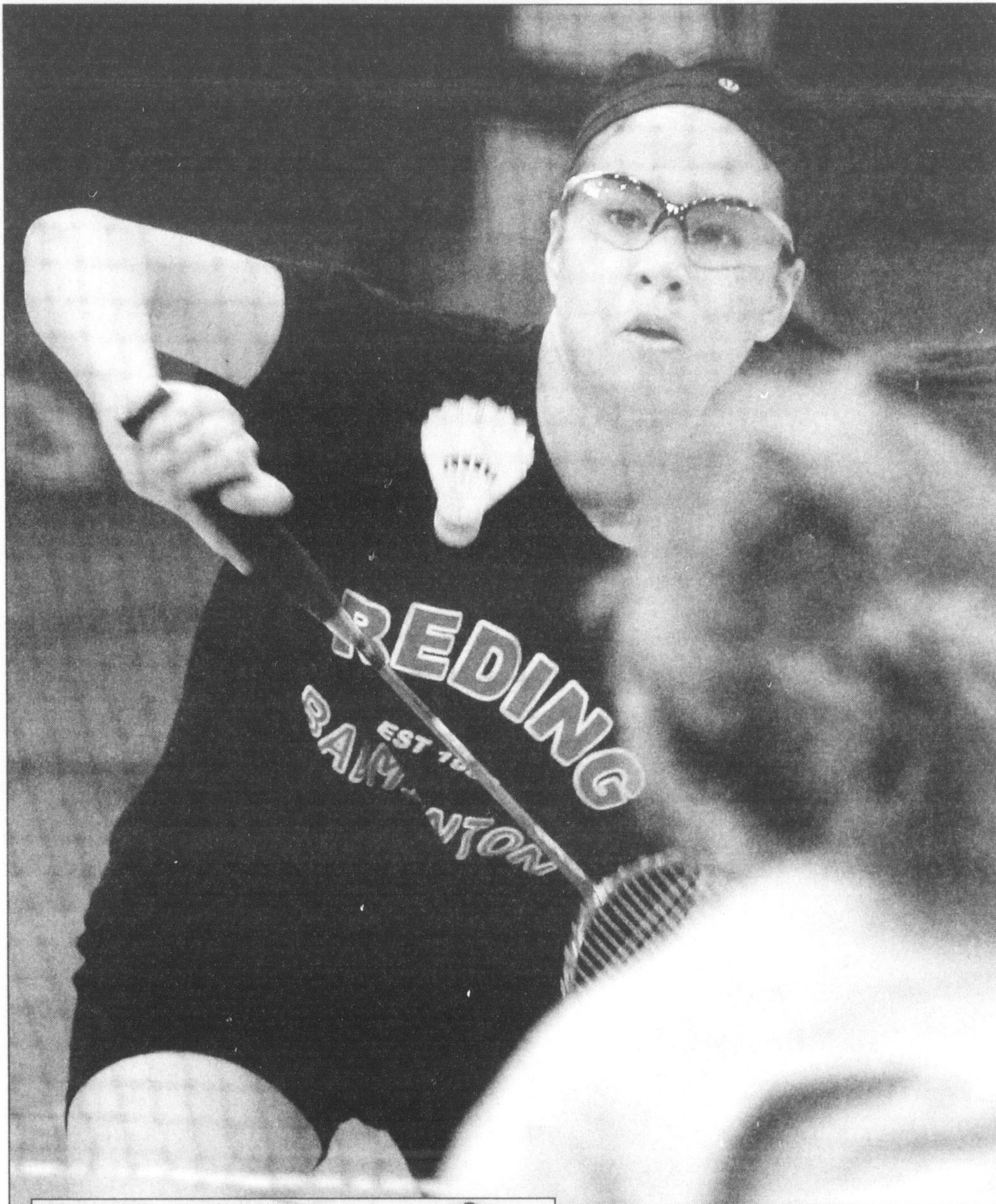


SPORTS

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Dawgs steam-roll way to OBA gold

Minor bantam girls undefeated in D-4

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

They don't just beat the OBA competition — they dominate it.

Delivering a commanding encore to last spring's unbeaten run at the Division 5 major atom girls provincials, the Madd Dawgs have reigned supreme again — doing so this time around at the Division 4 minor bantam championships in Niagara Falls.

Having beaten a couple of Division 3 contenders just one week earlier — after the OBA rankings had been set — the local cagers knew Division 4 gold was within their reach.

But no one could have predicted that they'd take all six games by double digits.

"Our conditioning was excellent this year and we wore teams down with our quickness and defence," said Brian Schroder, who coached the championship squad alongside Chris Blay. "The games were all pretty close in the first half, but we'd pull away down the stretch."

That was certainly the case in the finals with Hamilton's Blessed Sacrament, who were within a couple of baskets at half-time but wound up falling 34-18.

Natalie Samuels led with 14 points — her fifth double-digit game of the weekend — while Hayley Schroder and Marina Furik took turns quarterbacking the offence and did a great job breaking Blessed Sacrament's press.

"They're (Hayley and Marina) our floor generals out there," noted Schroder, whose Madd Dawgs closed out the season on a 12-game winning streak and were 16-6 overall. "We didn't shoot that well early in the finals, but our defence kept them in check and eventually we started knocking them down."

Milton kicked off the 12-team tournament with a 44-21 rout of Ancaster's Cardinal Newman and were in control the rest of the way — downing the Sault Ste. Marie Titans 47-34 in the quarterfinals and the Etobicoke Storm 40-23 in the semis.

Anchoring a topnotch defensive campaign throughout the OBAs,

• see GREAT on page A23



Going for gold

Josh Brittain and Team Canada are going for gold.

Led by two goals from Windsor Spitfires sniper Taylor Hall, the Canadians rallied from a pair of one-goal deficits to edge Sweden 3-2 yesterday morning in the semifinals of the World IIHF Under-18 Championships in Kazan, Russia.



Josh Brittain

That puts them in the championship for just the third time ever, this year against the host Russians, who knocked off the U.S. 3-1 yesterday afternoon.

The gold medal game will air live on TSN tomorrow, starting at 11 a.m.

One of 22 players named to the Pat Quinn-coached squad, 18-year-old Brittain — a six-foot-four-inch left winger who just finished a productive sophomore season with the Kingston Frontenacs — drew an assist in Friday's 6-0 whitewash of Slovakia.



EYE ON THE BIRDIE: Above, Bishop Reding's Rhyse Noel returns a shot in mixed doubles play at Thursday's Halton badminton championships at E.C. Drury. At left, Brooke Hartwick (left) and Fiona To look for a return on the way to their third-place finish in girls doubles play. They advance to this Thursday's GHAC championships — also at E.C. — along with school-mates Kristia Dermott (4th in girls singles), Rebecca Trischler (5th in girls doubles) and Matt Kerwin and Robyn McColl (5th in mixed doubles).

MICHAEL IVANIN / SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

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