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Thunderbirds sign coach

By FRED SIMPSON
It wouldn't be accurate to describe Al Morris as the "reluctant" new coach of the Thornhill Thunderbird Mid-Ontario Junior B hockey entry. He's happy with the job, considers it a "great challenge." But it's also true that the majority of members of his Tudor Glen Minor Midget All-Ontario champions played the major role in his decision. The Tudor Glen boys, who just recently won an All Ontario championship for an unprecedented four years in a row, decided not to stay intact as a team and move up to midget ranks.

"It was my intention to coach the boys one more year if they had moved up to midget," admitted Morris at a special press conference called Monday noonhour to announce his signing.

"I figured we would have had a good shot at winning the Wrigley tournament but it was their decision to break up as a unit."

DISAPPOINTED
"I was somewhat disappointed but we left it up to them. They

took a vote and reported their decisions to me on an individual basis. The nays won it."

That over with, Al left little or no doubt about his intentions with the junior club he inherits from last year's coach Ralph Beer.

"I know what we have to do, I know what we want to do," he said. "We definitely have enough good players in Thornhill to make our team very competitive in league play. I'm very optimistic."

Morris will undoubtedly also be something new to junior hockey as far as coaching methods are concerned.

SYSTEM COACH
"I'm a systems coach," he said. "I want my players to know how to react to every situation that might arise. I don't want any confusion about that. I want them to react together."

One of Morris' initial concentrations will be his defensive corps.

"First we're going to concentrate on keeping pucks out of our net and then we'll worry about scoring. It's my feeling that there are really very few teams that know how to get the

puck consistently out of their own defensive zone."

Morris will also have one of the best, if not the best, conditioned teams in junior hockey.

BE IN SHAPE
"I'm a firm believer in a team being in top physical condition," he said.

"However, I don't plan any special drills during the summer. It's up to the players to keep in shape themselves." Then he smiled.

"If they're not in shape when they report they will be in a week. It might prove to be painful."

Morris hasn't any fears about the difference between minor midget hockey and Junior "B". "Hockey is hockey," he said. "At the junior B level it should be faster and rougher. You just have to compensate for this by raising your own sights."

Morris is confident that "quite a number of the Tudor Glen players should be able to make the jump to junior hockey. It's a challenge but we had some pretty big players last year. Besides, you learn more in higher calibre hockey."

Morris is also counting on a

nucleus of last year's team "to return and give us the experience we surely will need."

He didn't come right out and say it but he figures his goaltending should be one of his lesser problems this season.

In all likelihood it'll be Tudor Glen's John Morris (who is also the coach's son) who'll see lots of action between the pipes.

IRON-MAN
Iron-man John played every Tudor Glen game this season with the exception of one. He had to. He was Tudor's only goalie.

Thunderbird Vice-President Fred Disera said it was "us who went after Morris and we're delighted he'll be with us. John is not only a local man but his coaching record speaks for itself."

"He'll also have a completely free hand at picking and handling his team," he said.

"We won't perform miracles in our first season," said Morris, "but we'll do all right."

Morris has plenty of credentials to take with him to the Thunderbirds including:

