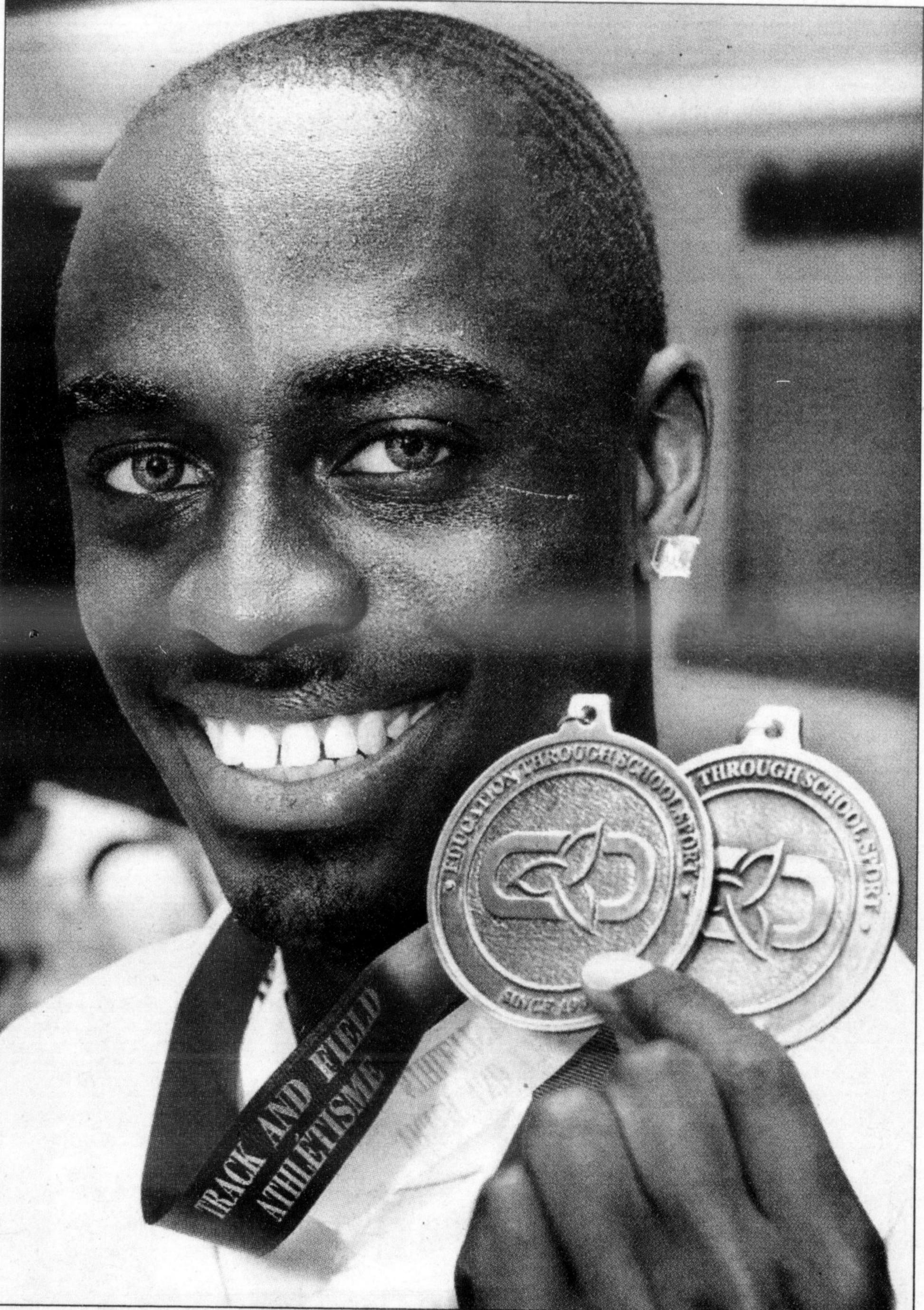
SIPORTES



MULTI-MEDALIST: Bishop Reding sprinter Wayndale Bennett flashes a big smile while displaying the silver and bronze medals he claimed at OFSAA this past weekend. For full results, see page A16.

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OFSAA heartbreaker

Reding senior boys' medal hopes dashed with straight losses

By Steve LeBlanc CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Heartbreaking, agonizing, devastating. Choose any and all to describe how the Bishop Reding senior boys soccer team's stellar season ended.

Bottom line, the trip back from Windsor was awfully long for the Royals who as the number one seed at 'AAA' OFSAA had high hopes of returning with the gold.

Those were dashed with a 2-0 double-overtime semifinal loss to the host Catholic Central Comets Saturday morning.

Less than two hours later, the still-reeling Halton/GHAC champs managed to put together a fairly credible performance for the bronze-medal showdown against Toronto's Senator O'Connor.

But even a top-three finish wasn't meant to be for the top-ranked club, which surrendered an early lead and was eclipsed 2-1.

"It's heartbreaking. We just ran out of luck," said striker Eros Olazabal, who factored heavily into BR's 4-0 round-robin campaign with a goal in three different games. "We definitely had the edge in possession for the semifinals, but we were banged up and two bad calls (in overtime) did us in."

Added assistant coach Adrian Flynn, "We dominated, but just couldn't finish our chances."

After stoning the opposition through six straight games — thanks to rock-solid defence and a standout performance by Alessandro Famele between the pipes — the spots Saturday, as St. Ignatius of Thunder Royals were finally scored on midway through the first extra session of the semis.

From there they pinched the rest of the way in a desperate bid for the equalizer, only to have the Comets find the back of the net once more in the second overtime frame.

Though not entirely motivated to battle 8 for bronze and sitting a handful of regulars, Reding looked poised to come away with a medal — as Rishawn Simpson sank his third tally of the tournament early against Senator O'Connor.

But Famele would surrender his first regulation-time goal shortly before the break and was beat again seven minutes into the second half.

The Royals once more played with a sense of urgency down the stretch, but just couldn't even things up.

"The guys were pretty devastated after losing the semifinals, and to come back just an hour or so later and play for bronze was really hard," said Flynn, whose team was the only one at the three-day, 20team tournament to reach the semi-

finals without giving up a single goal outscoring the competition a collective 9-0. "They gave a good effort, but I'm not sure their hearts were in it. However, to come fourth in the province is still a great accomplishment. Overall this team had a terrific season."

Captain Thomas Santibanez-Espinosa also scored three times in Windsor, highlighting his OFSAA run with the lone goal in a 1-0 quarterfinal decision over Holy Trinity of Courtice Friday evening.

Flynn also cited strong efforts from Richard Monk and Jamal Johnson, as well as supporting cast players Kyle Lynch, Zavaan Brown, Mark Andrade and back-up netminder Brandon Orlando - who blanked Waterloo's St. David 1-0 in the round-robin

Unranked teams swept the top three Bay edged Catholic Central 1-0 in the championship.

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