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THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

WEDNESDAY JANUARY 17, 1996



Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Here's looking at you

Milton's Amy DiPalma, an 11-year-old gymnast who works out with the Etobicoke Olympium Rhythmic Gymnastics Club, was getting ready for her first international meet recently. She's a nationally ranked novice competitor and will be in Los Angeles this weekend for a meet.

For Ontario Jr. Ladies title

Last throw by Cannington edges Milton rink out

By STEVE LeBLANC
Special to The Champion

It came down to the final match of the week-long tournament, the final game of the championship match and the final throw of a rock.

Unfortunately for Kirsten Harmark and her Milton Curling Club rink, last week's Ontario Junior Women's Curling Championships in Newmarket also meant the final competition in their 1995/96 campaign, and no provincial crown repeat.

The Harmark rink — which included 17-year-old vice Nicole Pellegrin, 19-year-old second Catherine Kemp and 18-year-old lead Andra Harmark — came up on the short end of a one-point championship decision to Denna Schell's rink from Cannington.

The 5-4 squeaker was arguably one of the closest and most exciting junior championship matches ever at the provincial playdowns, as Schell came up with her team's final point on her last shot.

"They were just a baby, finger away

from making a return trip to the nationals," said Milton coach Pat B. Reid. "It was truly a magnificent match. I told the ladies that we didn't lose, the other team just won.

"I've been to the provincial championships five previous times and this one definitely hurts the most."

Kirsten's sentiments were much the same after Sunday morning's showdown with Cannington. While clearly disappointed with the season being over, an underlying satisfaction with the team's vast improvement this sea-

son fought its way to the surface.

"I would say our performance at this year's provincials was better, we made big improvements over the 1995-96 season. The championship game was as close as possible. It came down to the very last shot of the day and unfortunately she (Schell) made it," said Kirsten, who finished out her last season of junior competition. Sister Andra, Nicole and Catharine are all eligible for at least another year together.

Coach Reid said both rinks stepped

things up a notch for the championship match, each making key shots from start to finish. "The fans were literally in awe of the shots being made. The teams really put on a show.

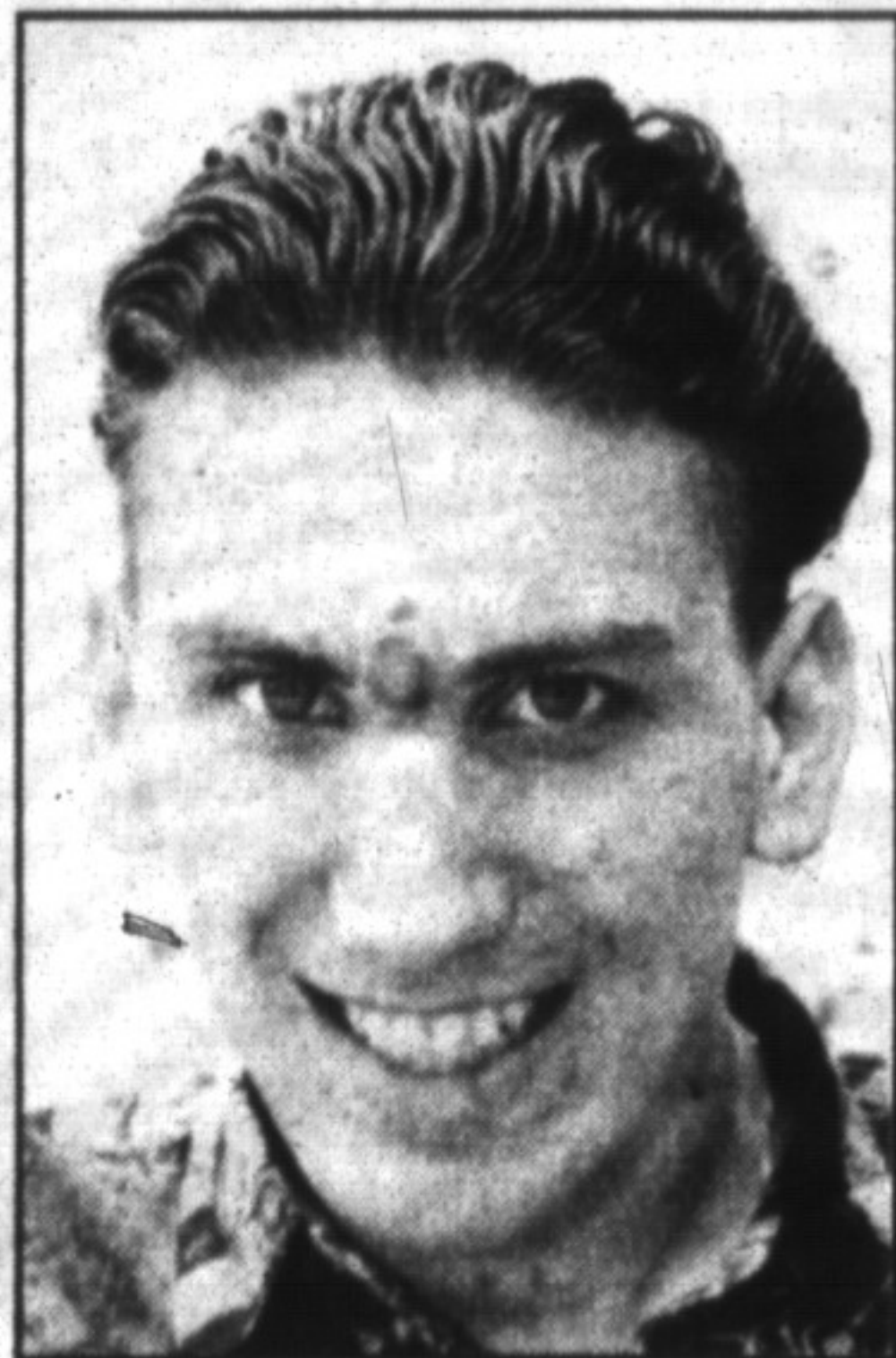
"Kirsten kept coming up with great shots. The only difference was they (Cannington) had last shot," added Reid.

