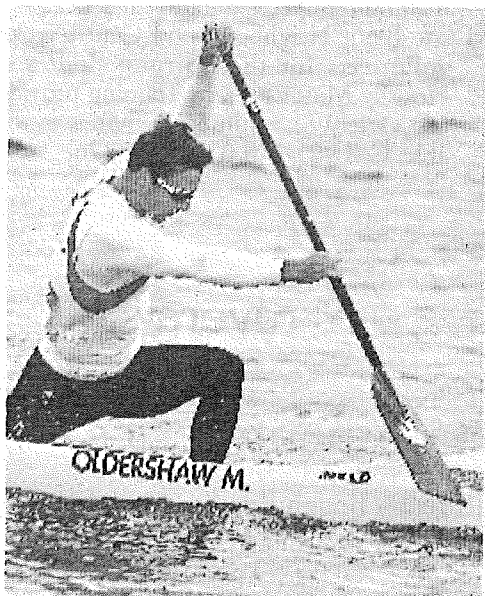


Olympic paddling runs in his family

By IAIN COLPITTS

Staff
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By now, you probably have seen the Visa commercial detailing Canadian Olympic paddler Mark Oldershaw's family history.

It talks about the 29-year-old from Burlington being the third generation of Oldershaws to compete in the Olympic Games.

It's a proud lineage that began with his grandfather Bert Oldershaw, a three-time Olympian from 1948-56 who was the founding father of the Mississauga Canoe Club in 1958.

Mark's father and coach, Scott, along with uncles Dean (1972 and 1976) and Reed (1976) all represented Canada at the Olympic Games.

Bert, Dean and Reed Oldershaw are all members of the Mississauga Sports Hall of Fame.

When Mark approached the starting line this morning for the C1 1,000-metre final at the Eton Dorney Rowing Centre near London, he had the chance to capture something his predecessors failed to acquire in seven previous tries: an Olympic medal. He was also looking to improve upon his 10th place finish at his first Olympics four years ago in Beijing.

"I've always wanted to win an Olympic medal," said Mark. "It was a possibility in

Beijing, but not that good a chance. An outside shot, nearly impossible. Now, going into London, I feel completely ready to challenge for a medal."

Mark qualified for today's final by finishing second in the semi-final round on Monday. Prior to that, Bert — a Toronto native who moved to Mississauga in 1956 — was the only Oldershaw to reach an Olympic final. He did that in all three of his Olympic appearances.

He finished fifth at the 1948 London Games (C2 10,000-metre), seventh at the 1952 Helsinki Games (K1 1,000-metre) and seventh at the 1956 Melbourne Games (C2 1,000-metre).

Meanwhile, none of Bert's sons, all kayakers, advanced past the semi-finals at the Olympics.

Mark said his semi-final heat wasn't easy, but he felt good about his medal hopes.

"I told Mark to be technically sound before the race," said Scott Oldershaw, who also coaches Canadian kayaker Adam van Koeverden, a three-time Olympic medalist and two-time world champion. "I told him he's as good as everyone else on the line."

The C1 1,000-metre final is scheduled for 4:45 a.m. this morning.

- With files from Torstar f

Mark Oldershaw, grandson of Mississauga Canoe Club founder Bert Oldershaw, will go for gold in today's C1 1,000-metre Olympic final near London.

Torstar Network

OLDERSHAW, MARK

Paul Biography