Certified at Level 4 of the Canadian Amateur Hockey Association Coaching

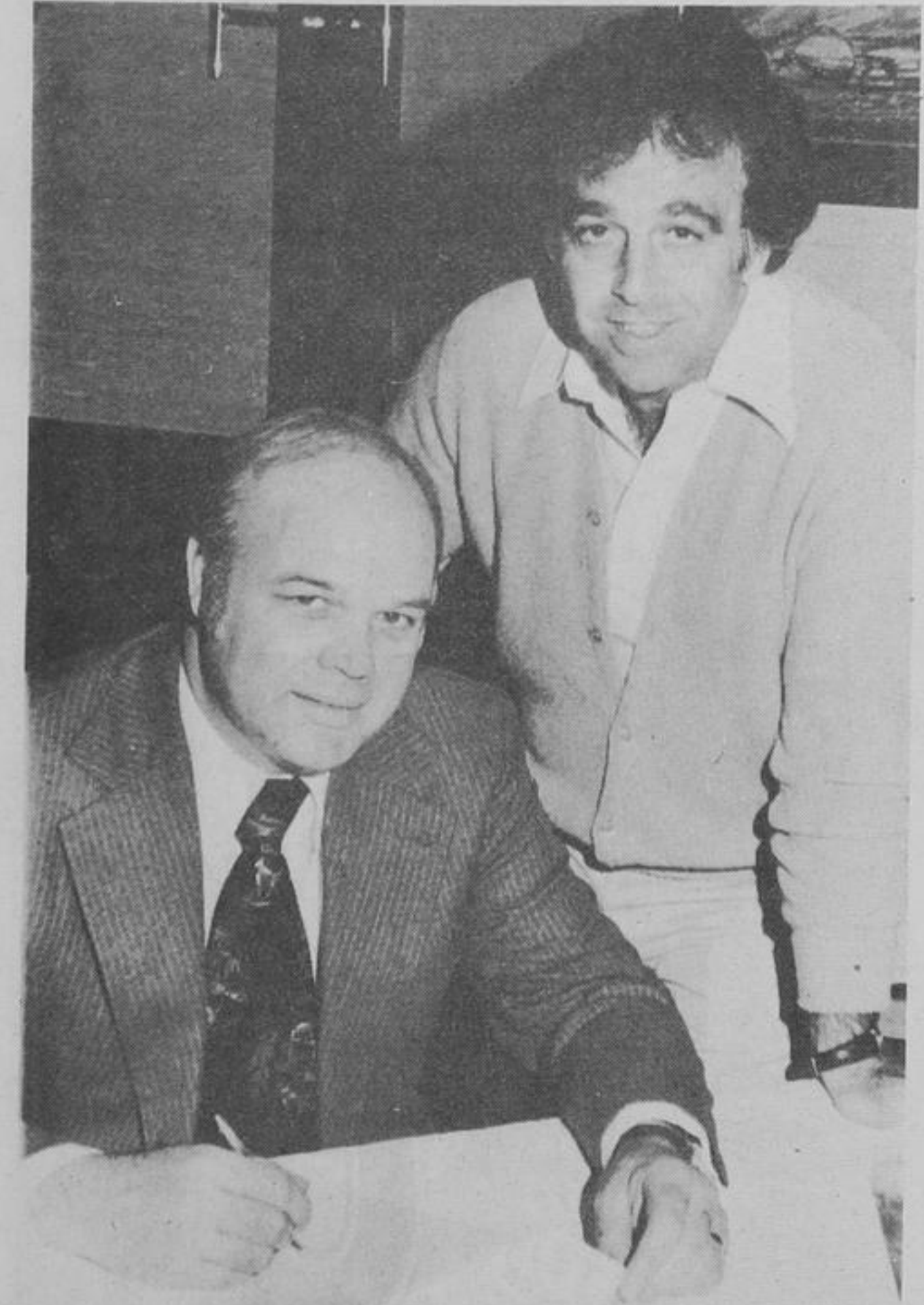
Development Program (presently awaiting Level 5 certification); instructor for OHA and CAHA in coaching development program; director of hockey and fitness camp for the Town of Markham; operator and head instructor of skating and conditioning program Thornhill Arena; and consulting coach for Thornhill Minor Hockey Association.

Coaching background:
Six years in the Thornhill Minor Hockey Association, three Ontario championships, one York-Simcoe league championship.

Five years in the Western Ontario Athletic Association, twice WAAA finalists; three times WAAA division finalists; two years as head coach Warton Minor Hockey Association; one year as coach in Thornhill Community League.

