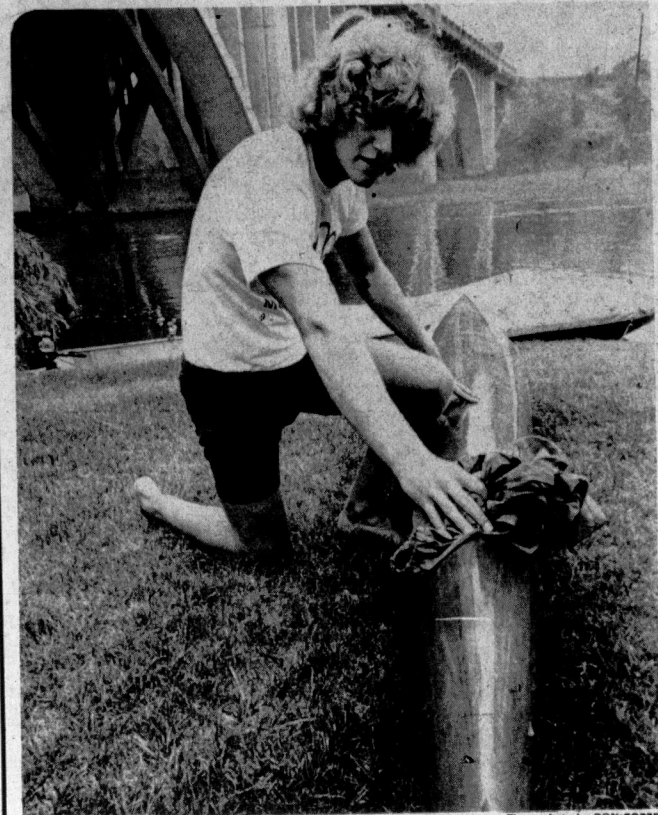




Olympic countdown

Abbott aiming for C-2 finals



Jeremy Abbott hopes to continue the tradition of the Mississauga Canoe Club by reaching the finals at the Olympics. Here he polishes his canoe.

By PAUL WILLIAMS
 "Is Jeremy Abbott around?"
 "He's on the river. He should be back soon," replied the young man soaking up the sun in front of the Mississauga Canoe Club house.

North of the railway bridge three dots indicated there were paddlers on the Credit River, but their distance suggested they wouldn't be back for a while.

Not so. Gregg Smith, John Wood and Jeremy Abbott, the cream of Canada's paddlers, were thundering silently past the clubhouse within a few short minutes.

With paddles flashing effortlessly the three canoeists sliced their canoes—little more than mahogany strips—past the clubhouse at 10 kilometres an hour, cruising speed for world class canoeists.

Deciding to call it a day, one of the three came to the dock, hopped out of his canoe and hoisted the slender craft on his shoulders.

If an advertising agency is looking around for somebody that looks like an Olympic athlete it should consider Jeremy Abbott.

Strongly built with blond hair and well-tanned from many hours on the water, Abbott has the type of looks one sees on Olympic stamps, posters, medallions and advertisements.

The only problem is, Canada can't take all the credit for Abbott as the Mississauga resident was born in Sheffield, England and didn't see Canada until he was nine.

Abbott and John Edwards of Carleton Place, will attempt to win Canada's first medal in the Canadian pairs (C-2) 1000 metres in 40 years.

There's a chance the Mississauga paddler will compete in the Canadian singles (C-1) 1000 metres as well. But Abbott is quick to point out Edwards has the inside track for that job.

Abbott has been infected by canoeing since he was 12 years old. "A couple of kids at school that I hung around with paddled. One of them brought me to the club and I began paddling," explains Abbott.

It wasn't for another couple of years that Abbott really got "psyched" about paddling. "I was a member of the C-4 team that won the Canadian Bantam championships," he says.

The taste of championship is sweet and since then Abbott has striven to repeat the sensation at increasingly more competitive levels.

The Mississauga Canoe Club (MCC) is sending five paddlers to the Olympics as well as head coach Mac Hickox. Few sports clubs can boast as good a representation at the Olympics.

What lies behind the MCC's success? "The club was started by two Olympians, Bert Oldershaw and Bill Collins," says Abbott. "Their coaching and example gave the club the high standard it has. As the paddlers grow older they coach the younger ones in the same traditions started by the founders."

