



SPORTS

THE CANADIAN CHAMPION

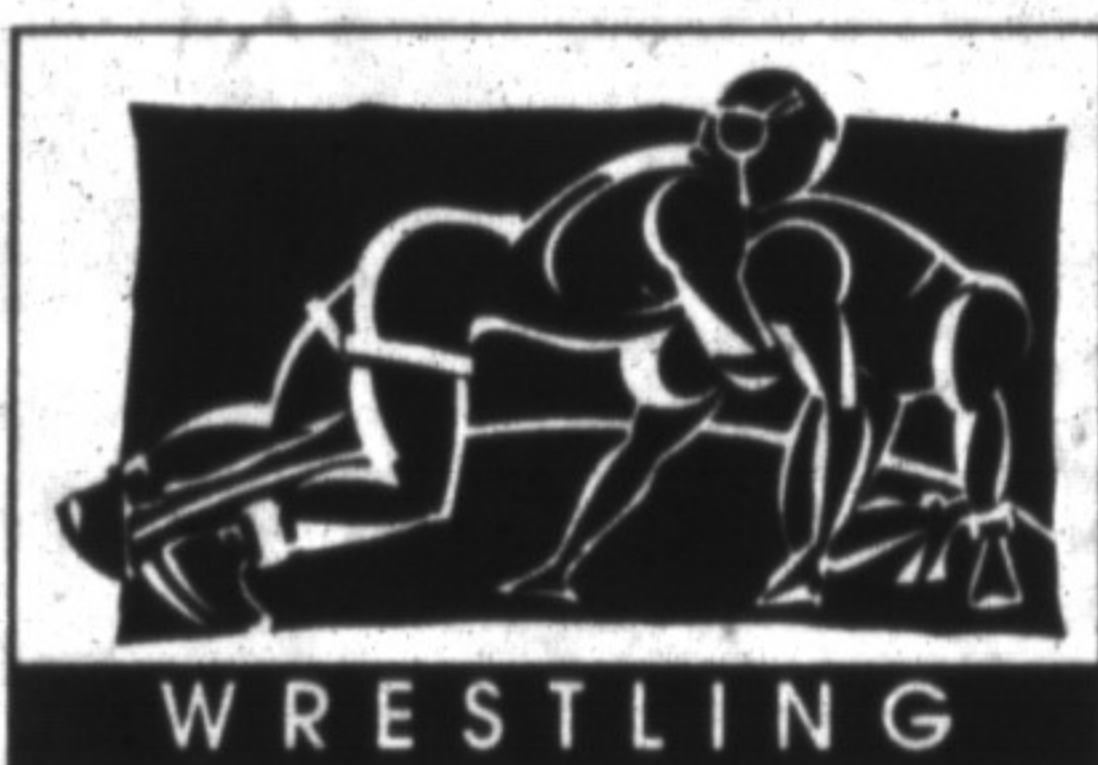
THURSDAY DECEMBER 26, 1996

Three golds at Spartan Invitational

Drury defends wrestling title in exciting tourney

Chris Denich provided fans with main-event wrestling action and provided his team with their third gold medal of the day as E.C. Drury successfully defended their Spartan Invitational title last week.

Denich met up with Burlington Central's Jamie Portenous in the 149-pound weight class finals December 18. With both wrestlers entering with remarkable credentials — including GHAC titles and Canadian championships — the match was as exciting as they come with Milton's hometown boy puffing out a sudden-death victory.



Portenous fought off several attacks to force overtime with neither combatant earning a point in regulation time. Central's representative looked to have the match won with a strong single leg attack, but Denich forced him into a stalemate and changed the momentum. He then penetrated Portenous' defense to earn a one-point victory.

Denich's tournament showing was one of a number of outstanding efforts by the Spartans, who collected 101 points to top 33 schools in an event that featured close to 300 wrestlers. Defending OFSAA champions Hagersville placed second while Georgetown took third.

Last year's rookie of the year, Kevin Heffron, won his first gold this season by outscoring teammate Tom Knott in the finals. Heffron continues to shine while Knott is becoming one of the most improved wrestlers at E.C.

Frank Cavallo fought from behind twice, including a comeback in the dying seconds of his semi-final match against Georgetown's Maurice Gear before capturing Drury's second gold medal.

Drury had strong showings in both pools of the 112-pound division. In pool A, Clayton Cowton lost a 9-1 decision in the finals to Hagersville's Jeremy Aude, one of the top ranked wrestlers in Canada. Grant Heffron also lost by decision in the other final to highly regarded Ian Krobe of Kitchener. Rookies Shawn Burnham and Bishop Reding's Jeremy Chuchmach scored fourth-place finishes in the two pools.

Justin Billingham ran his win total to 21 by earning a silver in the 119-pound class. His 3-1 record earned him his fifth medal of the season. Sophomore Chad Merritt also snagged his fifth season medal with a bronze. He's now 19-3 after five tournament appearances.

Veteran Scott Mills lost a close semi-final match before settling for bronze at 127-pound while Trevor Petherick was impressive in the 134-pound class and scored a silver. Andrew Sharpe also struck silver in the 141-pound category, with Jason Barrett turning in his best day with a 184-pound class bronze medal.

Darren Gallipeau and Trevor Ayling rounded out Drury's efforts with top five placings.