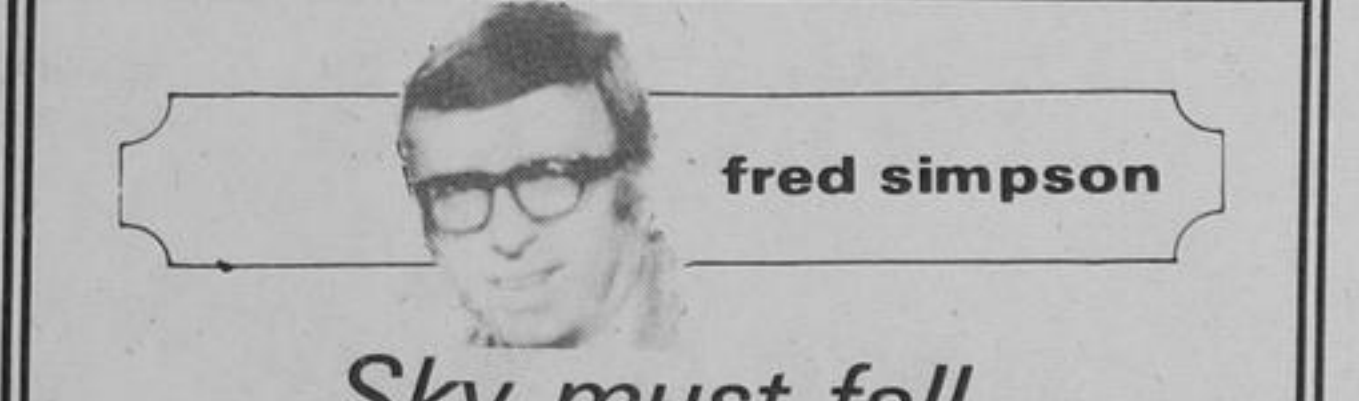
He played minor hockey in the Toronto Hockey League, junior hockey with the Waterloo Junior A's and B's; and a Chiropractic college team.

Morris is a chiropractor by profession.



New coach

New Thornhill Thunderbirds coach Al Morris (left) signs here as club vice-president Fred Disera looks on. Approvingly, of course. Morris coached Tudor Glen Minor Midgets to the All Ontario title this season. (Photo by Pearlstein).



fred simpson

Sky must fall

I've been worried this week. Nothing disastrous has happened to me. It makes me feel very insecure. I figure somebody up there is planning all kinds of little horrors for me. Turn the corner and, wham, the sky will fall, the earth turn upside down.

Don't misunderstand me when I talk about disasters. I don't mean those big ones, the kind you associate with wars with or having your family dog run away from home. Nothing like that. I can handle those.

A disaster is anything untoward that happens to me between 7 a.m. and 9 a.m. on a working day. There are no minor disasters between these hours.

OOOH

Such a seemingly innocent thing as getting toothpaste on my shoes can send me into trauma, or discovering the last roll of toilet tissue is gone or having it just out of reach, accidentally slashing my nose with a razor, the bleeding that follows, all these conspire to undo me.

None of these every day occurrences happened to me this week. When I got to the office no one even called me before I gulped my first shaking cup of coffee.

As a result, I didn't get the telephone cord wound around the cup and have it spill over my desk, seep tantalizingly onto my trousers, shoes and, eventually, trickle onto the now coffee-colored rug. Everything is lovely.

I must hurry on while my luck holds out.

BRIMBLECOMBE

Yes, I'm going to touch on hockey this week. Just a few notes here and there although I don't even like to mention the word "ice" at this time of season. Unless, of course, it's the kind that clinks devilishly at you when you tilt the glass.

First of all, the word has it that Carl Brimblecombe, former coach of the Richmond Hill Provincial A Rams, has found a new home. Namely with the Marlie organization, the Provincial Junior A Markham Waxers.

Carl, as you may recall, coached the Rams for seven rather successful seasons (never missed the playoffs) before being dismissed. He then hooked on with the Aurora Tigers.

That ended abruptly in a disagreement with then-owner John Sikura with Brimblecombe retiring for the rest of the season. It was indicated at the time that Brimblecombe was unhappy because of too much management interference or some such stuff like that.

Now he's getting an opportunity to do his thing with the Waxers and Carl is waxing enthusiastically.

"The Marlie organization," he said, "speaks for itself. And the Waxers are a young team and I like working with young players. And I've been promised no interference. I'm looking forward to a very interesting season."

Which should also make for another interesting season of hockey rivalry between the Hill Rams and the Waxers. Hopefully so, anyway.