Does the Credit take any of the credit? "It's a little small for races. It should be wider and

twice as long but it's ideal for training. It has very flat water and always dead," says Abbott.

"Flat water makes the water heavy and naturally requires more of an effort to paddle. This makes for ideal training conditions since the Olympic basin, Ile Notre-Dame, is noted for being a fast course. After the heavy paddling in the Credit, Mississauga's paddlers should skim along the Olympic basin.

Abbott, like all paddlers who compete internationally, is a full-time athlete. A student at Simon Fraser University, Abbott's academic life has been shoved into the background by the demanding regimen of the Olympic paddler.

Abbott took advantage of the balmy British Columbia weather and has been on the water since January.

The Mississauga paddler practically sleeps with his paddle. A typical day starts on the water at 8:30 a.m. After a hour and a half the Mississauga paddlers spend time at the Fitness Institute in dry land training. Following this the paddlers are back on the water until 4:30 p.m.

"A couple of months ago I was getting pretty tired of the routine and planned to take a small holiday after the pre-Olympic trials. But now with the Olympics so close it doesn't seem to matter," says Abbott.

Like many Canadian athletes Abbott's goal is to make the finals in his event. As Abbott explains, "Once you are in the finals it's another game. Anyone can win."

Maybe even Jeremy Abbott.

Fell wins Plate as he predicted

By PATRICIA HENRIQUES

"If everything goes according to plan, I'll see you in the winners circle," said a confident Jeff Fell before his ride on Norcliffe in the Queen's Plate on Saturday.

And everything went according to plan — more or less. Fell did make it to the winner's circle but only after a gruelling 1 1/4 mile run in which Military Bearing, guided by wily Avelino Gomez, went to the front and refused to quit.

Gomez did everything except carry his horse over the finish line but the class of Norcliffe and the riding skill of Fell proved too much for the 48-year-old veteran as he lost by half a length.

"Neither horse or rider had anything left after the race," said Fell (referring to himself and Gomez) before he rode in the eighth race.

Fell, who just turned 20 last Sunday, was confident that he had the best horse in the race and was prepared and relaxed for the event despite his previous bad luck with the Queen's Plates two years in succession.

"I feel 101 per cent confidence," he said. "I went to bed early last night and just relaxed."

Fell, who has been a Mississauga resident for over six months, did not have any chance of relaxing during the ride.

"I felt on the far turn, Gomez would come back to me," Fell said later, "and I started whipping the horse left handed. He responds better that way."
 "I felt there was no point in giving a jockey like Fell too many instructions," said Norcliffe trainer, Roger Attfield. "He did ride off the pace as per instructions — but we didn't expect the horse he had to beat would be Military Bearing."

The Plate win was the first for Fell, Attfield and owner Colonel Charles Baker. "To win the Queen's Plate is about equal to anything in

the world," said a jubilant Baker afterwards.

Norcliffe went off as an 8-5 favorite and earned \$89,716.25 plus the ceremonial 50 guineas for first place.

It was the second year in a row that a Mississauga resident had won the Plate.

Last year, Sandy Hawley rode L'Enjoleur to victory.

Hawley, who flew up from California for Saturday's 117th Plate running, guided second favorite Laissez-Passer to fourth spot.

Laissez-Passer, who is blind in the right eye, was reputed

to not like running from an inside post position and was slotted number four for the race.

"I don't think he will be hurt by the post position," said Hawley before the race.

