

# Hans wrestles way to Jr. Pan-Am bronze

*Drury grad overcomes injury, nerves to win medal in national team debut*

By Steve LeBlanc  
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Just a couple of years ago Ranbir Hans would have been considered a long-shot — at best — for the national wrestling program.

Now it's hardly a stretch to think he may have a long future on the international stage.

And recent efforts have certainly strengthened that notion.

Making his Team Canada debut late last month in Guadalajara, Mexico, the 19-year-old E.C. Drury graduate wasn't really expected to do much more than deliver a respectable showing at the Junior Pan-American Championships.

But more he did.

Persevering through pre-tournament jitters and a late injury, Hans came away with 50-kilogram bronze — giving Milton its first-ever medal at the event and helping the national men's contingent secure team silver.

#### Follows own advice

"I was more nervous than usual," admitted the traditionally-poised wrestler, who capped a breakthrough senior season at Drury with a gold-medal run at OFSAA and being named the school's male athlete of the year. "But I kept telling myself 'just take it one point at a time and stay relaxed and the rest will fall into place.'"

Able to put his own advice into practice, Hans went 2-2 and closed out the Jr. Pan-Ams with a 6-0, 6-2 decision over a

Guatemalan opponent in the battle for third place.

Solidified with a double-leg takedown, his bronze-medal triumph faced serious jeopardy midway through the opening round, though not because of any shortcomings on his part.

"I was doing the fireman's and I cranked it so hard that the side of my head hit the mat hard after I finished it," recalled Hans, who maintained a high level of training throughout the summer and is one of Drury's most improved grapplers in recent memory. "I started to black out a bit and took a couple of seconds to get back on my feet. Fortunately I was good to go after that. I had a burning feeling, but I was just so hyped up in the moment that I just blocked it out and re-focused on wrestling."

Nearly as memorable as his medal victory was a match he didn't even win.

But given how he'd been thoroughly dominated by this same Puerto Rican rival — who went on to capture gold — when they'd squared off two years ago at the Sparta Cup, any progress would be a major source of optimism.

#### Improvement evident

And Hans certainly made serious headway against the tournament standout before getting caught in a bad position on a high-risk scoring attempt and pinned in the dying seconds of round one. Up until then the eventual gold medalist had just a 1-0 lead,

thanks to some effective defence by the Team Canada newcomer.

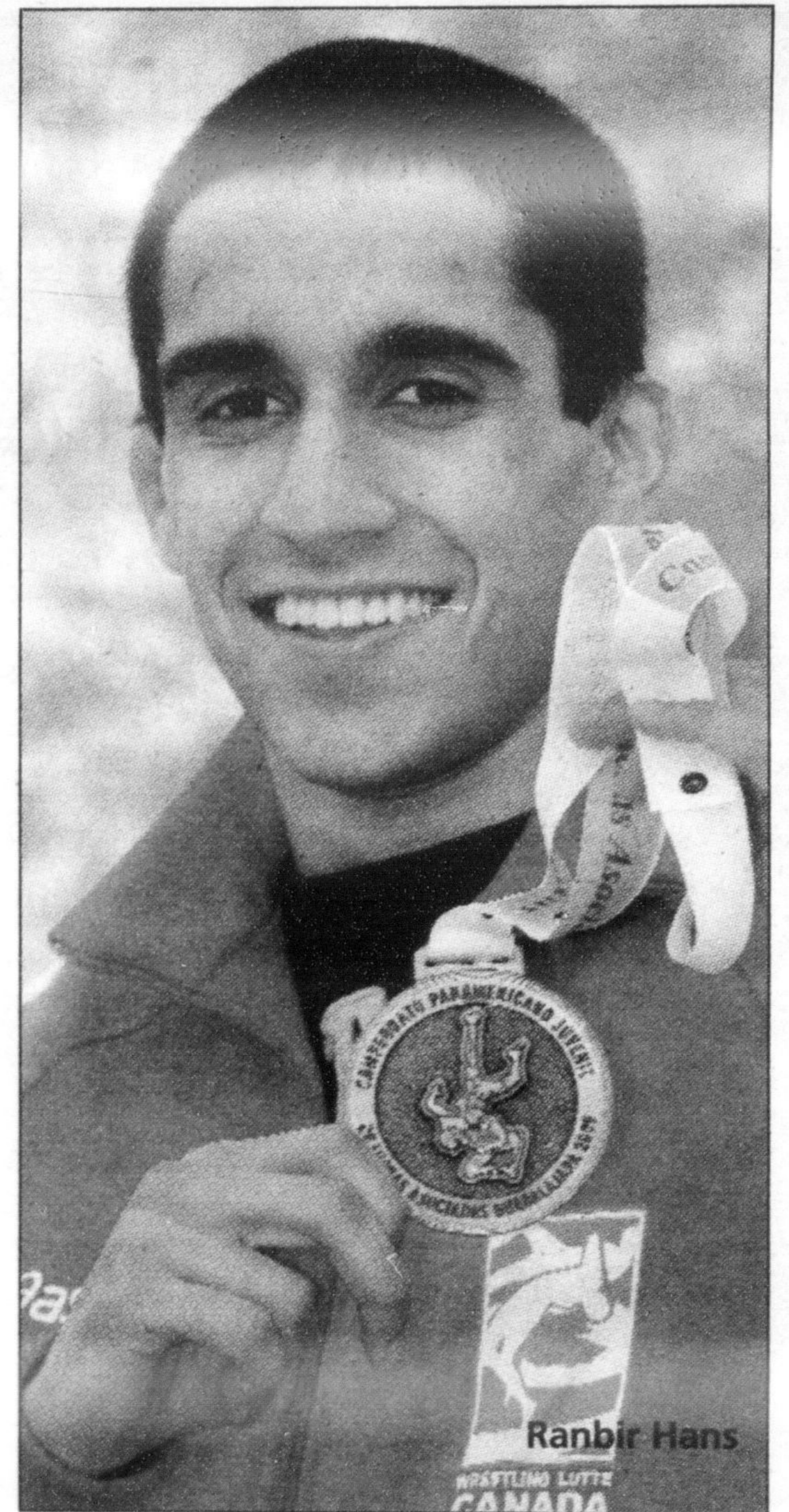
"The improvement I made since the last time I wrestled him was big," noted Hans. "I felt a lot tougher, both mentally and physically. And even though I lost it made me realize how far I've come in just two years and how much closer I've come to really challenging those type of guys."

