

Tykes capture title to end lacrosse season on high note

The Milton Mavericks tykes ended their impressive 1996 campaign on a high note recently, with a championship victory in Zone 8's C division. The victory came in a 3-1 series win over Elora, who fought off elimination with a 5-3 win in game three but then fell 4-3 in game four in Elora.

Milton earned 6-2 and 6-3 decisions to take a stranglehold on the series early on.

Greg Robertson was between the pipes for Milton in game four while fellow netminders Jessie McConnell and Ian Goertz scored wins in games one and two respectively.

Leading the offensive campaign against Elora

was 1996 MVP Ashley Rutz, who strung together five goals and six assists. Brad Mewhinney fired in seven goals over the four games and also drew one helper.

Robertson and Cole Madansky tallied twice in the series and Jonathan Monk, Graham Sharp and Greg Butt all contributed with singles.

Devon Medland picked up two assists and Madansky, Butt, Michael Brown and Geoffrey Strank posted one apiece.

Along with Rutz's MVP selection, Madansky was named most improved player for the Mavericks and Brown was the choice for the most sportsmanlike player award.

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Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Eric Cseff appears to be in the driver's seat when it comes to his bicycle racing career.

Eric Cseff is picking up the pace

Teenager has graduated to national series

By **STEVE LeBLANC**

Special to The Champion

He may ride downhill and cross-country, but Eric Cseff's progress in off-road bike racing has gone nowhere but up since he entered the sport two-and-a-half years ago.

The 18-year-old Milton resident is now taking his talents to a nationwide audience, as a first-year participant in the Canada Cup Series. He has been riding high for over two months now on a cross-Canada trek through Quebec, Ontario and most recently British Columbia.

"I'm still competing in the Junior Elite class, only now it's at the national level," said Cseff.

Cseff has looked like anything but a rookie this season. Despite missing some early races for various reasons, he has picked up the pace and is now ranked second overall in the downhill category and 18th in cross-country.

He suffered a crash in his first race of the season at L'ans St Jean, Quebec in May but still managed a fourth place finish in the downhill. He did not compete in cross-country.

Two weeks later he enjoyed one of his best efforts ever in the sport, and his best single showing in a World Cup Series race in Bromont, Quebec. "I finished second on

the cross-country course there. I completed the 40 kilometre race in two hours, 15 minutes in rainy and muddy conditions," he recalled. "I had competed in two World Cup races last year in Quebec and Vermont but didn't do well at all."

His highlight of 1996 so far came in the next race in Mount Snow, Vermont, where he tried his luck at an American National Off-Road Bicycle Association (NORBA) event and ended up third in the downhill. This came in the very same weekend as some special training in St. Anne, Quebec.

He has enjoyed several other top finishes this summer, including a third place downhill finish at Ontario's Dagmar, a second place downhill effort in Winnipeg and another runner-up placing in London in downhill — where he also competed in cross-country and ended up pushing his bike the last two laps to the finish line.

"I had broken my chain so I basically ran with my bike near the end. I ended up with a bad time but I didn't finish last," he said with a chuckle.

Cseff is now out west in Whistler, British Columbia where he is currently training for at least three western events over the next several weeks. He will compete in Whistler on two separate weekends as well as Silver Star, B.C. and Edmonton, Alberta. The last race in Whistler, at the end of September, is the national finals.

His Canada Cup Series success follows a remarkable 1995 campaign, in which he took down all comers on the Ontario Cup Series. He wrapped up the downhill championship well before the end of the season but needed the seventh and final race in

Beaver Valley (near Collingwood) to capture the cross-country title.

This dual triumph came in only his second year of competition.

"I'd say I have more power this year and my overall technical skills are just a little sharper. I hit the gym a lot this past winter in preparation for the Canada Cup Series," said Cseff. Due to his traveling schedule and pre-season training, he completed his grade 12 school year by correspondence and may likely do the same next year.

Younger brother Adam, 16, is also a mountain bike enthusiast who is currently contending for the cross-country title at the Ontario Cup Series Junior Sport level. He sits in second place.

The older Cseff has gained sponsorship over the past year from the likes of Rook, Oakley and Santa Cruz. This helps pay for bike repairs, equipment and a portion of his traveling expenses.

While 15 points out of first place in the Canada Cup Series' downhill competition — a spot enjoyed by fellow Ontario rider Joe Bauçkam of Collingwood — Cseff says finishing atop the pack is still a realistic goal for him.

"I also hope to move up in the cross-country category. This shouldn't be a big problem because a lot of the other riders from Ontario aren't planning to compete in the last few races out here (B.C.). This should help me move up to at least the top 10 and possibly even fifth or sixth place."

A first or second place finish in the downhill would likely earn him a place on the national team, and the chance to com-

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Condren drives to Gold win

Elegantimage captured the first Ontario Sires Stakes victory of her career in a Gold Series championship at Woodbine Race-track on Aug. 20. The two-year-old trotting filly led the \$103,440 race from start to finish, setting a new Canadian and OSS record of 1:57.7 with a six-length win.

That clocking eclipsed the former standard for her age, sex and gait on a seven-eighths mile track of 1:58.3, previously set by Vera's Image in 1995. It was also a new lifetime mark for Elegantimage.

Owned by Doug Millard of Woodstock, Jerry Van Boekel of Bright, Hyatt Holdings Inc. and her driver Steve Condren of Milton, Elegantimage is trained by Brad Maxwell. She upset the

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Photo by RON ERICSON

Ross Wood was on fire — literally — at a recent championship rally, but he quickly put the heat back on the competition.

Red hot Ross Wood smokes competition

Milton race car driver Ross Wood was on fire — in more ways than one — recently at the Ontario Performance Rally Championships in Britt.

With 1996 racing partner Keith Townsend of Brampton at his side, Wood not only had to deal with top-flight competition but a small exhaust fire as well, which came midway through the third round feature.

The duo managed to keep their cool, so to speak, and quickly extinguished the fire before burning rubber once again and winning the race.

The fire was sparked shortly after they hit a large rock in the middle of the road. The vehicle, an extensively modified Toyota Corolla worked on at both Attrell Toyota of Brampton and Japanese Automotive, has a heavily reinforced skid plate which protected the engine and transmission, although the protective plate itself was severely damaged.

This led to the fire, when the bent plate forced a rubber pad against the red hot exhaust.

Wood and Townsend have teamed up to compete in both the Ontario and Canadian Championships this summer. Wood has won two previous championships with other drivers.