THUNDERBIRDS

Another hockey happening of note was the announced signing of Al Morris to coach the Thornhill Thunderbird Junior B's next season.

Al, of course, has had phenomenal success with the Tudor Glen Minor Midgets who won the All Ontario for the fourth consecutive time this season.

Coach Morris is very well known and very popular in Thornhill and is definitely a man with his own ideas of the way hockey should be played.

Al is a devotee of the European-style of hockey (with new twists of his own), is a stickler about conditioning and a strategist along the lines of people like Fred Shero of Philadelphia and Roger Neilson of the Maple Leafs.

My personal view is it's a good move for the Thunderbirds and everyone concerned. Incidentally, he runs a fitness hockey school which should be an indication of his views on same. All the best to Al.

That's about it for now.

Excuse me while I take a sip out of my second cup of coffee of the day. Ooops, ooooooh! Spilled it. Now I'm not insecure anymore.

Keep your fingers crossed

It would be a gross understatement to say the Thornhill Thunderbirds are planning next season around becoming full-fledged members of the Metro Junior B hockey league.

Along with the Oak Ridges Dynes Jewellers.

Both teams played out of the northern Mid-Ontario league last season.

"It hasn't been okayed by the

Ontario Hockey Association," said Thunderbird Vice-president Fred Disera, "but the Metro look is for it and they're in the process of applying for approval. We have high hopes."

The proposal, as submitted to the OHA, would have the Thunderbirds and the Jewellers joining the Metro loop along with the Peterboro Petes.

The Thunderbirds would be

entered in the Eastern Division along with Peterboro, Belleville, Kingston, Oshawa, Scarboro and Markham.

Dynes would be in the Western Division with Wexford, St. Mike's, North York, Bramalea, Toronto Red Wings, Toronto Nats and Etobicoke Selects.

"It's a natural for our club," said Disera. "We're sure the competition will be top-flight,

fans will be able to see a variety of teams, and the travelling will be easier as most of the teams are right in our area."

Each team would play a 44-game schedule with 28 against clubs in their own division and 16 with ones in the other division.

"We also feel the competition would be more equal," said

Disera, "because the average age of players in the Metro league is lower. We'd be going against people our own age rather than 20-year-olds who tend to dominate the other junior B leagues."

Disera made his comments during a press conference Monday announcing the signing of new coach Al Morris.

High school

Track season off, running

By BOB THOMPSON
Mittens, wool hats, and extra jackets were the order of the day at the South Zone High School track meet this week at Thornlea Secondary School.

A fine rain and cool wind were unexpected visitors to the competitions which saw more than 300 athletes competing for acceptance to this Thursday's York County championships.

The top six in each event will advance to the York County competitions where only two athletes per event will be selected for the Georgian Bay championships later next week.

Over half of this year's entries at the South Zone qualifying affair were competing as first year midgets, a fact which thinned the junior and senior divisions to minimum competitors in some events.

This lack of competitors may have contributed to the fact that only two athletes recorded triple wins during the day long event, Jacqui Masil of Thornlea in the junior races, and Richmond Hill's Jane Toporowski in the senior throwing events.

Toporowski's effort was made more difficult by a sprained ankle which prevented her from performing at top ability but her 26.11 metre javelin toss, 9.32 metre shot put distance, and 34.85 metre discus throw were more than enough to record first place in all events.

POOR WEATHER
Jacqui Masil ran well in the poor weather dominating the 1500

metres in a 5.17.49 time, the 3000 metres in 11.24.21 and the 800 metres in 2.40.04.

Double winners were more plentiful throughout all age divisions with midgets Dianne Alexson of Richmond Hill winning the high jump and long jump competitions, Cindy McConkey of Markham doubling in the 400 and 800 metres, David Terry had two wins in the boys 1500 metres and 800 metres, and Troy Cadaret of Markham winning the midget triple jump and long jump.

JUNIORS
In the junior division double wins were recorded by Langstaff's Heinz Losberg in the 100 metres and Triple Jump, Peter McLelland of Thornlea in the 800 metres and 1500 metres, teammate Kirk Dickson in the 200 and 400 metres.

