

## Mississauga's beauty of the blades



Staff photo by Fred Loek

**RETURNING VICTOR** — Canadian Figure Skating Champion Karen Preston returned to her old stomping ground at Port Credit Arena yesterday where she offered some pointers to club skater Ashley Davison. Davison is eight years old — the same age Preston was when she started taking lessons. The 17-year-old Mississaugan will represent Canada in next month's World Championships.

## She's our champion

By STEPHANIE INNES  
Special to *The Mississauga News*

Mississauga's Karen Preston has come a long way since her recreational skating days at Port Credit Arena. Last week the 17-year-old surmounted some big odds and became Canada's 1989 Figure Skating Champion.

The Canadian championships in Chicoutimi, Quebec this year marked Preston's third time competing in nationals, and only her first as a senior.

A bronze medal at the 1987 novice nationals led to a junior national bronze in 1988. At this year's divisionals she finished second behind Quebec's Charlene Wong.

Before the nationals, the Erindale Secondary School student stated her goal as finishing in the top five, and even after skating a flawless long program, she had no expectation of winning.

"I thought maybe I had finished third," she said. "I didn't think I was going to win. It was a surprise. I didn't think first place belonged to anyone but Charlene (Wong)."

*Paul Bing Bk.*

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An eighth place finish after the figures event put Preston near the bottom of a competitive pack, but winning the short program took that placing up to third.

Five minutes after she stepped out onto the ice for Friday night's long program and performed to Andrew Lloyd Weber's *Phantom of the Opera* the title was hers.

While competitors Wong, Shannon Allison, and Diane Takeuchi floundered on their triples, Preston executed triple toe-loop, salchow, and loop jumps with ease.

"I really didn't have much pressure on me," she said of the competition, adding, "I had nothing to lose."

She may have pulled a surprise by grabbing the gold, but no one could argue that her win was deserved and her free skate program was a championship one.

With only a month left before the world championships in Paris, Preston won't have much time to reflect on her win.

"I'm taking two days off," she said, "and then I'll start training again."