Milton's only other loss over the six-day tournament came against Cannington in draw number two of round-robin play — again in an edge-of-your-seat 6-4 final that was decided on the last shot.

Milton tied with Cannington in round-robin play with a 6-1 record before blasting Ottawa 8-4 in the semifinals. Their round-robin showing included triumphs over Ottawa (8-6), Thornhill (7-4), St. Catharines (10-2), London (8-5), Orangeville (7-6) and Unionville (6-2).

"The ladies (were) outstanding all week long. One thing I admire most is that they weren't afraid to give 110 per cent, knowing that if they gave it everything they had and still lost it was going to hurt," Reid said.

"Most athletes stay in a comfort zone so they have an excuse if they lose, but this team simply refused to do this. I'm extremely proud of them and know they'll learn a lot from this season," the coach added.



Ryan Leworthy

Leworthy plays at Maple Leaf Gardens

Wheelchair athlete Ryan Leworthy will represent Milton when a dozen hockey players take to the ice at Maple Leaf Gardens tonight (Wednesday).

The five-minute exhibition game during the first period intermission has been arranged by the LINK Foundation (headquartered in Milton) and will be unusual in many respects. First, its aim is to showcase the abilities of disabled athletes, who play sledge hockey.

Second, the sledge hockey players are to be pitted against able-bodied champion women hockey players, all in the pool for the 1998 Olympic team. These women have been practicing hockey on sledges just for the opportunity to help promote it before a packed house at the Gardens.

Ryan Leworthy will represent the newly-formed Milton OPPortunists sledge hockey team, sponsored by the police force. Other players are coming from Niagara

Falls, Hamilton and Mississauga.

The exhibition game will use normal rules for contact hockey play and will be officiated by former NHL referee and Milton resident Bruce Hood. Players propel themselves in lightweight molded plastic sledges on skate blades, with picks on the handle end of custom-made hockey sticks. The game is fast moving and takes substantial upper body strength.

LINK Foundation executive Mike Leworthy is excited about the opportunity to demonstrate this sport at the Gardens.

"The Maple Leaf management has been really great about making this happen. Of course, it's a tremendous thrill for all the players but more importantly, it fulfills the LINK Foundation goals to show that active living is very much possible for disabled people who participate in recreation and sports."