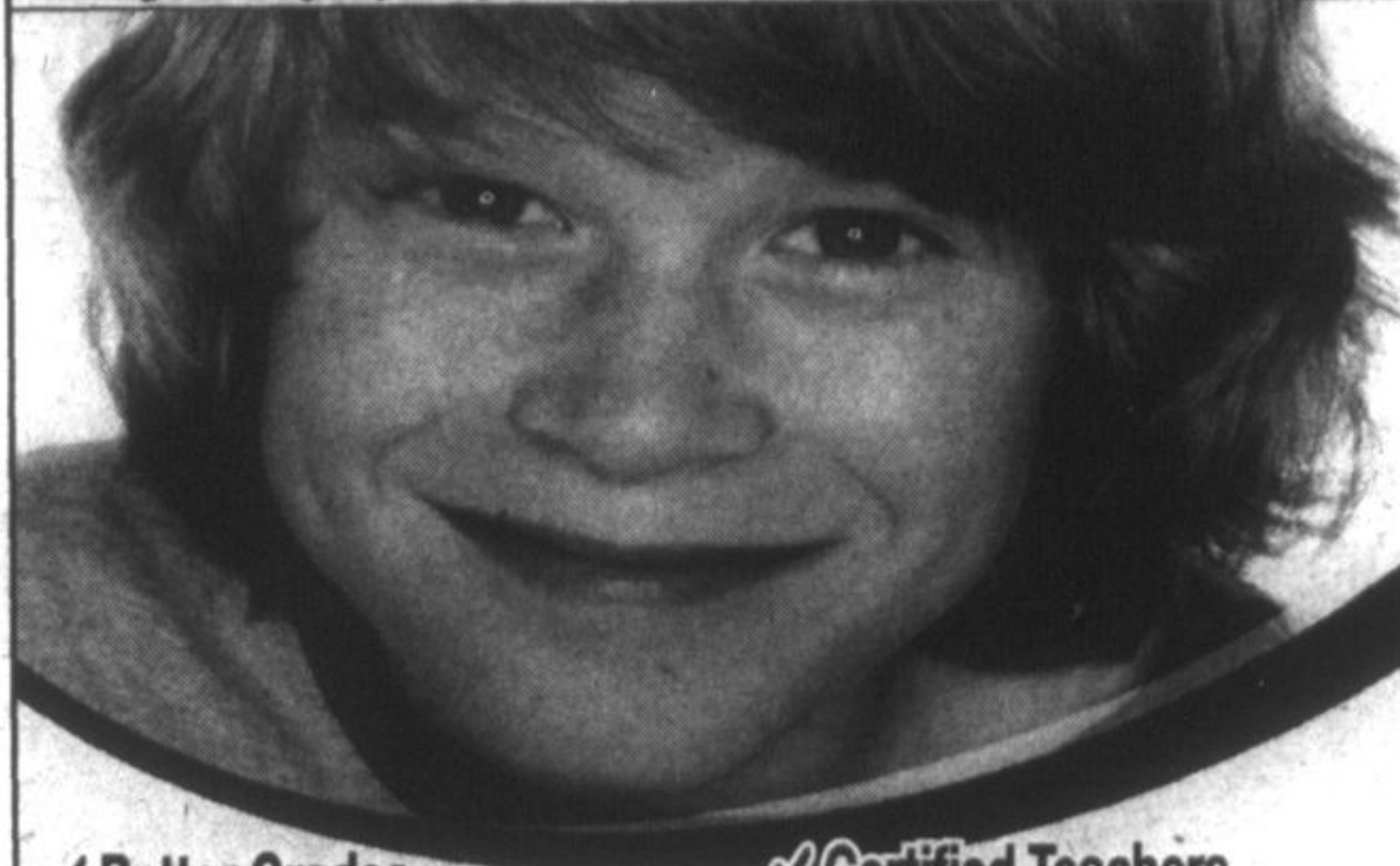


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Must-win day in Orillia for novice Clippers

BY MIKE HAYAKAWA
Staff Writer

For the Stouffville novice Clippers, it's a case of win on the road today and play Sunday at the Stouffville Arena.

Lose today and the season is over.

The Clippers have their backs to the wall in their first-to-six-point Ontario Minor Hockey Association Central semifinal series against Orillia, trailing five points to three.

But, based on the manner

in which the club has performed this season, which saw them record a 20-4-4 regular season mark and second-best behind Orillia, Clippers first-year head coach Mike Sear is cautiously optimistic they can extend the series to the limit.

What has Sear feeling upbeat is the progression his team, which has 13 returning players, has made this year.

"I knew we had a strong group that would be competitive," he said.

"This team has steadily improved in all aspects of the game ... offence from a wide variety of contributors, a strong defensive core and two goalies that boast a goals against average of less than two goals a game."

