

# QUINTE Total Sports

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EDWARD COUNTY . NORTHUMBERLAND

Spring 2023 Vol 6 Issue 2

**Quinte Skyhawks Back on the Field pg 20**



**LOCAL Hockey Review**

**SENS, Dukes, Golden Hawks, OMHA**



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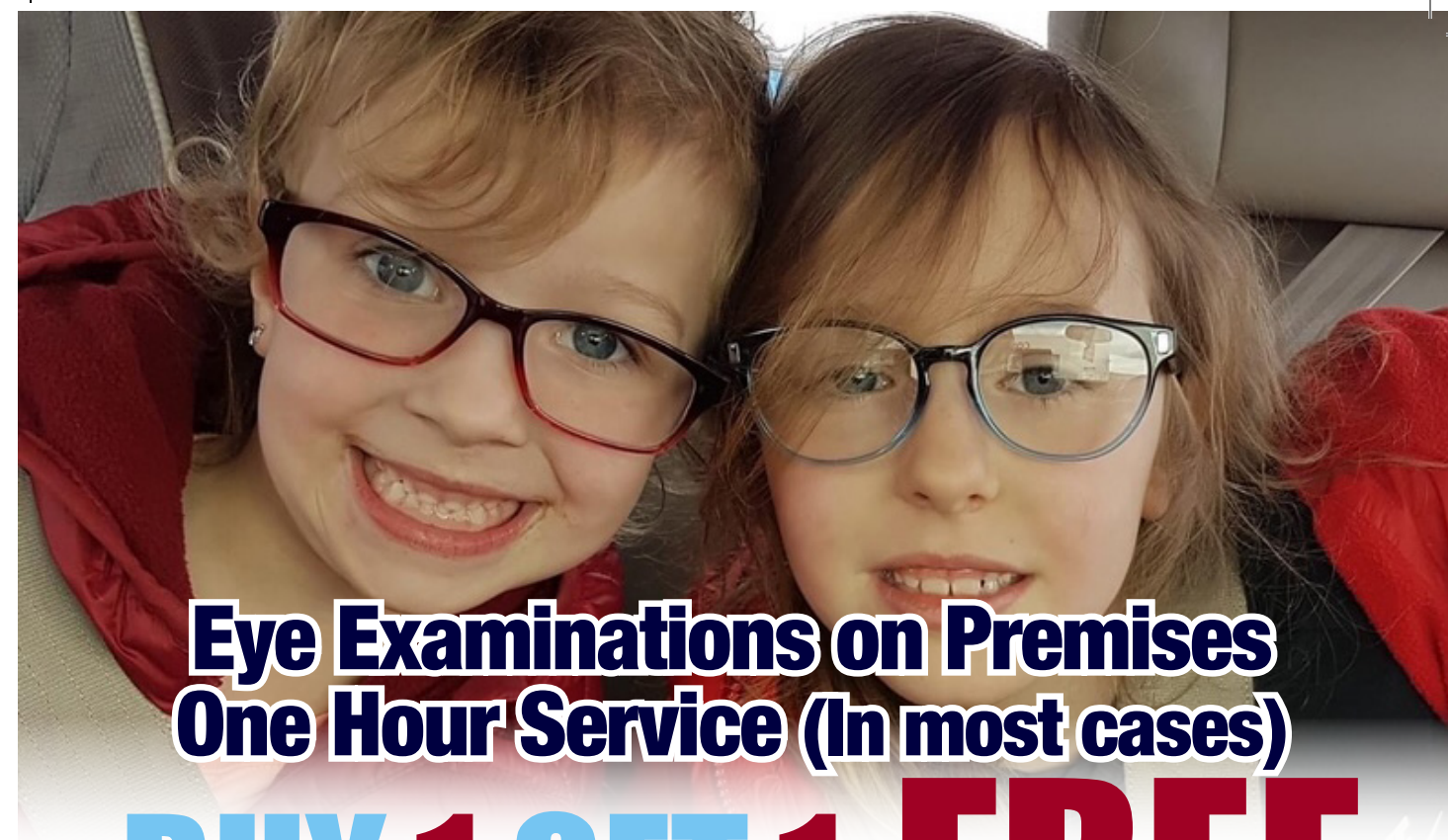
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# Total Sports

**GREATER BAY OF QUINTE &  
EAST NORTHUMBERLAND REGIONS**

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# FEATURES



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## ULTIMATE FRISBEE

### Belleville Club Celebrates Decade of Ultimate Competition



By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte

**Belleville Ultimate Disc Association celebrated 10 years of offering frisbee competition in the Quinte region in 2022.**

Now in its 11th year, BUDA has leagues year-round and is introducing the sport to younger athletes as well.