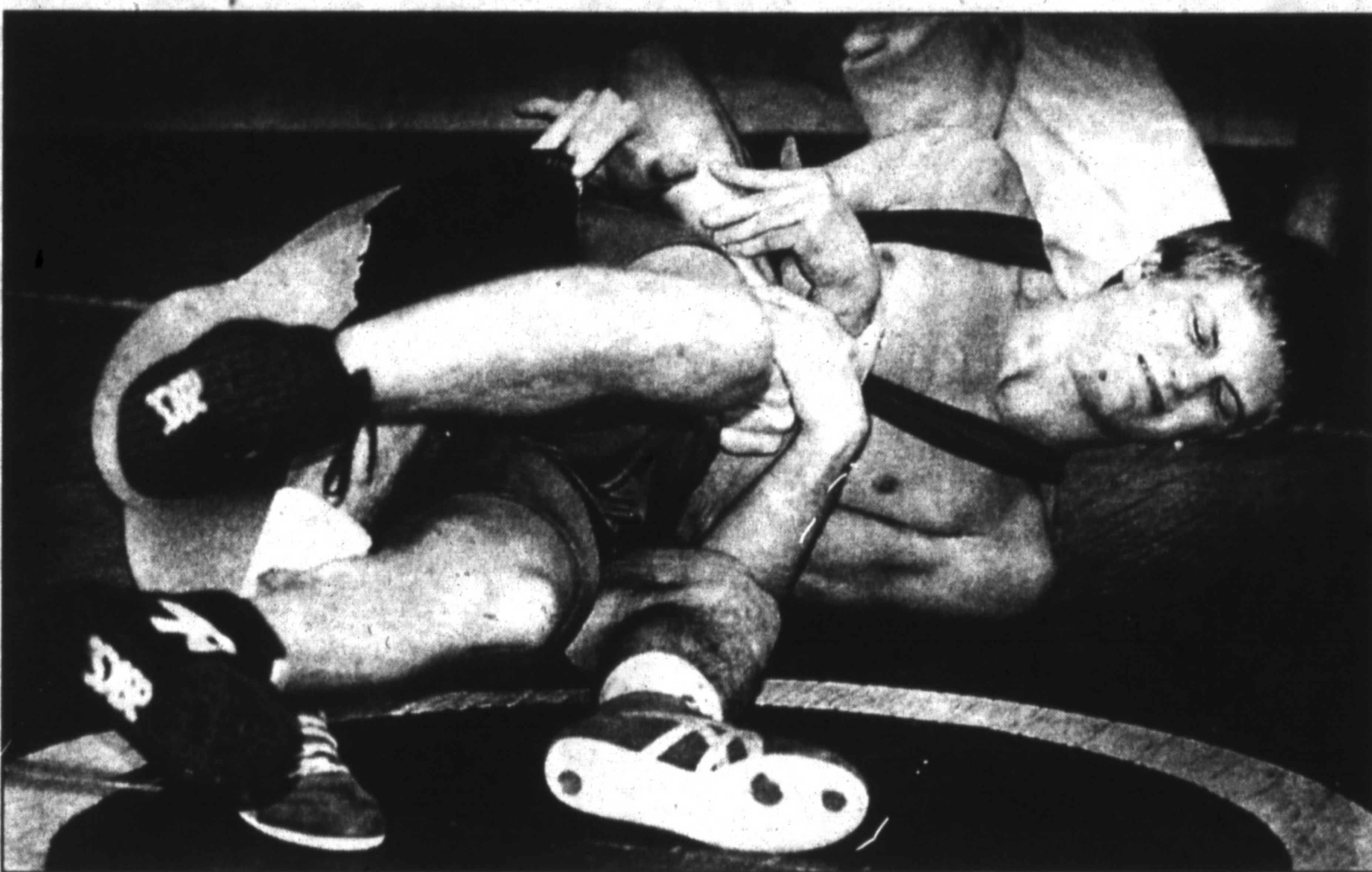


Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

E.C. Drury's Chris Denich has Daryl Weber of Beamsville all tied up in this 149-r pound match-up last week during the Spartan Invitational. Denich went on to win the match and the division title.

Powerhouse Merchants keep winning

By STEVE LeBLANC
Special to The Champion

The Georgetown Raiders enjoyed no holiday generosity in Provincial Jr. A hockey action this past weekend as they fell victim to the powerhouse Milton Merchants in 7-2 and 9-1 bombings.

Having come off tough bouts with Brampton and Bramalea recently, the home-and-home series with the Raiders allowed Milton to showcase their scoring touch and do a little stats padding before a five-day break. For Georgetown, the weekend meant two more losses and a further slide down the West Conference standings.

Despite having former Merchant skipper Rick Bince at the helm this season, the

Raiders continue to struggle and now sport a dismal 2-30-1 record.

The Merchants remain first in the West with a 25-6-2 showing.

The back-to-back contests played out in much the same fashion, with Georgetown putting up a token defense through the first period and then folding up like tents the rest of the way. Goalies Jonathan McCarthy and Ryan Lowe faced a combined 105 shots, thanks to a robust Merchant offense and non-existent Raider defense.

Travis Riffin provided the biggest slice of the scoring pie against former coach Bince. The 19-year-old right winger fired in three goals and helped set-up five others. Captain Steve Clarke had an outstanding weekend as well, turning in thunderous

checks Friday at home and turning a hat-trick Saturday on the road.

One Merchant unable to showcase his talents was newly acquired netminder Lloyd LeFrance. The 20-year-old North Bay native made his Milton debut Friday but was idle for most of the night as the Raiders recorded just 16 shots and only seven over the last two frames. Jeremy Wenzel was fairly inactive in goal the following night, turning aside just 22 shots.

Cory Holland returned from a four-game suspension Saturday and pumped in a second-period goal. He also assisted on one of Troy Walczak's first-period markers. Walczak scored three times over the weekend and added four helpers.

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