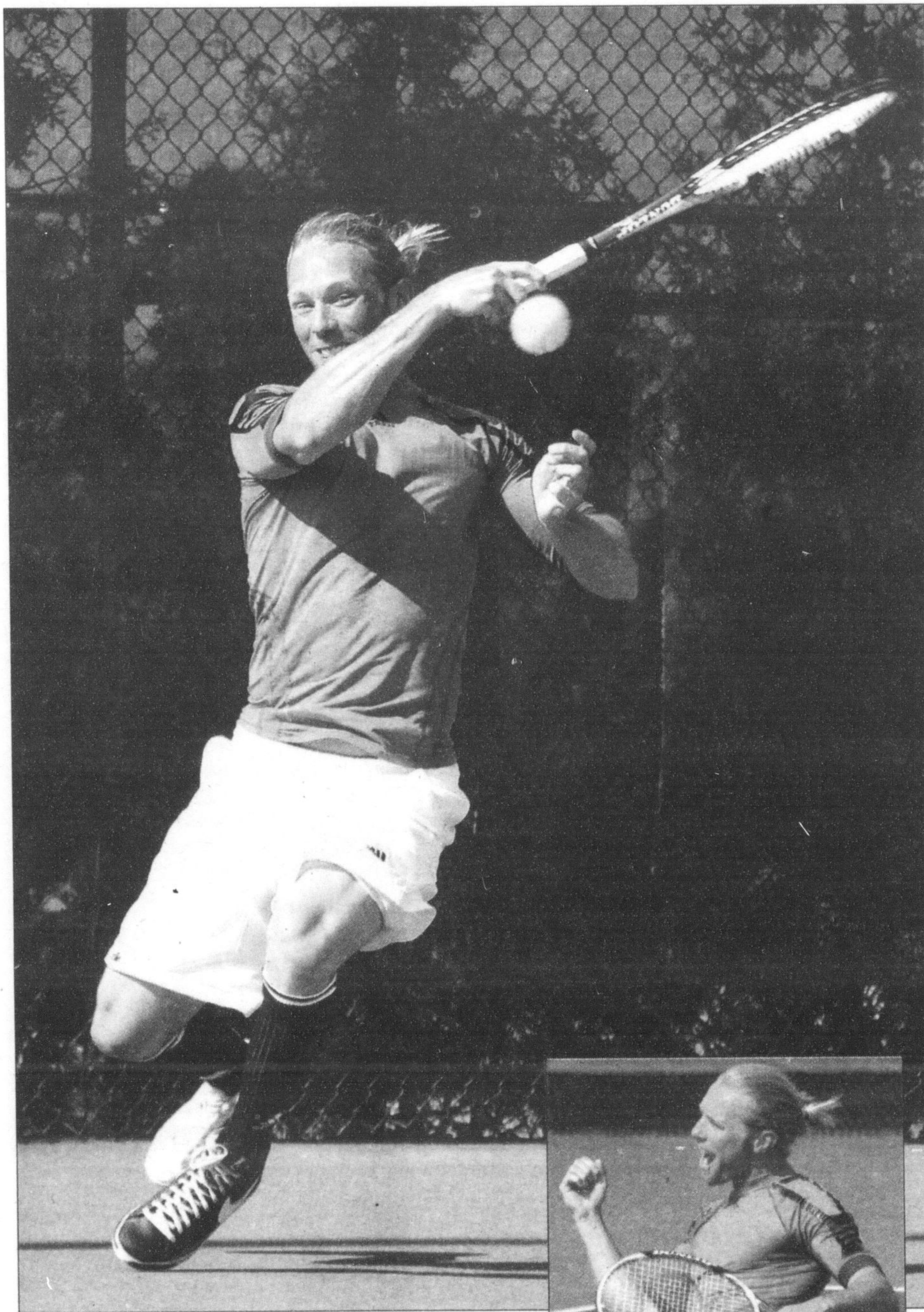


SPORTS

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GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

ON THE BALL: Above, Davis Cup veteran Robert Steckley — who's set to play in this year's Rogers' Cup — competes in men's doubles play during an afternoon open house at the Milton Tennis Club Saturday. At right, Steckley pumps his fist after a successful return.

Unbeaten colt wins North America Cup

Somebeachsomewhere delivers decisive victory

By Greg Blanchard
SPECIAL TO THE CHAMPION

Still unbeaten — and yet to be really tested. Three-year-old colt pacer Somebeachsomewhere earned a standing ovation from a packed and adoring Mohawk crowd Saturday night — following a scintillating triumph in the \$1.5 million Pepsi North America Cup. At the finish, the undefeated odds-on choice — now a perfect nine-for-nine — had crossed the wire in 1:49, the same time he clocked in the previous week's elimination.

He completed the continent's richest harness race two-and-three-quarter-lengths in front of second choice Badlands Nitro, with Santanna Blue Chip taking third.

Sent post-ward as the 2-5 favourite, the son of Mach Three — driven by Paul MacDonell — left from the two-hole and was fourth as Mucho Sleazy took the high-quality Cup field to the first quarter in :26.4.

Huge second half

But just as quickly, Somebeachsomewhere was pulled out by MacDonell and the pair swept to the front, reaching the half in a rather soft :54.4, with no challengers. From there, the race was over, as Somebeachsomewhere turned on the afterburners through three-quarters in 1:22 before coasting home for a career-equaling mark.

Co-owned by trainer Brent MacGrath of Truro and the Schooner Stables of Bible Hill, Nova Scotia, Somebeachsomewhere had been nursing a bruised coffin bone suffered in May, which forced him to miss an Ontario Sires Stakes event and come

into the 25th edition of the Cup off only two starts this year.

Talk about a buzz. The Big Brown buzz in the thoroughbred world may be over, but stablemate Somebeachsomewhere's buzz has more than filled the void on the harness side.

"It sends chills up my spine," said a jubilant MacDonell, celebrating his first Cup victory, about the crowd's roar as Somebeachsomewhere cruised to the wire. "I could feel everyone behind us and supporting us leading up to this week. Everybody in the country and in the United States just love this horse. He's the whole show."

"Once he got to the half in :54.4, he was pretty much on air. He got the breather he needed. I just let him pace down the lane and he just loved to stretch out."

MacGrath has had to be careful this season with last year's champion two-year-old colt in both Canada and the U.S., as Somebeachsomewhere was trying to get back to full speed. In his elimination, MacGrath felt the colt was only at 80 per cent, since he'd only had one qualifier and no training since early May.

Last year, Somebeachsomewhere — just a \$40,000 Lexington Select yearling purchase — established a world mark of 1:49.3 in winning the Metro Pace and prevailed in all six of his starts. He also shared Canadian Harness Horse of the Year honours with North America Cup winner Tell All.

Should his success continue, he won't need to share any awards at this season's end.

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