Hans opened the tournament with a 6-0, 3-0 win over an opponent from Brazil and from there dropped a narrow decision to a Mexican wrestler — losing round one on a tie-breaking clinch before getting edged 1-0 in the second round.

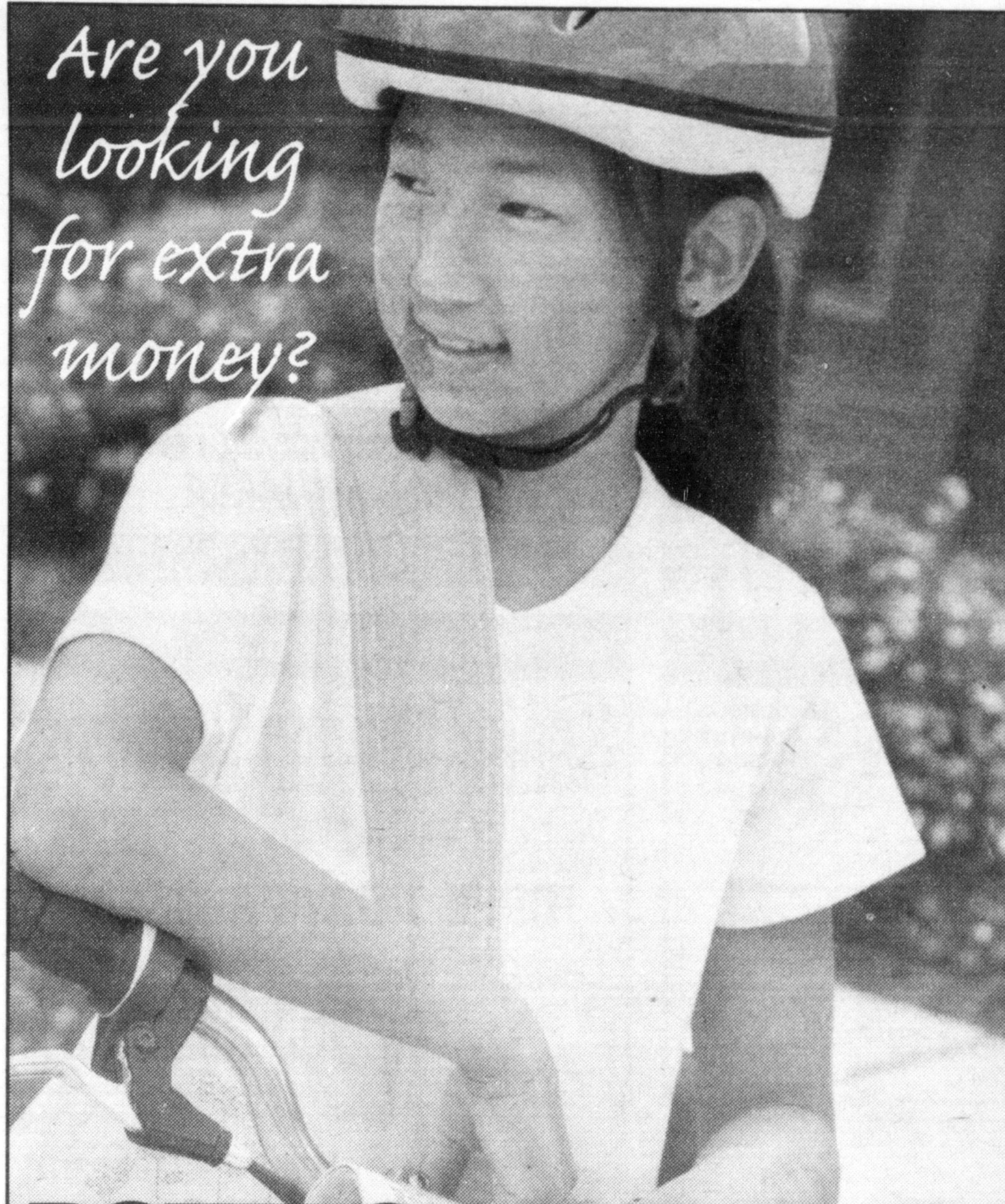
"Overall I was happy with my performance. I wasn't expecting to do as well as I did."

Echoing those sentiments was Drury's long-time wrestling coach Larry Jaroslowski, who served as manager for the Canadian squad.

"I was very pleased and impressed with Ranbir, especially considering this was his first tournament at this level. This experience should go a long way in his development as he moves beyond high school competition."



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