Comprised of eight- and nine-year-old players, the Clippers' roster includes goalies Jak Yasuda and Parker Strupp, defencemen Austin Meiliunas, Gerrit Tiemers-

▶ Go to omha.net for more information and updates.

ma, Tim Barker, Adrian Addante, Rhys Barker and Simon Horner and forwards Vaughan McCusker, Jackson Mistlebacher, Steele Rodin, Miller Boothby, Luke Sear, Kyle Kincade, Matthew Hunt, Kieran Beaudoin, Mitchell Butler and Taggart Clark.

In the semifinal series, Orillia took the first game 5-3 before the two clubs tied 4-4 in the second game.

Orillia then won the third game 7-1 before the Clippers came back to win the fourth game 4-3 in overtime.

Tonight's game in Orillia starts at 5 p.m. If a sixth game is required, it would be played Sunday at the Stouffville Arena at 6:10 p.m.

The series winner takes on the winner of the Oakville-Hespeler series for the Central title.

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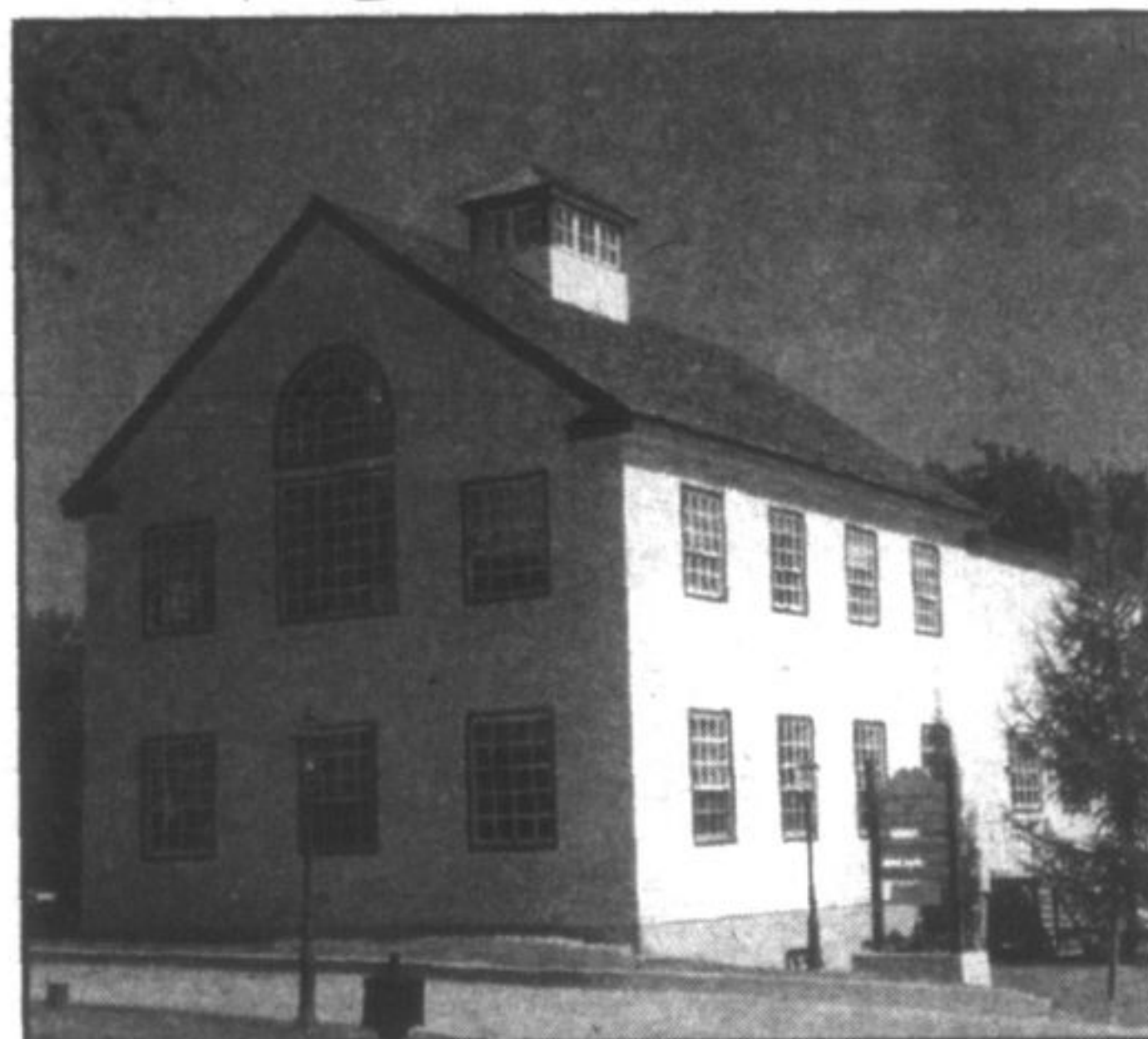
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