

Hefford leads tumbling trio with national gold

Continues breakthrough season with another high-stakes victory

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

In a word — golden.

That pretty much encapsulates Meghan Hefford's power tumbling efforts of late, with yet another high-stakes victory delivered earlier this month in Calgary.

Refusing to let her winning ways be interrupted following back-to-back gold-medal performances this spring — beginning with Elite Canada in B.C. — the 16-year-old Miltonian turned back all women's youth challengers at the national championships.

Determined to put herself in title contention after a fifth-place finish in her division debut last year, Hefford put herself atop the preliminary standings and then nailed her final passes to win the eight-competitor class.

"I actually didn't do as well as at Elite Canada, but I was still pleased with my performance," noted the local teen, a national novice champion two years ago in a sport that's best described as gymnastics' floor routine without the dance element. "This was probably my biggest meet so far, and it felt great to win it."

Individual success wasn't the only type that came Hefford's way out west.

She and fellow Miltonian and Burlington BGs Gymnastics Club member Teja Durante — debuting in the women's senior ranks — were selected to represent Ontario in the inaugural team competition at the end of the meet.

Each turned in formidable showings to aid in an overall victory over B.C., Canada's other power tumbling stronghold.

Shaking off an early stumble that saw her close out the preliminary round in sixth, 18-year-old Durante — also a three-time national competitor — fortified her efforts in the finals to move up two spots.

"You just have to put that behind you," she said of her initial glitch. "I had a couple of solid passes in the final, really sticking the landings."

The power tumbling veteran hopes this strong showing is the latest step on the road to next year's world championships in Russia.

Now part of the national women's senior team, her next challenge comes in a few weeks at the Canada Cup team trials in Montreal.

Completing Milton's representation in Calgary was 12-year-old Huston Browne, who was slated to make her national debut last year before a fractured foot put the kibosh on those plans.

With another year of experience under her proverbial belt, the local pre-teen not only qualified again but secured bronze in the novice (10-to-14-year-old) division.

An up-and-comer with the Mississauga Futures Gymnastics Club, Browne placed third in the preliminary round and maintained that position in the final — thanks to some technically-sound passes that featured a double tuck.

"I felt good about how I did," she said.



Meaghan Hefford



Huston Browne



Teja Durante

HIGH FLYER: Teja Durante competes at the national power tumbling championships in Calgary.

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	TEAMS	G	W	L	T	PTS
1	SOUTHSIDE 1	9	9	0	0	18
2	KNOX	10	8	2	0	16
3	ST. GEORGE	9	6	3	0	12
4	SOUTHSIDE 2	8	5	3	0	10
5	HOLY ROSARY	9	4	5	0	8
6	MILTON BIBLE	9	3	5	1	7
7	NEW LIFE "A"	9	3	5	1	7
8	HILLCREST	9	3	5	1	7
9	NEW LIFE "B"	10	3	6	1	7
10	BOSTON	7	2	5	0	4
11	ST. PAULS	9	1	8	0	2

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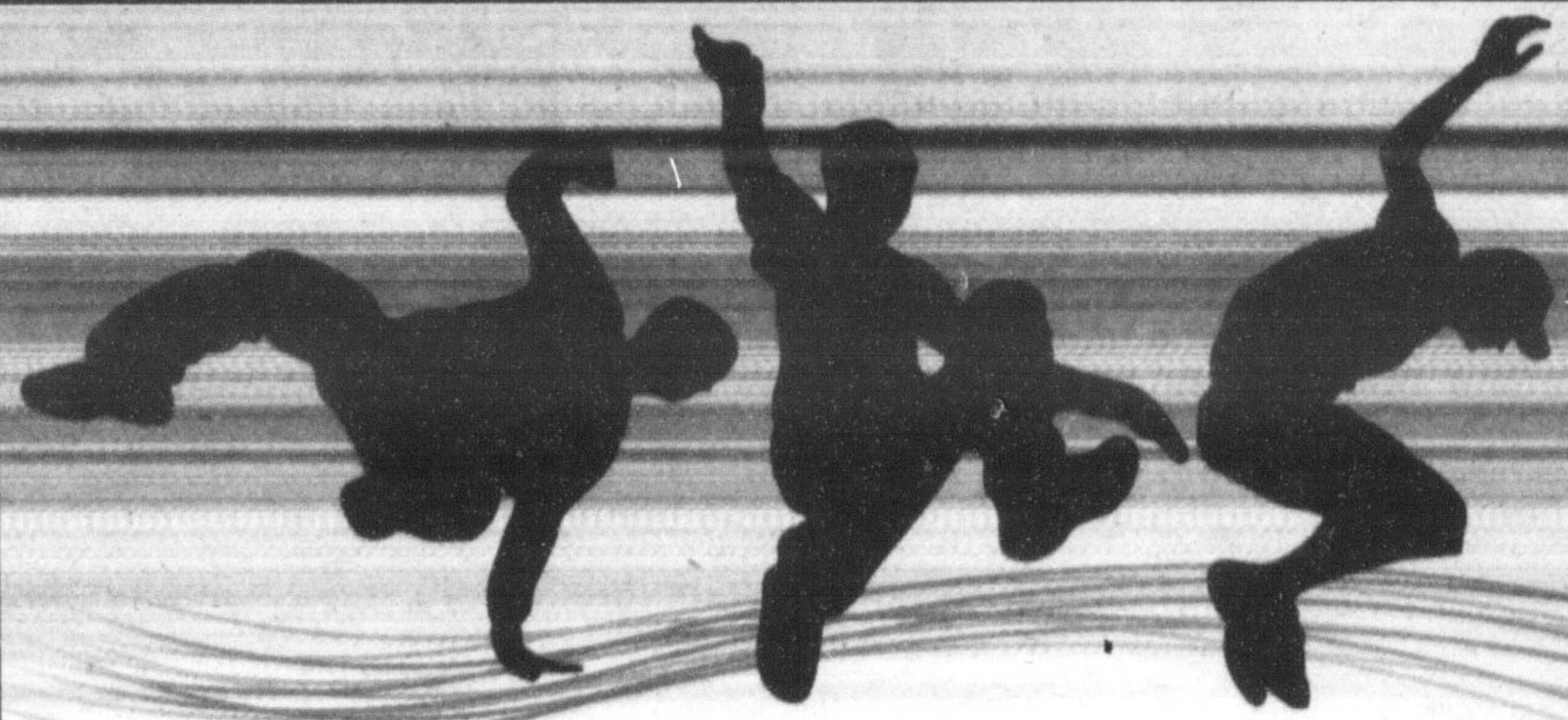
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