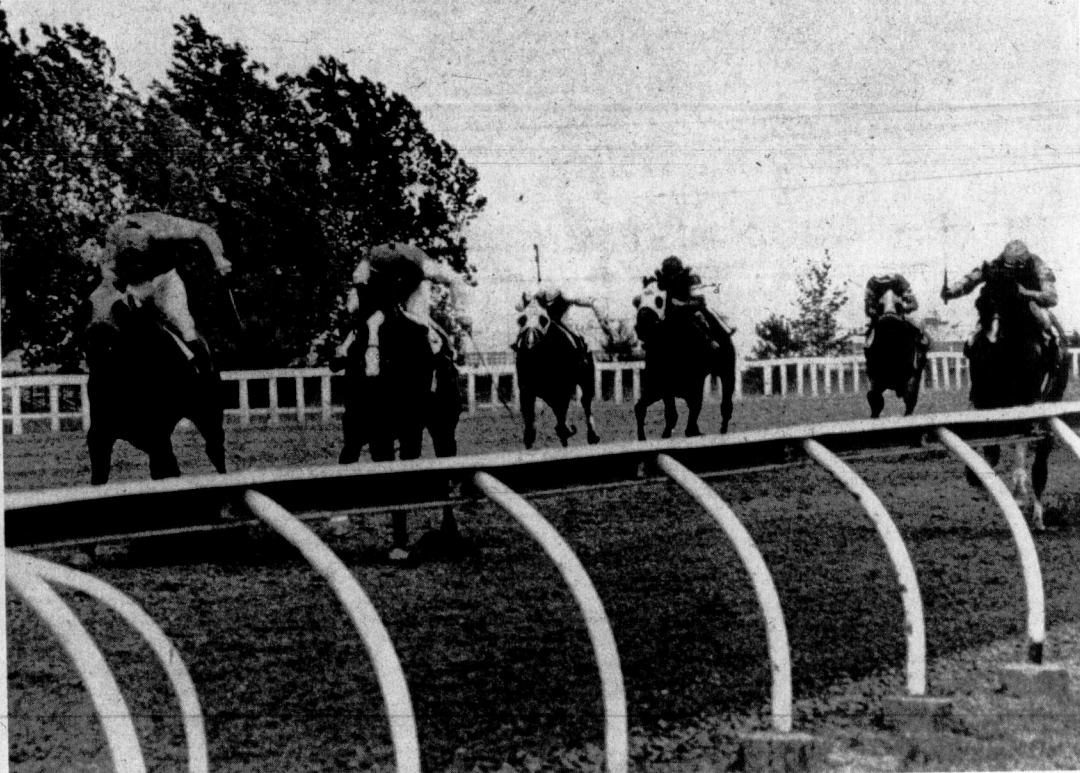
"He'd probably run a better race on the outside — but we have a long stretch to the finish."

But Laissez-Passer could not come up to his Plate Trials performance when he ran a strong second to Ambassador B and began to drift when he was given his head, according to Hawley.

The third Mississaugan in the race was John LeBlanc, who aboard outsider (90-1) Intrepid Spirit, finished a distant last.

The crowd of more than 35,000 spectators wagered a record \$2,940,813 on the nine race Queen's Plate day card, including a record \$669,547 on the feature race itself.

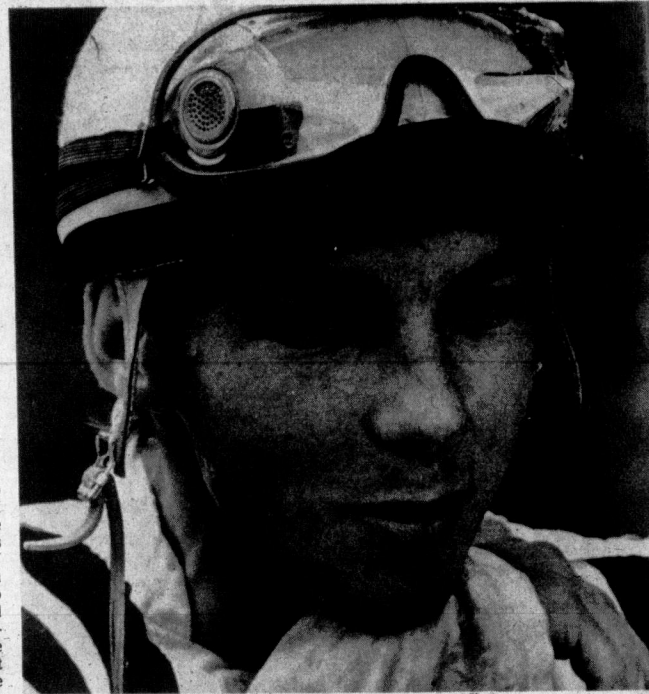
Fell picked up three firsts and two seconds on the day's card. LeBlanc had a first and a second while Hawley was held to a third place finish in the eighth race.



Times photo by GORM LARSEN

Where it was won

Mississauga's Jeff Fell, aboard Norcliffe at left, took the lead from veteran Avelino Gomez aboard Military Bearing at this point and went on to win the Queen's Plate Saturday at Woodbine. Fell is the second straight Mississauga jockey to win the Plate.



Times photo by GORM LARSEN

Nothing left

"Neither horse nor rider had anything left after the race," said Jeff Fell and this photograph proves it. Fell rallied Norcliffe to beat Military Bearing by half a length in the 117th running of the Queen's Plate. Norcliffe was the favorite.

