

# Engine problems stall Howden's plans

Wayne Howden and his crew are scurrying around trying to get his car engine fixed in time for a weekend race in Columbus, Ohio, on Saturday.

Howden suspects he broke a header Saturday at Delaware Speedway in London where he was putting his NASCAR-type stock car through its pre-season paces.

He went about 20 laps in the modified Buick Regal when trouble struck.

"There's something wrong with the engine and we have to go back to the States," said Howden Monday. "We're just pulling the

engine out now."

Howden said it will take about six hours for one of his crew to drive to Grand Rapids, Mich., with the engine.

The engine was driven to the United States Monday evening and is now in the shop. Howden is hoping the engine will be repaired and ready Friday so he can race in Columbus Saturday.

"We're crossing our fingers," said the Milton resident and president of Edgar Howden and Sons Ltd. "It just takes time. We're going to do our best."

Howden, 42, is entering his first year on the NASCAR-type circuit and expects to spend about \$150,000 to compete in races in Canada and the United States.

The 15-year racing veteran is driving a 600-horsepower, 355-cubic-inch Baker Enterprises prepared V-8 engine. His car was built by Oakville's Junior Hanley.

Howden plans to compete on the American Speed Association, American-Canadian Tour and FAST circuits. Races will be held in Ontario, Quebec, Ohio, Michigan, Wisconsin and Tennessee.

Despite Saturday's setback, Howden is delighted with the car.

"It feels comfortable and it feels good," said Howden.

The car's handling also impressed Howden, who added the test was done on track conditions less than ideal.

Howden said he has to be at the track by 7 a.m. Saturday to race in Columbus and it's a six-hour trip to the track.

He's "trying desperately" to beat the clock and is hoping Saturday's problems will pave the way for a trouble-free race this weekend.

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# Sports

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## Track spill puts Condren on shelf for eight weeks

By PATRICK TURENNE

Milton's Steve Condren, Ontario's leading harness-race driver, was sidelined for 6-8 weeks when he collided with another driver Tuesday at Mohawk Raceway.

"If you want to know what it really felt like, get in your car and take it up to 30 miles per hour, then open the door and jump out," said Condren.

Condren is Ontario's foremost harness driver with almost 2,000 winners in seven years of racing. He collided with driver Paul Larrabee in the third race on the card.

Both were admitted to hospital after the accident and have since been released.

"My horse must have caught a piece of equipment or something," said Condren. "When this kind of thing happens, they drop instantly."

"I was sitting second at the time. Paul was behind me and his horse plowed right into me. It probably hit me with its head or knee."

Condren will be house-bound for a lengthy convalescence under the care of a physiotherapist. He's had to learn the proper way to get out of a chair and how to walk as if a book was sitting on his head.

"It knocked me flying but it all seemed to happen so quick. It was over before I knew what was going on."

"I got to my hands and knees and saw Paul lying on the track. He was in danger because those horses will run over you and kill you."

"It was lucky for us. In fact, that the horses were as dazed as we were; they didn't panic."

"I crawled on my hands and knees over to Paul. He was unconscious but all right otherwise. Then I worked my way over the hub rail and tried to pull myself up. It was then that I realized I was hurt. There wasn't a lot of pain but everything went dizzy."

Condren said he couldn't move for two days after the accident.

"I started moving around on Friday morning, but with great difficulty. The doctors tell me I've broken two transverse processors, and that I'll be out six to eight weeks," he said.

This injury is related to the lower back and it's painful.

"If I twist, it's like someone puts a knife in my back and turns it."

Condren, 30, entered the racing scene in 1981. In the past seven years, he has won 1,862 races on the Ontario Jockey Club circuit alone, topped by last year's record-breaking 374 victories.

He has been selected as the Ontario Jockey Club's top horseman in three of the last four years and was in the process of another excellent season. Prior to his accident, Condren was on top with 91 victories and total purse earnings of \$800,000.

