

## Stellar showing by Springers duo

Townsend, Sadler claim all-around Level 7 medals at provincials

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

It took three decades for the Milton Springers to produce their first all-around provincial champion.

Sydney Townsend made sure the wait for a second wasn't anywhere near as long.

Putting a golden exclamation mark on a much-improved season, the nine-year-old gymnast upstaged four competitors to reign supreme in her Level 7 age class late last month in Windsor.

This gave the local club its second Ontario title in just three years, following Celena Morgan's 2007 triumph in the Level 6, 10-year-old ranks.

"It felt really good to win," said the newly-crowned provincial champ, who'd delivered a modest ninth-place overall finish at her first qualifier but quickly put herself in contention with bronze and gold-medal showings at the next two events.

Added coach Shannon Gwillam, "We were really excited (about Sydney's win). It was pretty overwhelming."

Surprisingly, Townsend's all-

around victory came without a top showing on floor — traditionally her bread-and-butter event.

Powering her overall ranking this time around was a personal-best effort on the vault, where she managed to sidestep the landing glitches that had plagued her for much of the season.

"I really stuck the landing, which I hadn't done before. That was the big difference," she said.

Armed with a fair amount of confidence after making great strides since the start of the season, the Springers' youngest provincial representative

was also golden on the bars and medaled in her other two events — taking silver on beam and bronze on the floor.

This allowed her to squeak by a Newmarket contender for first overall.

"It was neck and neck right to the end," said Gwillam.

Townsend's triumph wasn't the only cause for celebration in Windsor.

A model of consistency in her Level 7, 12-and-13-year-old class, provincial veteran Heather Sadler secured third overall to become the

first Springer to book passage to the Eastern Canadian championships this week in St. John's, Newfoundland.

This eclipsed the fourth-place finish she'd managed two years ago in Level 6.

"It was so exciting. I'm really look forward to going to Eastern Canadians," said the 13-year-old, who plans to start coaching the younger gymnasts in the next year or so.

Sadler got out to a promising start with a fifth-place performance on bars, and from there was fourth on both the beam and vault and ninth in an especially-competitive floor routine competition — in which she was on par with some of her better scores this season.

When it was all said and done, she beat out an Ottawa girl for all-around bronze by a mere tenth of a point in a field of 24.

"Heather wasn't outstanding in any one event, but was consistent and strong all weekend," said Gwillam, who'll be joining her club's first Eastern Canadian competitor as coach of Team Ontario.

On the strength of a bronze-medal showing on vault, Victoria Peetoom placed fifth overall in the Level 7, 10-and-11-year-old division.

Unable to match the impressive results enjoyed in qualifying competition and the recent Ontario Cup, Emily Homer had to settle for



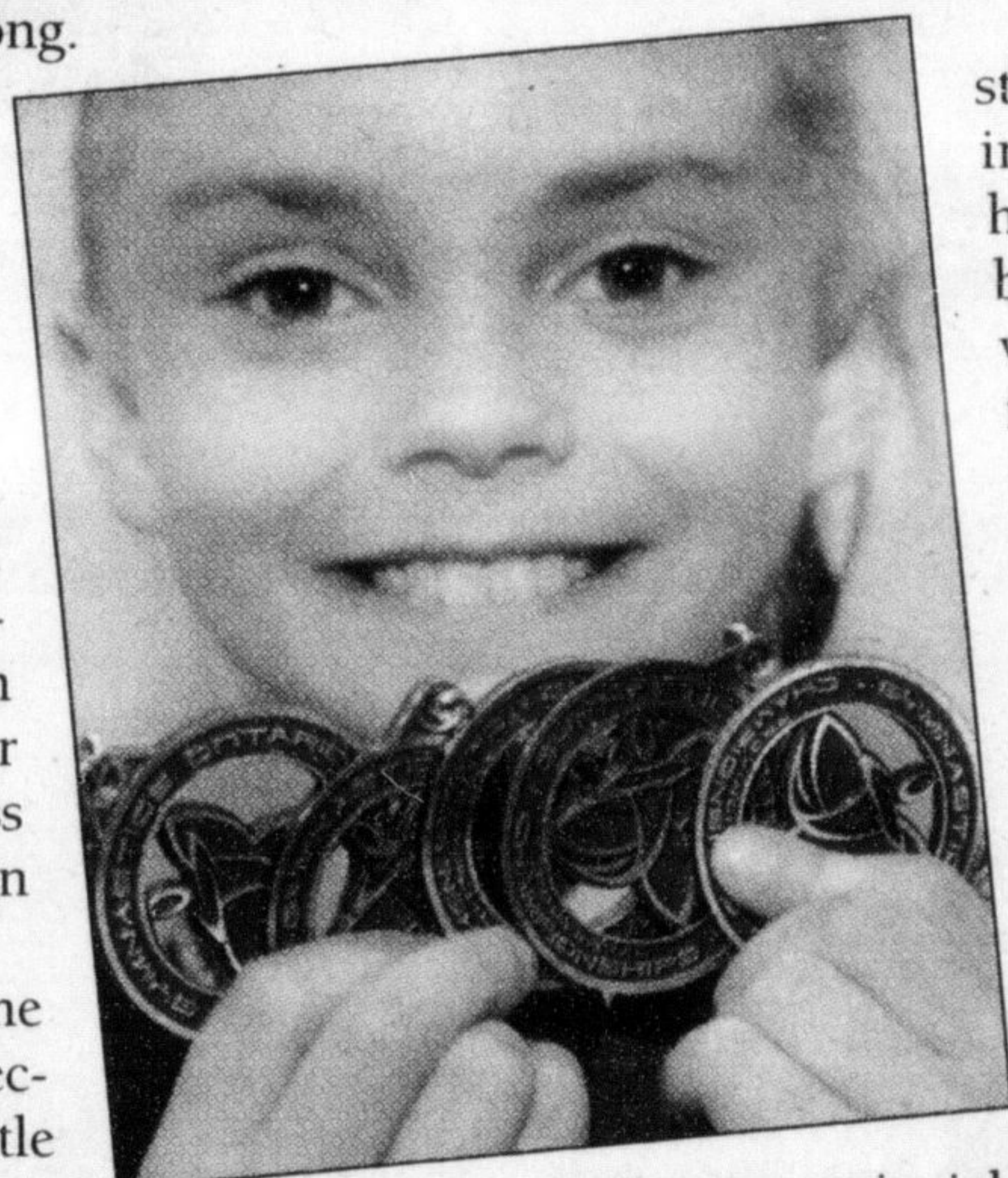
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**DYNAMIC DUO:** Above, Heather Sadler shows her skills on the beam. At left, Sydney Townsend proudly displays her medal haul.

eighth place in her Level 5, 12-and-13-year-old class. Her best result came on the beam, where she was fifth.

Rounding out Milton's Ontario

championship contingent with a 20th place among the Level 5, 12-and-13-year-olds was Amanda Forsstrom. She highlighted the trip with a fifth on vault.





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