The senior events saw Thornlea's Bill French crossing the finish line first in the 1500 metres and 800 metres, Dennis Limoges easily capturing the discus and shot put events, Sue French running away with the 1500 metres and 3000 metres, Laurie Neufeld of Markham dominating the 400 metres and 800 metres, and Langstaff's Mary Anne Ball the winner in the 80 metre hurdles and 100 metres.

Based on the entries for next Thursday's York County championships Thornlea Secondary School has placed a solid group of athletes who stand a good chance to capture the team award, a feat which has escaped a south zone school for over five years.

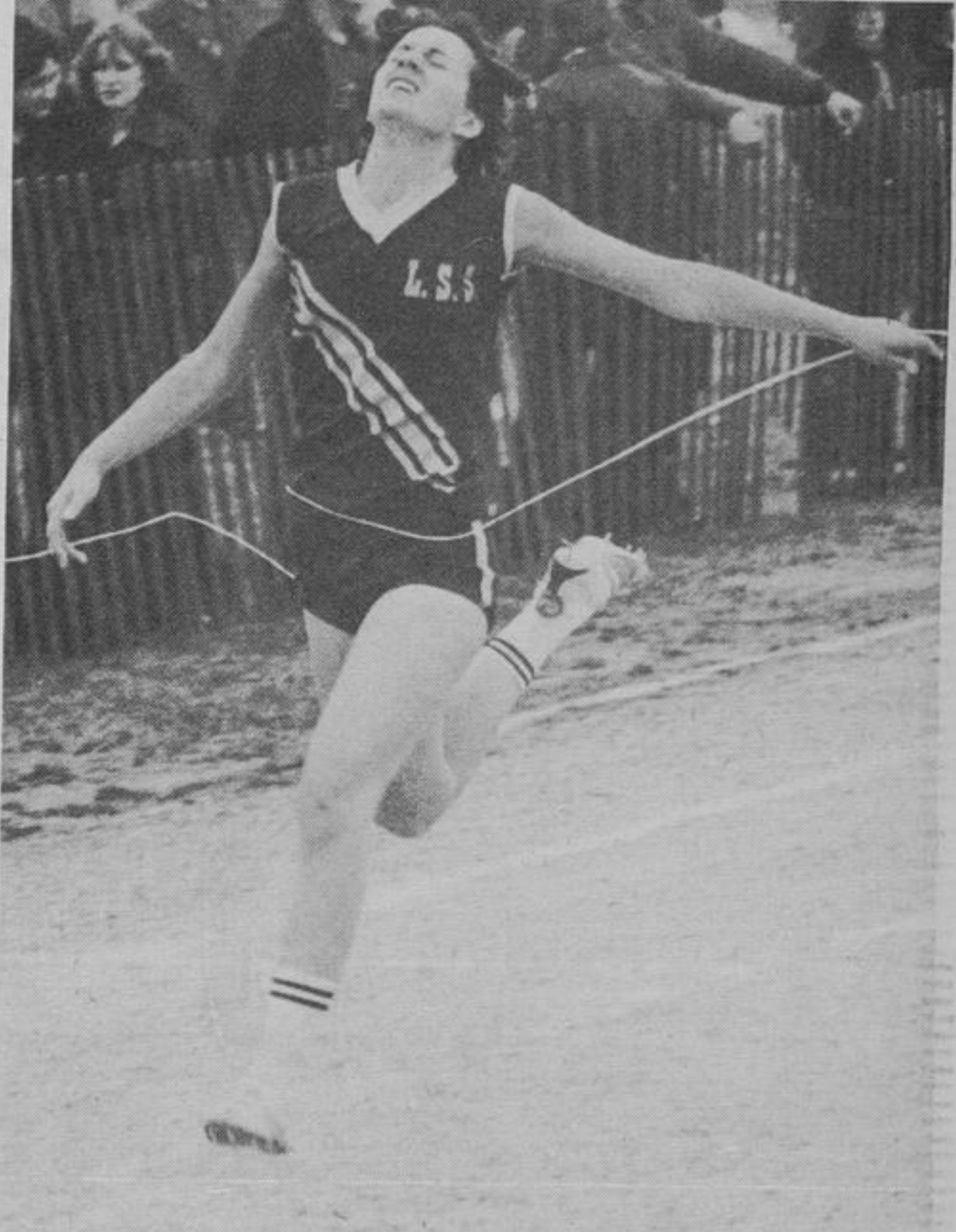
Some of the highlights of the meet were Richmond Hill's midget high jump competitor Diane Alexson clearing 1.53 metres, Robin Birnie of Bayview throwing the junior shot put 9.47 metres, and Toporowski's one-legged efforts in the senior throwing events.

