

Senior football teams ready to hit the gridiron

By Herb Garbutt
 CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

David Montoya knows what it's like to be a part of a successful football program. In high school he helped Notre Dame win the Halton title

and reach the Metro Bowl final. In university, he was the defensive MVP in the Laurier Golden Hawks' Vanier Cup victory.

Now that he's teaching at Bishop Reding, he hopes to give Royal players the same opportunities he had.

"I was blessed as a player," said Montoya, who replaces long-time senior skipper Joe Jurus, who's now at Oakville's Loyola. "Growing up at Notre Dame, it was nothing but the best. We're bringing that tradition, not only from Notre Dame, but also from Laurier and it's really special to be part of building this here."

Montoya's goal is to develop Bishop Reding into a perennial contender, among the likes of Burlington's Nelson, Assumption and his high school, Notre Dame. While the foundation is in place, Montoya said it's time to start building upward.

Montoya optimistic

Though the Royals lost many players from last year's team, the pieces are there to build on a solid 3-4 2007 campaign.

"The true strength is the youth of the team," Montoya said.

Richard Monk, a Grade 11 who is playing his second year at senior, is back at quarterback and junior aged running back Sanjay Moodie and full-back Jake Hetherington will start in the backfield. Stephan Gray and Cole Pryce will be Monk's main targets while offensive captain Louis Aranguren anchors the line.

While the Royals have a strong secondary with returnees Gray, Pryce, Brett Farquharson and Terrance Whitehouse, their biggest challenge will be defending the run.

"We have some new kids who haven't played before and they're just realizing what it's like to tackle," Montoya said.

There's plenty of experience to help the newcomers. Along with long-time Reding coaches Chris Belanger and Jim Harper, Montoya has called on Laurier alumni to help shape the Royals into a contender.

While numbers are still a concern — the Royals have only 34 players — Montoya is encouraged by the progress in the junior program, which has 55 players under Lee Cond and David Agro.

"The junior program is excelling. That's exciting to see

the juniors and to see where it's going," he said.

Until the seniors can boast the same kind of numbers, avoiding injuries will be a key to achieving Montoya's goal of reaching the semifinals.

Avoiding the injury bug will be even more critical for the Milton District Mustangs. MD came within a few yards of going to the Halton Division 3 final last year and has most of its players returning in key positions, including quarterback Eric Cowan.

Mustangs a bit thin

But with just 23 players, the Mustangs can't afford to have many players on the sidelines.

"We have kids who have been with the program four or five years. They know they game," said Mustangs coach Keith Pearce. "We're just light on bodies."

While now without Brenden Cronin, who scored a team-leading nine touchdowns last fall, Pearce said he likes the balance provided by running backs

Andrew Cerny, Jase Lavigne and receivers Cameron Freelen and John Russell.

In a controlled scrimmage against a St. Catharines school, the Mustangs scored four rushing touchdowns and three more through the air.

Linebackers Brad Mazzocato and Wessel Engelbrecht add speed to a defence that posted a couple of shutouts last season and surrendered only five points to Pearson in last year's semifinal loss.

