

New kids on the court deliver dynamite debut

Stags' Under-15 girls capture gold at Division 5 provincials, Under-15 boys claim Division 3 bronze

The Stags weren't content to simply ease their way onto the OBA scene.

In a sensational debut at the provincial championships, Milton's newest basketball program — in just its second season — claimed a pair of midget medals.

The first was secured by the Stags' Under-15 girls, who struck Division 5 gold in Downsview.

Powered by an 18-point effort from all-purpose standout Denell Brown, Milton fortified its efforts down the stretch — after sur-

rendering a first-half lead — to outdistance IEM Newmarket 43-36 in the finals.

"We switched to a man-to-man defence after they went ahead by two and that made the difference," said assistant coach Manny Santiago, who led the team alongside Bennett Trinidad.

Veronica Aureus contributed eight points and some fierce rebounding to the championship victory, which followed a decisive 53-36 semifinal triumph over the Strathroy Spirit.

A late change of venue threatened the Stags' title hopes before the tournament even began, as the event was moved from Scarborough to Downsview without the team's knowledge.

Arriving just 15 minutes before their first-round game against the Kingston Impact, the local cagers didn't even have time for a warm-up yet managed to pull out a 36-33 victory — igniting a 4-1 OBA run.

"The girls didn't use the mix-up as an excuse. They fought through it and played great," said Santiago, who praised centre Frances Furguele and point guards Kheila Cruz and Monica Del Prado for delivering standout performances.

Rounding out the championship squad were Abigail Burdeos, Camille Sanghera, Chantelle Ouano, Charmika Trinidad, Denyse Mangubat, Jasmine Santiago, Jessica Lacz, Tashya Caleon and Manda Grasic.

Milton's Under-15 boys added to the OBA medal haul — claiming Division 3 bronze in Mississauga to punctuate a fairly challenging season.

Down 31-29 at half time in the battle for third-place honours, the Stags stepped up their bread-and-butter fast break to turn the tide and down the Niagara Falls Red Raiders 68-52.

Leading the way with a formidable attack

that accounted for more than half the overall scoring were guards Josh Berza, Kyle Ylagan and Mikey Borlongan — who's been recruited for the OBA's Central West Region elite development team.



"This team really likes to run. That's been our strength all year and it's what won it for us," said head coach Mike Borlongan, who's been selected to coach the midget development program.

Milton's boys had its hopes for gold dashed by the Goulbourn Hornets, who exacted a measure of payback in the semifinals — winning 75-57 after having lost 66-57 in the round-robin finale.

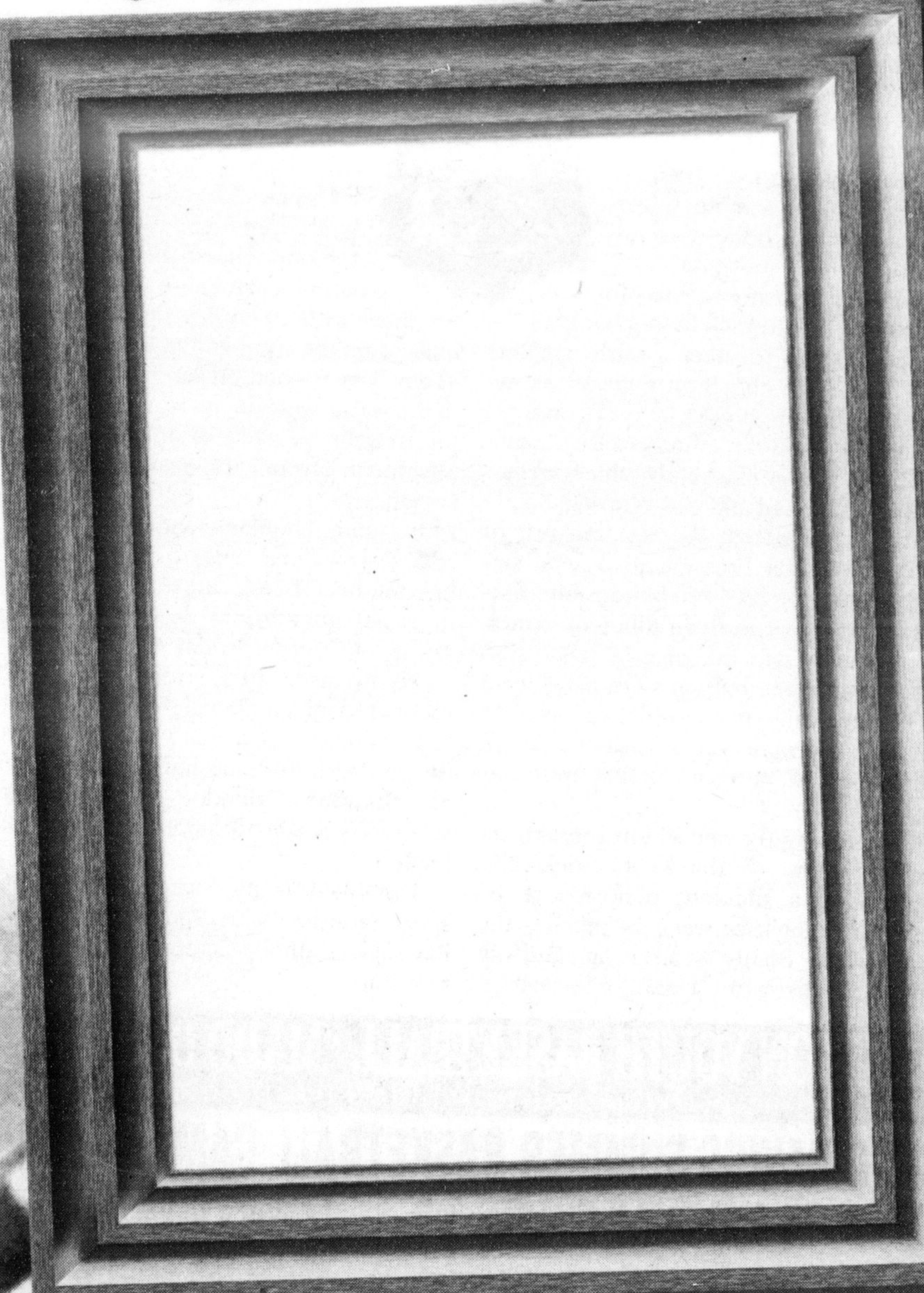
Jalen Taylor had scored a team-high 16 points in the initial clash with Goulbourn.

A decisive quarterfinal upset of the Vaughan Panthers — who'd beat the Stags in previous tournament play — served as another high point of the weekend, as did a 69-45 comeback win over the North York Fire in round one.

That tournament-opening victory saw Borlongan hit five of six three-point attempts to douse the Fire.

Paul Dragos, Donovan Hasting, Jordan Millare, Dallas Padua, Nick Homesin, Julian Maharaj, AC Teodoro and Nathan Caskanette comprised the rest of the team.

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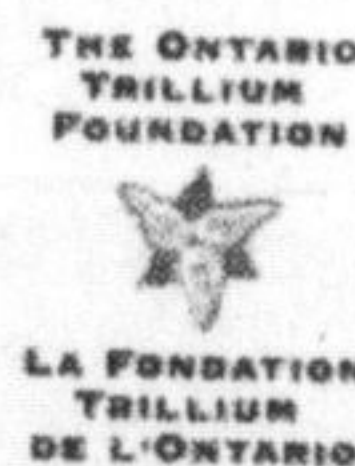
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