Single efforts which were worth noting were midget discus thrower Eric Lutzman of Thornlea with a 41.95 metre toss, and Greg Wheeler of Richmond Hill High School with a 58.53 timing in the 400 metres.

VICTORY PARADE
Athletes who participated throughout the winter as members of track clubs were most obvious in the victory parade, Markham's Judy Neufeld, Thornlea's Jacqui Masil, Sue French, Peter McLelland, Dennis Limoges and Jack Proctor, Langstaff's Heinz Losberg, and Richmond Hill's Jane Toporowski all availed themselves of winter training in preparation for the 1978 outdoor season and all won their particular events.

NEXT
Next Thursday the winners face the best from the north zone schools in the York County Track and Field Championships and results trickling in from the northern competitions promise an interesting day of good competition.

First event fires off at 10 a.m. at Thornlea and will continue throughout the day. Drop around and see some of the best high school athletes in Ontario perform.



The winnah

Diane Borgignon of Langstaff Secondary School strains to win here in the women's 200 metre sprint as the high school track season kicked off at Thornlea Monday afternoon. (Photo by Hogg)

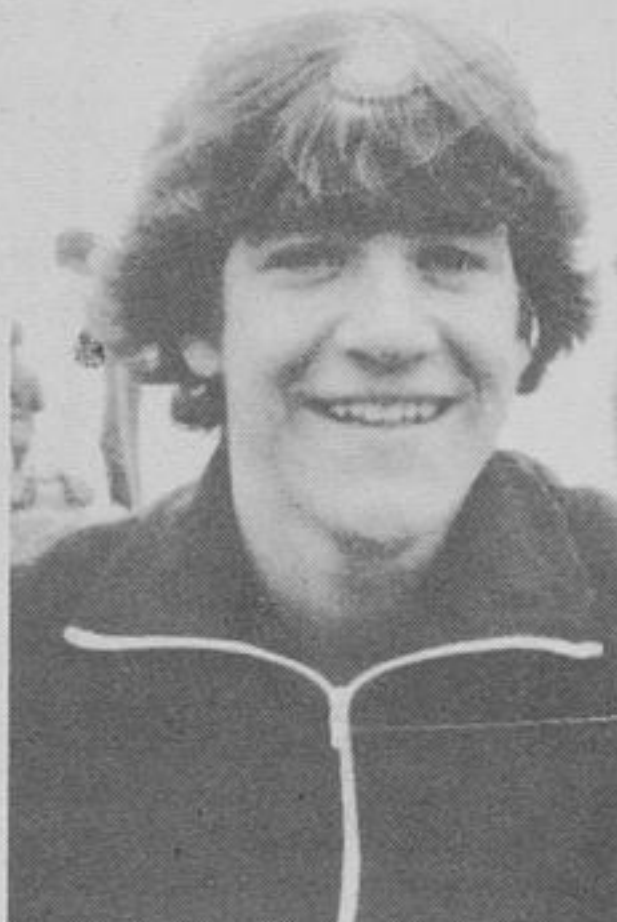


Digging in

Long jumper Zorry DeHan from Langstaff Secondary School digs in here as track season gets off in a splash of dirt. (Photo by Hogg).



Jane Toporowski of Richmond Hill High was a triple winner, naturally, despite competing with a sprained ankle.



Eric Lutzman of Thornlea was winner of the Midget Boy's discus event.



Greg Wheeler of Richmond Hill High was the winner in the 400 metre Midget competition.