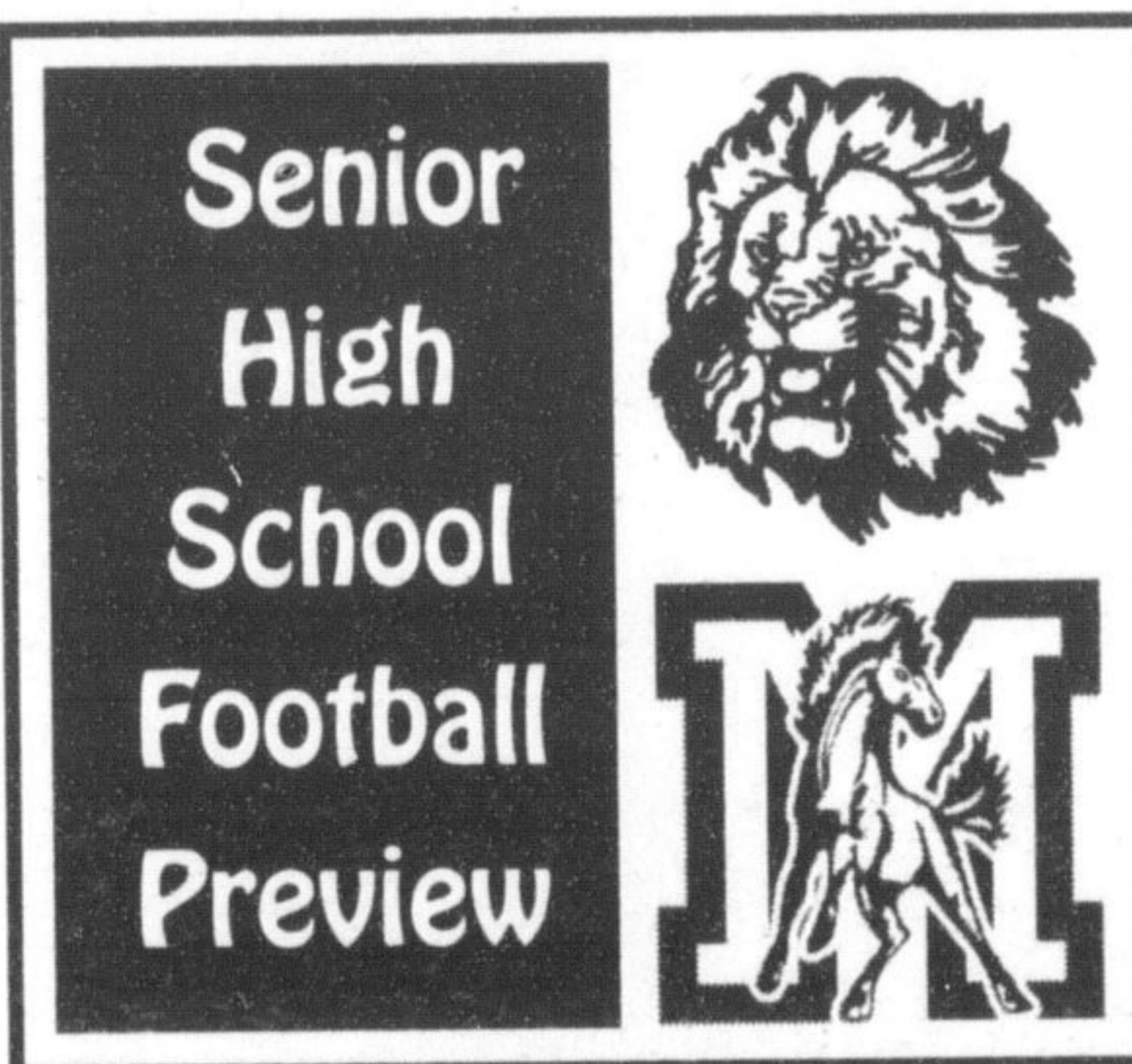
Where the numbers catch up to the Mustangs is in the number of players that have to play both sides of the ball, including linemen Kyle Robertson and Daniel McLeish.

"We've been focusing on conditioning," Pearce said. "We've done a lot of work in practice to build stamina."

In a game where the difference between winning and losing can be minimal, that will be important to the Mustangs' success.

"We felt we didn't quite meet our expectations (last year)," Pearce said. "We came up a few yards short. We want to take it all the way this year."

Reding kicks off its Halton Division 1/2 schedule tomorrow at Georgetown's Christ the King, while MD gets rolling next Thursday, Sept. 25 at Burlington's Lester B. Pearson.



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Intercounty team completes perfect season

Milton Tennis Club served up a slice of history recently, with its Intercounty Mixed A team putting the finishing touches on a perfect season.

Captained by veteran Jeff Truswell and powered by Rob Krzyzak's 15-0 dominance, the local squad prevailed in all 16 matches throughout the regular season and playoffs.

Milton punctuated its unblemished run with a 5-1 tournament finals triumph over Germain Mills at Toronto's Rexall Centre, after sidestepping Tournament Park in the semis.