Injury can't stop Boileau

Determination through pain is the mark of an athletic champion as Mississauga's Michele Boileau proved when she took the gold medal in the under 61 kilogram class in the Canadian Women's Wrestling Championship held in Montreal over the weekend.

Ten days before the event Boileau injured her shoulder in a practice session and spent the days before the championship alternately putting ice and heat packs on the shoulder.

Although she was in considerable pain and could not

execute her moves as well as she would have liked, Boileau won her first three fights by a full point.

"If my shoulder wasn't hurting, it wouldn't have been too bad," said Boileau. "But I guess that's all part of it." Boileau moved into the

finals against Quebec champion Carole Messier the first time both girls had fought each other.

Boileau, who had trained for an eight minute bout, was in excellent shape and easily outlasted her opponent in the five minute bout.

The other Mississauga contender, Rosalyn Crothers, lost out in her bid for third place in the under 48 kilos class.

Both girls are members of the Mississauga C.O.P.S. wrestling club.

How a life can change by missing the National

This was to be the start of a new career for Lou Clare. After three years of playing out of position with the Hamilton Tiger-Cats he was to be given a full shot at switching to his natural position of linebacker. It was to be a new life.

How new a life it will be was something Clare never dreamed about.

Barring a miracle of sorts by the end of this week Clare will be playing with a new football team, either at linebacker or defensive halfback.

The former Gordon Graydon Hawk's big change started last week at the Ti-Cats' training camp at Ridley College in St. Catharines. Clare committed probably the worst sin a professional football player can — he violated a curfew during training camp.



Chris Zelkovich

When I got back at 11:30 there was a note on my door telling me to see Mr. Shaw (coach Bob) and to hand in my playbook."

What happened next is totally unfathomable to everyone, save those who are familiar with the narrow

mentalities that dominate professional football management. Clare was suspended.

"I saw Shaw the next day," says Clare, "and he said he might try to work something out. But I told him to forget it. They were just trying to make an example of me. I asked him to trade me."

As far as anyone knows, Shaw is attempting to comply with Clare's wishes.

"In the three years I've been with them, that was the only thing I've ever done against the rules," says Clare. "Mr. Shaw has some strange ideas. I think his mind is somewhere back in the early 60s."

"Sure the situation is crazy. But sometimes they feel they can use these things to scare you and maybe

by scaring you they can get the most out of you. But I can't play under those conditions."

The sad part about the Lou Clare case is that it's far from uncommon. Similar situations happen every year.

It's actually quite amazing that in this day and age the curfew still exists. The very thought of locking grown men in a camp and running 11 o'clock bed checks seems ludicrous. But the thought of suspending and trading a proven player because he went to bed half an hour after the prescribed time exceeds absurdity.

Only in the twisted world of professional sport could such a situation exist and flourish. Can you imagine a group of executives of a major corporation meeting prior to the start of a fiscal year to plan their strategy? One of the company's top executives is caught sneaking into his hotel room moments after Lloyd Robertson has

bid the nation good night. Within hours the executive is told to hand in his key to the executive washroom and is sent home.

Yet that's what has happened to Clare and dozens of players before him. No doubt it will happen to dozens of players after him.

Surprisingly, Clare isn't bitter about the way the Tiger-Cats are playing with his career. Like most pro football players he's learned to accept these things.

"It doesn't really bother me that much," he says. "Right now, the only thing that's bothering me is the sitting around and waiting."

"I'm not worried. I know I can play in this league and I know there's a few teams that can use me. I guess they're just trying to make a trade that'll be best for them."

Clare isn't even too concerned about where he plays this year.

"I'd prefer a team in the East," he says. "But I wouldn't quit if I was traded out West."

The Toronto Argonauts would be Clare's first choice and Argo coach Russ Jackson has expressed interest in Clare. But the chances of the Ti-Cats sending Clare to the hated Argos are slimmer than the Ti-Cats' chances of winning the Grey Cup this year.

How Clare got himself into this situation isn't quite clear, but an incident prior to last season might give a clue.

Clare wasn't willing to play for the salary the Hamilton management offered and announced he'd quit pro football rather than do so. He even suggested giving pro hockey a fling.

But the Ti-Cats upped their offer and Clare signed a new contract. There was no reason to believe either party was dissatisfied.

Until now.