

NCAA very business-like: Alexander

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 (for NCAA). And not just to be ready for a higher calibre of play but for a whole new training schedule. With Team Canada we were working out and practicing two or three times a day, so that prepared me for this (university) environment. It's a completely different level (than high school) when it comes to skill, competition and aggressiveness. In the U.S., sports is a business and they take it very seriously. Basketball is really my job now, since they pay my education. Of course I still enjoy playing, but it's much more business like (in NCAA)."

Alexander admits she had more than a few freshman jitters for her NCAA debut last month against Fairleigh Dickinson. But a nine-point, eight-rebound effort in the Orange's 65-45 helped ease those nerves, and since then she's proven her value in every Syracuse win.

Averaging just under 16 minutes a game, the two-time junior national champ highlighted her early-season run with a team-high 23-point performance in a 93-55 rout of Wagner December 2. Four days later she chipped in 13 points and three blocks in a 70-54 decision over Ohio, prompting Big East panelists to name her Freshman of the Week.

Asked what he finds most

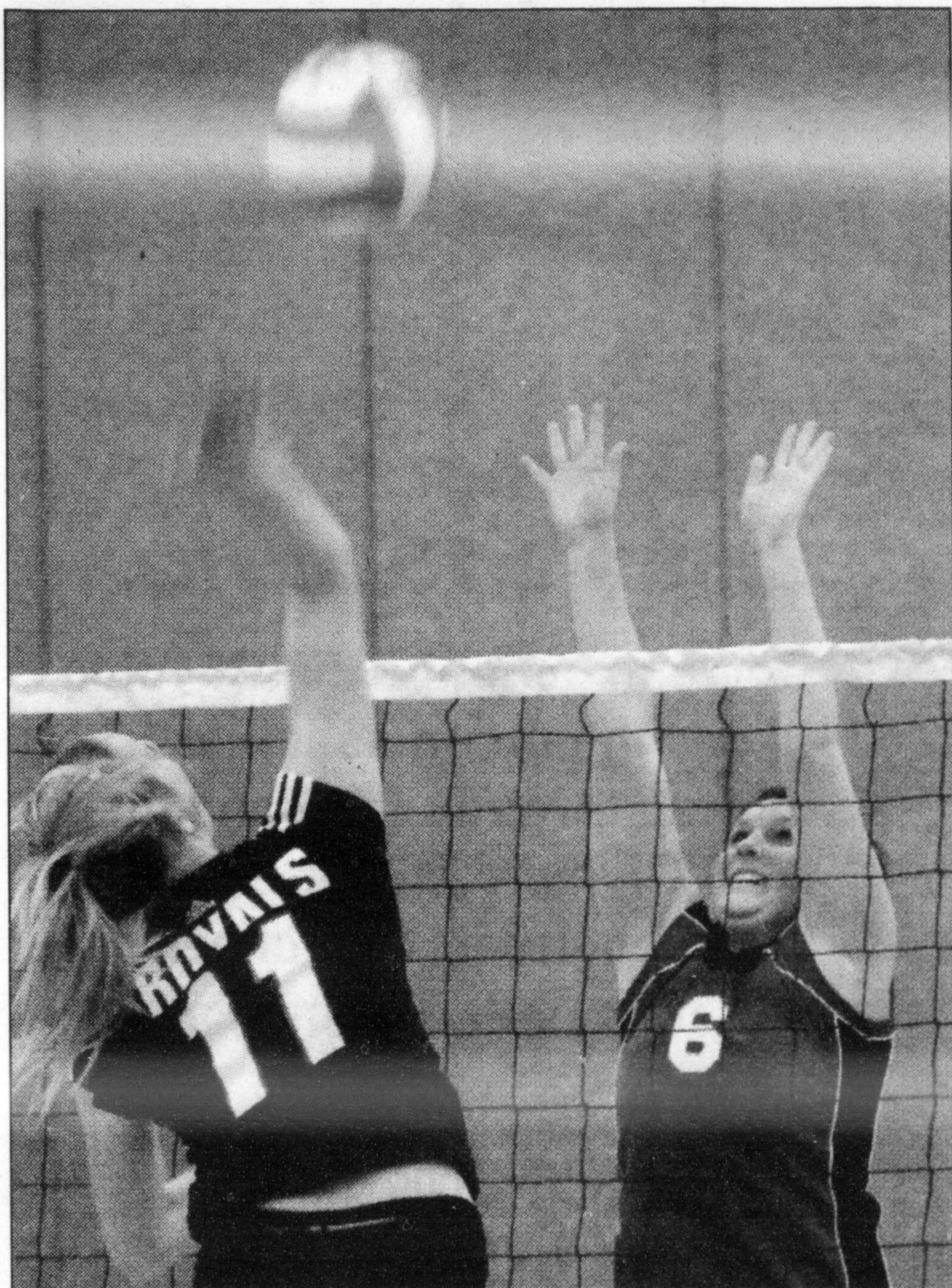
encouraging about his freshman centre's immediate contribution, Hillsman doesn't point to any individual stat.