While fending off defeat at every turn, the locals faced their share of adversity, including a memorable showdown in

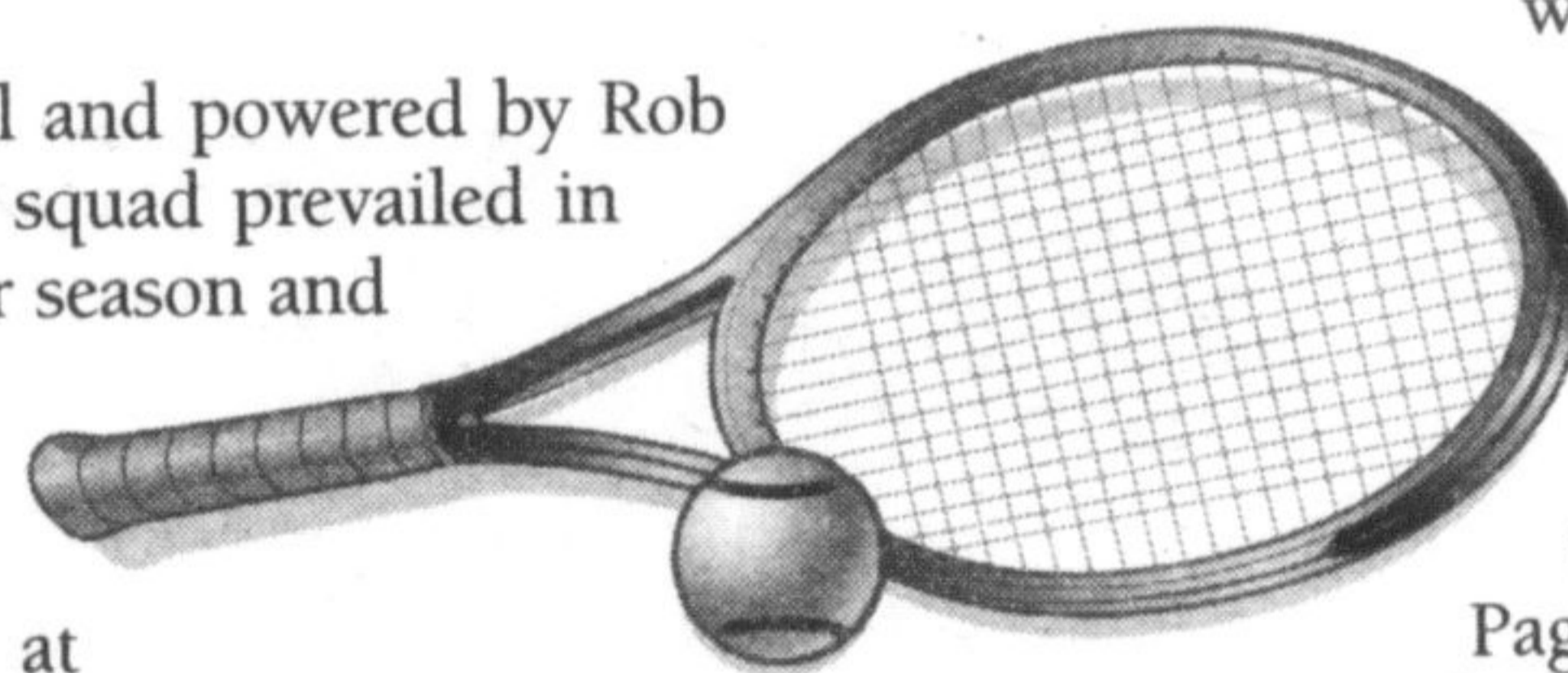
Brampton in which five substitutes were needed to fill the ranks. Milton fell behind early but stormed back to win 4-2,

with each match going the distance. Juan Carlos Tovar, Bob Edmonds and Dave Hudak anchored the overall victory.

Other standouts this summer were Mike Mitchell, Ale Giacopelli and most improved player Gonzalo

Pages.

With its title win, the team now moves up to the Majors Division, where they'll take on former international touring professionals, as well as NCAA players and provincial and nationally-ranked juniors and adults.



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