Vice-president Jaye Dilts recalled learning of ultimate from a softball teammate before they began playing recreationally in Belleville. A small gathering tossed the disc around and played a modified game. After a couple of years the group decided to form a league and began with four teams.

"When I was playing softball I had never even heard of ultimate," Dilts said.

Now the participants range in age from 16 to 67, though Dilts said the average is players in their 30s. Spring and fall leagues are held at Mary Ann Sills Park while Albert College is the venue during the summer and the Loyalist Sports Dome for winter. Both competitive and non-competitive leagues are offered.

"It's really great because the more experienced players can help the younger ones and explain the rules," Dilts said. "We are getting more youth into it. We run youth clinics as well."

Registration is open for the BUDA Spring Youth Clinic, which will run Thursday evenings 6 to 7 p.m. from May 18 to June 22 at East Hill Park in Belleville.

The six-week program is for ages 8 to 15 and is intended to be a fun, co-ed, educational opportunity to offer youth the opportunity to learn the fundamentals of Ultimate with an emphasis on skills, drills and some gameplay.

Cost is \$30 and includes a disc and t-shirt for each participant.

BUDA's summer league registration is open with the season, which begins May 30 on Tuesday evenings until Aug. 29. The cost for participants is \$55 for the early-bird price and \$70 after May 19.

Dilts explains ultimate as a mix between a few different sports.

"You have an end zone like football, but you cover more like basketball and you count stalls when somebody is going to throw the disc - they

have 10 seconds to throw it and they are not allowed to run with the disc," he said. "When you go to catch it you can come to a running stop, but then your foot has to stay planted. You can pivot, but your one foot has to stay where it is or you can be called for travel."

To score, a player must be in the end zone when they catch the disk or be jumping into the end zone at the time they catch it in order to score a point. Regular play is at 7-on-7.

Dilts noted the league is a registered not-for-profit association and is insured and governed by Ontario Ultimate.

Respect and sportsmanship enjoyed in the sport is why Dilts thinks the sport appeals to the participants.

"It's really about the spirit of the game and respect because you call your own foul. Somebody else could call a foul as well, but really it's all about respecting the other people," he said. "There's no refs, there are observers at the higher level for tournaments and things like that, but they're really just there to go over a rule if there's a disagreement.

The sport is a lot of running and cutting, like soccer, and then it's also hand-eye coordination, teaching young kids about sportsmanship and if you hit somebody by mistake, call a foul, it comes back, and play continues."

**Check out the Belleville Ultimate Disc Association at [bellevilleultimate.com](http://bellevilleultimate.com) or join the club's Facebook group.**





# BOCCIA COMES TO QUINTE REGION



By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte

Colleen DeMille is thrilled to have helped bring the sport of boccia to the Quinte area and hopes to see it continue to grow.

DeMille provided information about boccia, which is a Paralympic sport that can be played and enjoyed by everyone.

It is similar in concept to bocce and was introduced onto the Paralympic program in 1984 and today is played in over 50 countries.

A co-ed sport of control and accuracy, boccia is played on an indoor court about the size of a badminton court. Players propel soft leather balls towards the target or white "jack" ball. Each side has six balls (red or blue) per end to try and score points. The closest side to the target ball when all the balls have been played, scores. Boccia can be played head-to-head, in teams of three or in pairs.

The game is played from one end of the court and players remain in their designated throwing boxes during the entire game (either four or six ends).

In competitions, athletes compete in one of six sport classes based on their level and type of disability. There is an Open Class that is for any athlete not classifiable in the BC1-BC5 groups.

Ontario Cerebral Palsy Sports Association (OCPSA) is the governing body for the sport of boccia in Ontario and is also known as Ontario Boccia. Though the OCPSA handle has CP in the title, it is not restricted to those who have CP and it provides programs and services to all abilities for participants in boccia, recreationally and competitively.

