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The Thursday PLAYBOOK

► Kirby's gold in Legions

A soaring 51.7-metre javelin throw was enough to put the PG Track and Field Club's Owen Kirby on the top of the podium at the the Legion National Juvenile track and field championships in Sherbrook, Quebec over the weekend. Kirby is under the tutelage of the club's throwing coach, Nick Prevost, who coached Charles Beck of Fort St. James to a national title in two previous Nationals. PG's Cameron Swift was slated to attend the Sherbrook meet to compete but a stress fracture in his foot kept him at home. The 16-year-old Swift still has another chance at the 2002 Legion Nationals.

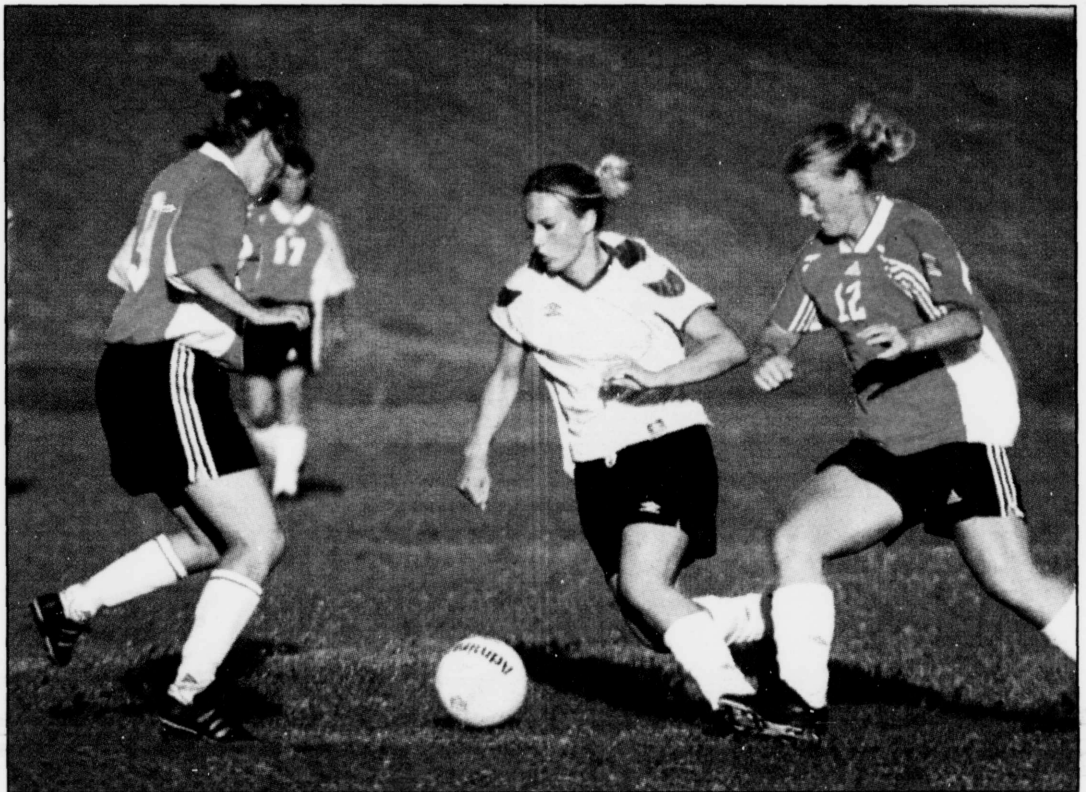
Ross Wiens of the PG club picked up a silver medal in the 800-metre against competition from across Canada and the US in the annual North American Hershey track and field meet. Wiens adds that silver to the provincial gold he won earlier last month. The 13-year-old Vanderhoof native's provincial time qualified him to attend the meet as part of contingent from across BC and the northwest US states.

► Rockets sign Kobasew

One of the hottest properties in the WHL signed with the Kelowna Rockets this week after his rights were traded from the Prince George Cougars earlier in the summer. Nineteen-year-old Chuck Kobasew was the Calgary Flames top draft pick and 14th overall in this year's NHL entry draft and had been playing NCAA hockey at Boston College. The Osoyoos-born winger was listed by the Cougars after playing a strong last season with the BCHL's Penticton Panthers and also recently returned from the Canadian World Junior Camp. His rights were handed over by the Cats in exchange for 19-year-old forward Chris Di Ubaldo and future considerations. Cougar's assistant general manager Dallas Thompson said Tuesday the Cats were looking for high-ranked draft picks, not players, from Kelowna as their future consideration.

► Boulet takes mini title

Marc Boulet cruised to victory in the shortened 34-lap mini-stock main event Saturday night at PGARA raceway. The bomber title was taken by Jason Hall after a 25-lap contest with Wayne French. Lyle McComber won the pro stock main. The bomber invitational is August 25 and 26.



The Phoenix Medical Centre team kept McQuik bottled-up for a 1-0 win in the opening round of the PG Women's Soccer League playoffs Monday night. JOHN MCKENZIE/FREE PRESS

Phoenix is rising

First-year team comes on strong for league playoffs

Entering into the playoffs for the PG Women's Soccer Association, Phoenix Medical wasn't just a dark horse — they were downright distant. Fourth-place in the five-team league and matched up against one of the league's traditional powerhouses and winners of three of the last four playoff titles — the McQuik Shooters — Phoenix was expected to go gentle into that good night and lose the first playoff round. Instead they raged.

The first-year team downed the Shooters 1-0 during Monday's opening playoff

game, courtesy of a second-half goal by 16-year-old Alex Harris. That earned them a shot at taking down regular season champs Cougar Allen Thursday night to advance to the Sunday finals. It was a hard-fought victory, says team captain Kate Harris, and a powerful validation of the idea to form a first-year team in the competitive division of women's soccer.

"We had a slow start but we've really picked it up lately," says Harris. "It was tough at first to get a team going and have all the people showing up. It's really

been a building year for us and to win the first playoff round is amazing."

Phoenix Medical isn't just young as a team — they're young, period. Formed almost exclusively from recent youth soccer graduates and powered by a core of vets from another bird-named team — the Kelly Road Roadrunners senior team — who wanted to stick together in the women's league instead of being scattered by the draft, the Phoenix squad doesn't have a single player over the age of 20.

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