He is worried about falling behind this season, with the loss of revenue. "We're (jockeys) looked upon as



Steve Condren's track spill has fegged him off the harness-racing circuit for 6-8 weeks. Before the accident, Condren was having a banner year with a leading 91 wins and purse earnings of almost \$800,000.

self-employed, so we don't get much money from the government. I own horses myself, but right now they're not turning much profit. I earn 90 per cent of my money racing for other people," he said.

Condren is not only worried about his livelihood, but also his other passion — golf. The avid golfer is worried his injury may keep him off the course as well as the race track. "I'm not too happy about this."

## Local athletes win awards

By PATRICK TURENNE

Three local athletes have received provincial recognition for their athletic achievements.

Ed Whitlock, Cathy Redshaw and Sandra Stephanson have been chosen as recipients of Central Ontario Sports awards for 1987.

Whitlock, a member of the International Masters Organization for competing amateur athletes, won his award as the result of a victory in October 1987 at a cross-country meet between Canada and the United States.

"We beat the Americans, and I won the cross-country, though I consider myself a 1,500-metre runner," said Whitlock.

He was competing in the over-55 category, but his youthful look and lean frame easily betray his years.

"I'm 57 now. I started running as a young lad, and then stopped for about 20 years. When I got back into it, I was more serious than I am now. I'm really not in good shape right now," he said modestly.

"I've had trouble with injuries and my work is demanding. Six or seven years ago I was running up to 20 races a year," he said.

Whitlock has competed in both North America and Europe, winning the world championship in West Germany in 1979.

"I intend to get more serious again. There really is no age limit. One Swedish runner was 90 years old."

The 19-year-old Redshaw, was a member of the winning team at the national soccer tournament held in

See WHITLOCK page 14

## MDHS sends two gymnasts to provincials

By JIM DAVID

Milton District High School gymnasts Katrina Sipkes and Alissa King are on their way to the Ontario championships.

The Grade 11 students had overall finishes of second and fourth at the regional high school girls' gymnastic finals at Delta Secondary School in Hamilton Friday.

Sipkes, club C, and King, club A, led the seven-member Milton team to a fifth place overall finish in the Golden Horseshoe Athletic Conference meet.

The meet attracted 15 schools.

"It was a high-calibre meet," said co-coach Greg McPherson, who praised Milton's team performance.

"I think the results were positive. In general, we did very well for the school. We're quite pleased. We haven't had gymnastics at the school for a number of years."

"I'm very pleased with the performance," added coach Janet Campbell. "They competed in less than perfect conditions and they performed like the professionals they are."

Campbell said the gymnasts waited for five hours before doing their routines.

The Ontario Federation of School Athletic Association finals are April 22-23 in Chatham.

Sipkes, competing despite a back injury which may force her to quit after this year, came first in the vault and bars while adding seconds in beam and floor.

She could have added another first in beam, but fell. Sipkes' routine was disrupted by the timer, who made a mistake with the clock.

Sipkes said the timer "apologized profusely" for the error and judges offered her the opportunity to keep the first score or try again.

She didn't like her first score and redid her program. It was her last event on the day and she fell during the routine.

Campbell is confident Sipkes would have had another gold if the timer hadn't erred.

Vault and bars are her best events while the beam is her weakest. She came second in floor because she took out her tumbling events. She made the change because of her back.

The 16-year-old athlete has been in gymnastics for 10 years and is hoping her back problems don't force her to miss the OFSAA championships.

Her teammate, and friend King, is confident Sipkes will be at OFSAA.

"She's going to come first," said King, 16.

King had fourths across the board in vault, bars, beam and floor.

"It was consistent on my part," said King. "I was pleased because I was competing against nationally ranked people."

King has also been in gymnastics a decade competing with clubs in Milton, Georgetown, Cambridge and Burlington.

See KING page 14



Chatham-bound Katrina Sipkes, who finished fourth in two provincials, may be sidelined this year because of back spasms.



Chatham-bound Alissa King is heading to the provincials with a specific goal — not to finish last.