During Covid – OCPSA ran the "Boccia Bratz" program virtually. This eight-session inclusive program was led by trained instructors and included virtual training sessions, lesson workbook and equipment kit. A group of families from the Quinte region participated in the virtual program.

This prompted Jules von Cramon, program manager for Ontario CP Sports, Ontario Boccia, and Learning Facilitator for Boccia Canada to contact DeMille to ask if she would consider helping to establish a Boccia Club in the region as she had recently completed NCCP Boccia courses.

"Absolutely, I was interested in supporting athletes of all abilities to get fit, have fun, establish friendships, and pursue personal goals," DeMille says. "Sports are so important for athletes of all ages and abilities and it is vital that communities ensure that there are opportunities for everybody to participate in safe, welcoming, accessible, quality facilities."

DeMille said the next step was to schedule a "Boccia Have a Go Day" in June, 2022 at the Quinte Sports and Wellness Centre and there was a great turnout.

This led to the decision to set up a six-week pilot program that was held at the Hillcrest Community Centre throughout August and September 2022. "We were able to secure a small core group of dedicated athletes interested in playing recreationally as well as competitively on a more regular basis," DeMille said. "This led to the decision to apply to OCPSA for financial support to rent space at the Loyalist Sports Dome and to acquire use of boccia equipment."

With weekly practices beginning in January of this year, some athletes felt ready to compete at the Durham Region 2023 Ontario Parasport Games in February. The Parasport Games were first held in 1975 and since then have grown to include more than 500 participants competing in 11 sports. "All our Quinte Boccia Club athletes performed exceptionally well and we won two medals - a gold and a silver," DeMille said.

Aurora Whalen won gold in the junior open division and Gus Sacrey claimed silver in the senior open division. "I like that everybody can play it and it is just really fun," Aurora said.

Sacrey said "as an athlete all my life it became very hard for me when I got sick to compete in anything. I could no longer play football. It broke my heart. Then I found basketball and sledge hockey and then I couldn't play them anymore because I got worse and then I found boccia and I can play that.

"I can compete with my club and my teammates. What is great about boccia for me is that people get to walk or wheel onto that court and shut the world off. They can shut off doctor appointments, surgeries, cerebral palsy, spina bifida, fetal alcohol syndrome, degenerative disk disease, arthritis, rheumatoid arthritis, and being an amputee. The best thing for me about boccia is that I get to be an athlete and when I play with my teammates, I am playing with boccia players. I am getting to play with some of the best boccia players in Ontario and I am playing with some in my club who are going to be the best in Ontario. I look at my club teammates and see them going to the Parasport Games and to wherever this sport can take them because it is not just a sport, it is a doorway, a doorway you can walk through and leave everything awful you are going through behind and for that time on the court you can be an athlete and that is what Boccia does for me and that is why it is important to me."



After the success at the Ontario Parasport Games, Quinte Boccia Club members agreed to host a Quinte Regional Boccia Competition. Plans were made for the "Open Pairs Boccia Qualifier" to take place on March 26 at the Loyalist Sports Dome. The Ontario Regional Boccia Series is a series of club-driven boccia tournaments across Ontario that are used as qualification for entry to the competitive division at the Ontario Boccia provincial championships which will be held in Waterloo in July. Soon after registration opened, 18 athletes from various locations in Ontario, some from as far as Ottawa and Niagara, signed up to compete at the Quinte Regional Boccia Competition.

Six athletes - Gus Sacrey, Maggie O'Hearne, Aurora Whalen, Josie McKeown, Colton Bernier and Patricia Hayes - signed up from the Quinte club.

Quinte Boccia Club coaches Grant Montgomery, Riley Andrews and Gus Sacrey are committed to supporting all our athletes to learn, explore their abilities, challenge themselves and identify and work toward personal goals, DeMille noted.

"Our Quinte Boccia Club community is strongly supported by the active, ongoing involvement and encouragement that our volunteers provide," she added, naming Lesley Montgomery, Matt McKeown, Kristen Whalen and Chris Whalen.

