

Badminton scholarship has Tannis thinking

By MICHAEL BEGGS

If there's any truth to the saying that "75 per cent of any sport is psychological," Mississauga's Tannis Harrison certainly should enjoy a great deal of success.

On a badminton scholarship to the University of Western Illinois, this 18-year-old freshman is conveniently enough majoring in sports psychology.

Of course, success is nothing new to this child prodigy who has been competing in tournaments since age 8.

Among her achievements are: appearances in the Pan-Am Games in Mexico in 1976, and in Vancouver in 1978 (in which she advanced to the finals in both doubles and singles in the under-16 category), and the title of Canadian champion for three straight years (under-16).

Athletic prowess seems to run in her family. Her father Dave was a track star and mother Bonnie was once the badminton champion of British Columbia.

Tannis is making a big splash down there as well, having recently defeated the National Collegiate Athletic Association's No. 1-ranked player in the nation, Sandy Coulson of Wisconsin.

She seems to have created quite a stir on campus, being a Canadian upstart and all.

"The Americans are all very interested," she says. "They keep asking who this foreigner is and if I speak French."

She looked on the move away from home as a challenge and seems to be thriving on it.

"It's a lot of fun," she enthused. "I wanted a change. You can make what you want of your education. There's a lot of temptation, a lot of parties."

So far she's made quite a bit of her education, recording the highest mark in English this year in the entire college.

Her parents stood behind her decision and are suitably pleased with the results. "I'm really glad she's working at it," explains her mother. "She's putting herself through university because she wants to."

"We miss her at home, although it's nice not having to say be home by 11."

"She used to cook a lot (laughs). I miss that."

Tannis feels that there are more good badminton players in Canada than in the U.S., and credits her training with the Canadian national team for helping to

develop her game.

Of course her studies in psychology haven't hurt either.

"What I would apply to others, I can apply to myself. It helps mental preparation going onto the court."

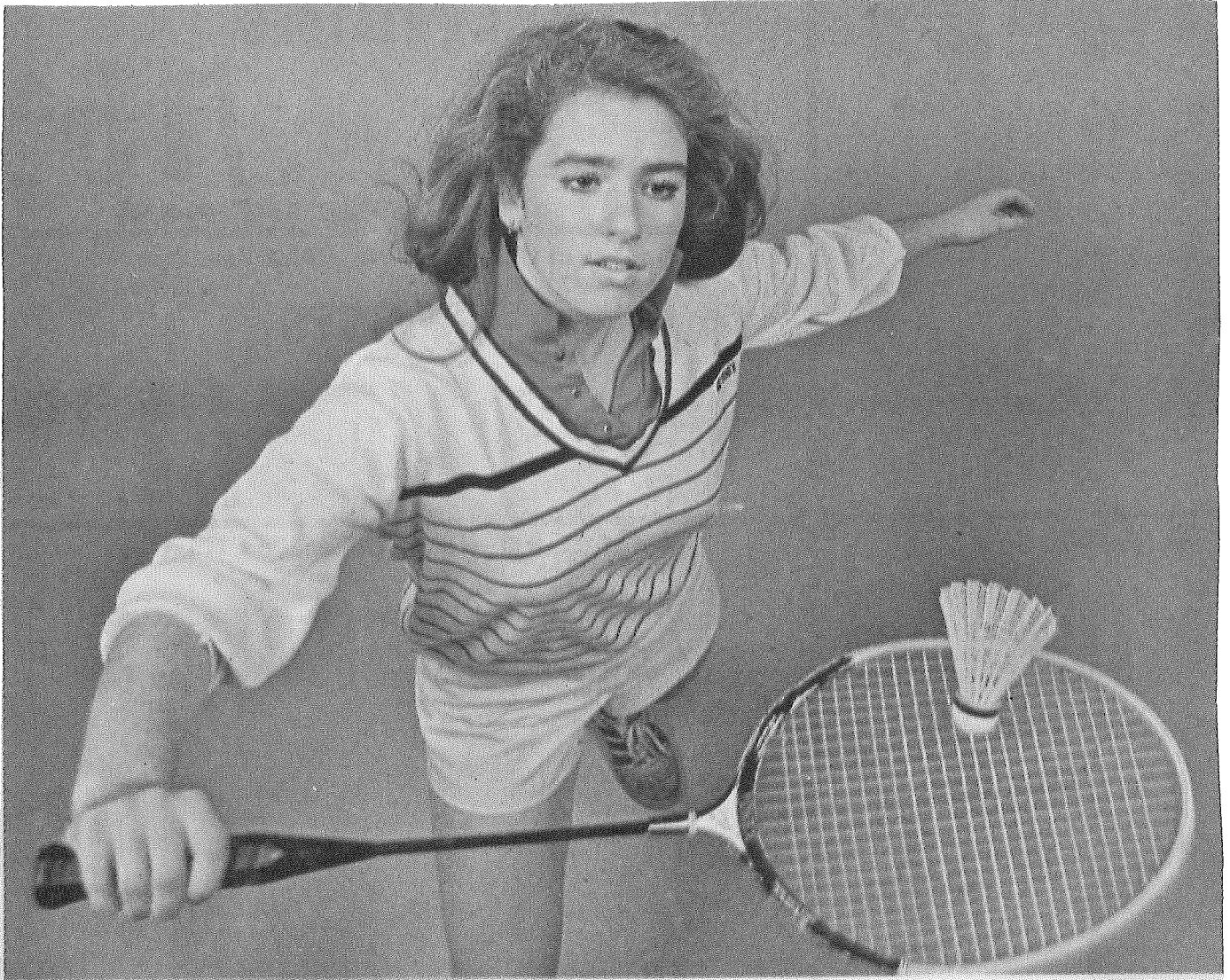
"The key is a positive attitude. You've got to believe there's nothing your opponent can do to beat you. That's important for any sport."

Her badminton has taken her to such faraway stops as Indonesia and Europe (last summer) where she discovered that, "badminton is one of the most popular sports."

Her visit home over the Christmas holidays typically involved badminton, as she competed in the tryouts for team held Dec. 26-29 at Humber College in preparation for the Canada Winter Games. Having survived the final cut, she'll now compete in the event to be held Feb. 17-19 in Saguenay and Lac St. Jean, Quebec.

As for her future in sports psychology, she believes she's qualified for it because, "You have to have had athletic experience to know what you're talking about."

We all should have such experience.



Mississauga's Tannis Harrison is one of the top badminton players in the National Collegiate Athletic Association. The

former Applewood Secondary School student was home for the holidays, but still managed to make an appearance in court. (Staff photo by Fred Loek)