"It's just the way she wants the ball. You don't see many freshmen demanding the ball the way she does."

Of course having battled players of her size and skill — some who've surpassed both — on numerous

occasions before this fall, Alexander didn't need to be convinced that aggressiveness is prerequisite for success.

Added Milton's NCAA freshman, "If you don't demand the ball out there, you're just not going to get it. I set some goals for myself this season and am not done reaching them yet, but yeah I'm pretty happy with how things are going so far."



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

NET GAINS: Bishop Reding's Devan O'Connor spikies the ball past Milton District's Stephanie Proulx during devan volleyball play at Reding Tuesday. The hosts won 25-20, 25-11 to improve to 3-0. Milton District's juniors beat Reding 25-1, 25-15 to stay perfect at 4-0.

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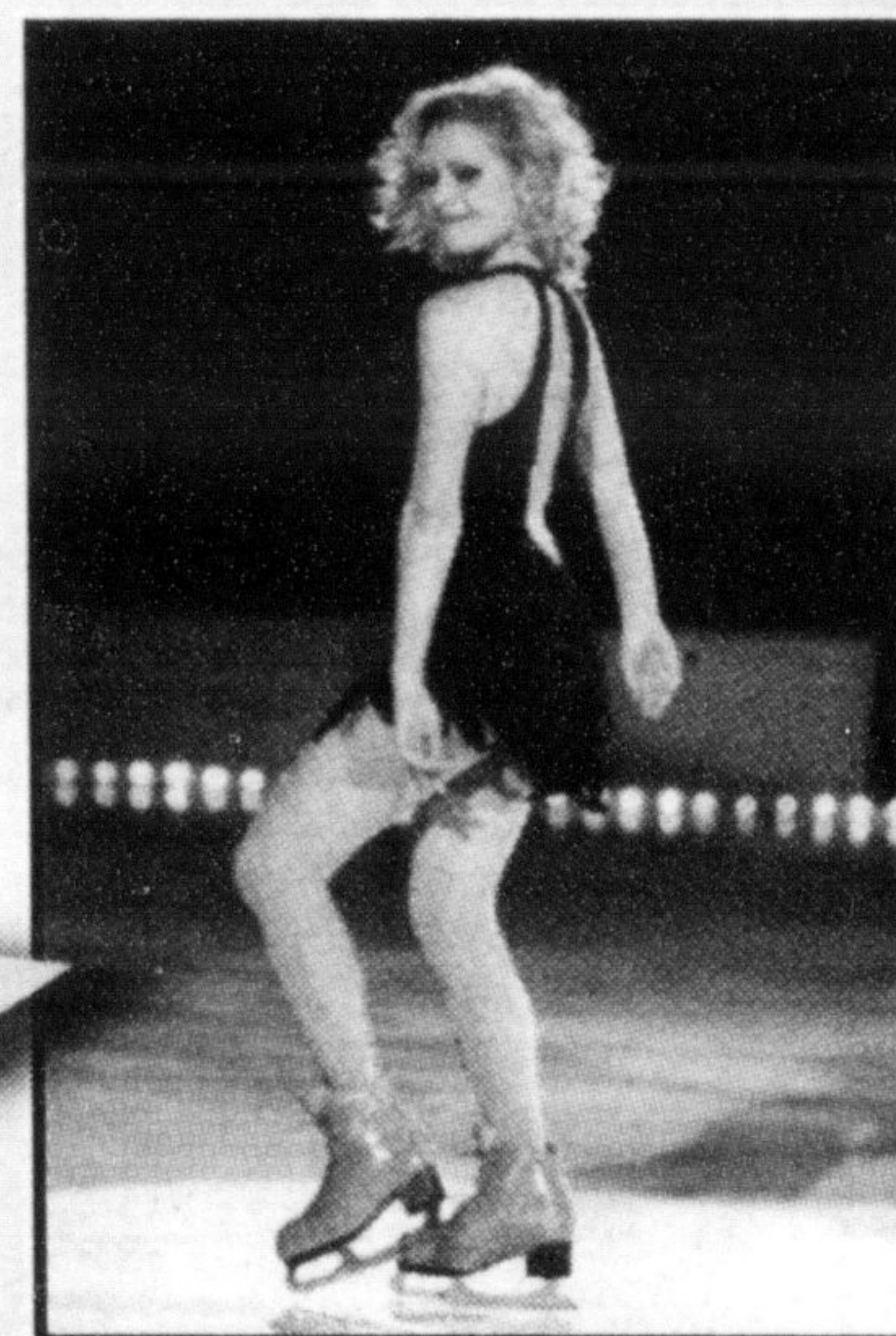
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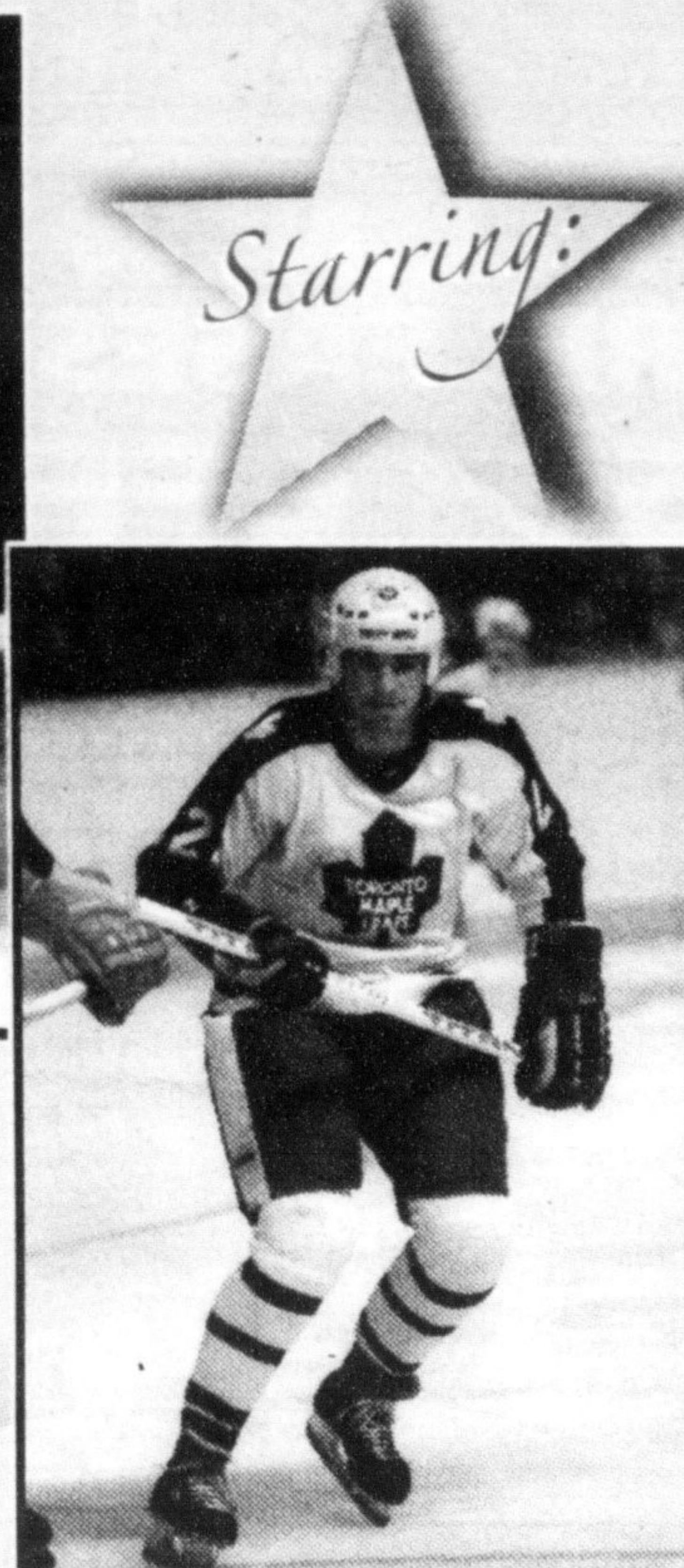
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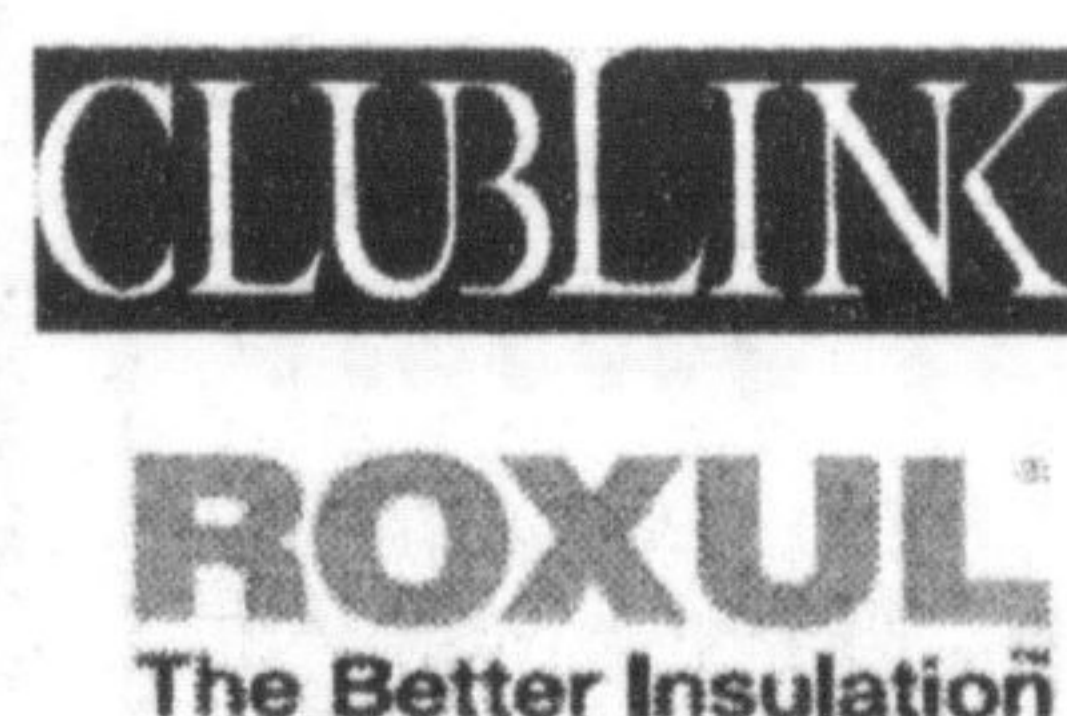
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