With the end of its first season approaching, DeMille said the club is hoping to grow the sport in the Quinte region next year.

"We are on the lookout for more individuals of all abilities to participate, either recreationally or competitively, next season which is tentatively scheduled to begin in January 2024," she said. "Our biggest obstacle is the cost of equipment and finances to ensure the continued use of a



safe, accessible, quality facility for our practices. The hard part for us is knowing where, or who, to turn to for help. To date, OCPSA has been supporting us to get established but over time we will require other local sponsors if we are to sustain the sport of boccia in this region.

"We hope to remove barriers to play whether they be physical, cognitive, cultural or economic."

For this reason, participant fees (\$20 annual membership fee to OCPSA) have been kept to a minimum.

Anyone willing to assist to help maintain a boccia program in the Quinte area can contact Colleen DeMille at demillecolleen@gmail.com.



Continued next page ...



# REV THOSE ENGINES

## Shannonville Motorsport Park is Back!



By Jeff Gard / Total Sports Quinte

Another exciting season of racing is planned at Shannonville Motorsport Park.

With some upgrades to the track complete, it's time to wave the green flag and get the action underway.

"We did some paving so our competitors are going to be very excited to get out on fresh new asphalt," said owner John Bondar, a 2021 inductee into the Canadian Motorsport Hall of Fame.

One of the major events at Shannonville this year is the Canadian Superbike Championship series. Round one of the 2023 CSBK schedule runs May 19-21 during the Victoria Day long weekend.

"That is going to bring the top riders from across Canada to our track," Bondar said. "This is some pretty serious competition with some of the best machines in the country."

General admission tickets are \$40 and are valid for the entire weekend. Parking is also included. VIP tickets for \$150 are also available and include Friday general admission as well as Saturday and Sunday access to the Nelson Event Centre, which will have live video of the racing action, lunch, snacks, water, non-alcoholic beverages and two free beer or wine beverages that can be consumed inside the venue.

There are five rounds of competition for the CSBK championship (csbk.ca) with the series concluding its schedule back in Shannonville Sept. 15-17.

"We're going to book-end their championship, which is going to be really cool," Bondar said. "These are real serious riders. If you think our local riders are fast, you ain't seen nothing. These guys are just another notch above."

There are a number of opportunities to see Shannonville's local motorcycle action, known as the Super Series, which is the Super Series, from May until September with five weekends of competition. Motorcycle racing school is planned for May 5 for prospective riders to test their skill in organized competition. Unlicensed riders must attend a school before applying for a racing license.

Bondar said the Super Series features five different bike classes from novice to amateur and pro levels.

"Motorcycle racing is incredible here," he remarked. "The track was built as a motorcycle track so you really get to see these bikes stretch their legs and it's really something to see."

Meanwhile, the SMP Cup amateur road racing weekend will be held June 2-4. Spectator tickets are \$20 at the gate. There will be a full slate of races, including Formula 1600 and Formula Libre open wheel cars as well as GT 1, GT 2, GT 3, GT 5 and GT 5 sports cars.

Bondar said the sprint races last about 20 to 30 minutes each and the event is "a great opportunity to see some of the cars that you may drive day-to-day on the track in a race prepared condition."

A unique car racing experience, from Lucky Dog Racing Canada, also comes to Shannonville. In fact one event was already held in April with another scheduled for July. The events feature seven-hour endurance races.

"The way they do that is by having a large team, but also a whole bunch of drivers," Bondar said. "They'll stop their car about every hour-and-a-half to two hours to fuel up and change drivers so they can continue to the end of the seven-hour stint."

Lucky Dog returns to Shannonville July 29-30, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. both days. Other popular features at Shannonville include Car Lapping Days, Drifting, Track Nights, Motion Monday, Motorcycle Lapping Days, Two-Wheel Tuesday and Shannonville Drags. See [shannonville.com](http://shannonville.com) for full dates and details for each.

Shannonville Drags is a partnership with RaceWindsor and has events scheduled for June 17-18, July 15-16, Aug. 26-27, Sept. 23-24 and Oct. 7-8. Divisions include Pro, Super Pro, Street, Bike, Sled and Nostalgia with each day consisting of two time-trials followed by eliminations and one buy-back.

"The drag racing action should be fantastic," Bondar said, noting the great partnership with the promoter and sponsors for Shannonville Drags. Also, the regular monthly drifting program runs one weekend a month until the end of October with drivers able to use either the drift track or drift pad. The program is growing following an exciting 2022 season, which had 40 new drivers turn out in September and 25 more in October.

"There could be some novices all the way up to pro level drifters here and a variety of cars, from just streetcars to pro level cars, which are highly modified with a very unique suspension and engines," Bondar said. As exciting as the action will be on the track, Bondar is also excited about the future of the Nelson Events Centre, which opened last year. The facility is named after John Nelson, a motorcycle and racing enthusiast, who built the Shannonville Motorsport Park in 1974.

There were a couple of successful events during the inaugural season with more scheduled this year and already a wedding booked in 2024. Bondar hopes the Events Centre, which has a capacity for 150 people and has full amenities, will appeal to anyone looking to host an event, including corporations. He likes the proximity of being located between Montreal and Toronto and close to areas like Prince Edward County.

"We're very confident we'll have a lot more bookings in the months to come," he said.

Also scheduled for this summer is the Kartstars Canada National Championship from Aug. 12-14. Watch for more details as the season progresses.

**Visit; [Shannonville.com](http://Shannonville.com) or follow us on social media for all the latest news and events.**

**MAY 19, 20 & 21, 2023**

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# QUINTE ROYALS BASEBALL

## Set to Begin 2023 Season

By Chris Lisle & Brianna Demille/ Royals Baseball

Quinte Royals Baseball is set to begin their 2023 season in the Eastern Ontario Baseball Association loop, which extends from Kingston to Pickering. Quinte's ballparks will be packed on weekends again this summer as Royals teams from 9u to 16u chase the EOBA Championship and the opportunity to represent at the Ontario Baseball Association Provincial Championships on Labour Day weekend.

Quinte Royals Baseball is proud to host the 14u and the 16u OBA Provincial Championships. Our OBA tournament committee, composed of volunteers from throughout the community, has been hard at work to plan the best tournament experience we can for the players, coaches, and families.

The OBA Championships will be hosted within the Quinte Region on Labour Day weekend. The 14u tournament will be played in Melrose Sports Complex, and Belleville's Rotary Park. The 16u tournament will be played at Bayshore Field, in Trenton, Rotary Park, Belleville, and Field of Dreams in Wellington. We are ecstatic to bring the best 24 A teams from all over the province to compete for the title of Ontario Champions.

As the baseball season approaches, our committee has been meeting monthly to plan for these tournaments. A big project that we are planning is welcome bags for each of the players and coaches of each team. We hope these welcome bags will highlight all the wonderful business' and attractions that our entire Quinte region has to offer. We are looking for sponsors to help make these 2 events memorable for all involved, as well as promoting our area and its various business. Please reach out to [quinteroyals@gmail.com](mailto:quinteroyals@gmail.com) to discuss available opportunities.

### Quinte Royals 2023 Rosters/Coaching Staff

#### 9u Roster

William Vader  
Cole Watson  
Kostin Blakely  
Cooper Wannamaker  
Ethan Dowling  
Lane Nicol  
Liam Guthrie  
Isaac Miron  
Nolan Joseph  
Greyson Rennie  
Chase Smith  
Cohen Thorn  
Hugh Murphy

Isaac Keller  
Kane Blakely  
Miles Whalen  
Cooper Buxton

#### 9u Coaching Staff:

Nathan Vader - Head Coach  
Adam Watson  
Randy Guthrie  
Cory Smith  
Nathan Nicol

#### 10u Roster

Easton Bassett-Spiers  
Mason Nurse  
Lincoln Wood  
Lincoln Larocca  
Carter Edwards  
Jude Charron  
Carson Holt  
Liam Boomhouwer  
Brayden Vigneault  
Jaxson Stapely-Roe

Logan Holmes  
Nathan Lawrence  
Bentley May

#### 10u Coaching Staff:

Matthew Bassett-Spiers - Head Coach  
Michael Nurse  
Greg Holt  
Daniel Charron

#### 11u Roster

Michael Ampeuro  
Jillian Bell  
Nolan Bell  
Wyatt Colton  
Kohen Cooperus  
Mason Haggart  
Carter Madill  
Preston Martin  
Hunter Mayer

Ryerson Miller  
Logan Thompson  
Griffin Van Gemeen

#### 11u Coaching Staff:

Dave Bell - Head Coach  
Todd Hagar  
Stewart Martin  
Shane Mayer

#### 12u Roster

Bentley Genereaux  
Carter Gillingham  
Eric Rosatte  
Felix Gagnon  
Howard Theissen  
Jake Morrow  
Jaxson Plummer  
Logan Charbonneau  
Logan Cole  
Lucas Ray

Majka Popiel  
Reed Gleeson  
Rowyn Haley  
Tyler Buhr

#### 12u Coaching Staff:

Kevin Buhr - Head Coach  
Rob Gagnon  
Kris Gleeson  
Jim Morrow

#### 13u Roster

Henry Martin  
Gabriel Larkin  
Ben Stitt  
Henry Stitt  
Eric Bell  
Grayden Howard  
Sam Murphy  
Braydon Tweedy  
Tyson Cooper  
Hudson Conger

Easton Vanheche  
Nathan Lewis

#### 13u Coaching Staff:

Adam Martin - Head Coach  
Dan Howard  
CJ Bell  
Michael Larkin  
Mike Lane

#### 14u Roster

Kalen Banks  
Taite Crawford  
Ryan Dunn  
Logan Fonger  
Trip Harvey  
Seth Martin  
Lorne Miles  
Nathan Miron  
Jayden Pemberton  
Jensen Shaver  
Norah McGuinness

Charlie Vos  
Avery Longwell  
Hayden Parent

#### 14u Coaching Staff:

Chad Crawford - Head Coach  
Chris Martin  
Matt Miron  
Chad Harvey

#### 15u Roster

Reece Deline  
Gavin Gardiner  
Colin Launderville  
Cooper Martin  
Nolan Reitzel  
Josh Thomas  
Ben Dryfhout  
Max LaCroix  
Pearson MacDonald

Jack Murphy  
Jack Stitt  
Ethan Thompson

#### 15u Coaching Staff:

James Murphy - Head Coach  
Brad Reitzel  
Dave Potts

#### 16u Roster

Mitch Sills  
Oliver Brackenbury  
Joaquim Murray  
Cole Baird  
Jakob Briscoe  
Colin Stephens  
CJ Kerslake  
Bryce Mitchell  
Colby Coe  
Ben Demille  
Marcus Forbes

Locklin Stewart  
Christian Fonger  
Nick Martin  
Shawn Sills

#### 16u Coaching Staff:

Chris Lisle - Head Coach  
Steve Sills  
Peter Brackenbury  
Tre Murray



Quinte Royals Baseball wishes to thank all of our volunteers, sponsors and families for all the support.

**Go Royals Go!!**

Thank you to Deroche Sports Photography for the use of these amazing photos on the Royals Pages!



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# QUINTE MOHAWK SCHOOL

## Intermediate Girls Basketball Team

### Wins Championship



This year saw the return of the Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board elementary championships.

After just completing winning the district volleyball championship, the Quinte Mohawk School intermediate girls set their sights on winning the city basketball championship.

All of the girls on the team participated in the school Jr. NBA program before the school season. "We have a phenomenal group of intermediate female athletes," said QMS coach Jamie McCourt. "They work extremely hard and don't mind pushing each other to get better."

After playing multiple exhibition games against Peci, Madoc, and NHHS, the QMS team was ready for the Eastside ASG tournament.

The biggest scare at the Eastside tournament came in the round-robin game against Harmony where the teams tied. QMS got their revenge in the finals where they were able to beat a tough Harmony squad and punch a ticket to the city championship.

At the District Championship, QMS faced some stiff competition in round-robin play. After winning against Peci and North Hastings, QMS finished first in their pool and had to play a tough Parkdale team.

Molly Cook-Martin took over the game, scoring the first eight points and helping her team with rim protection by getting a ton of blocks around the basket. This win saw QMS match-up against a very athletic Bayside team in the final.

Even with timely baskets from team leading scorer Brooklyn Maracle, steals from defensive standouts Marissa Hill and Victoria McCourt, Bayside was able to come back and tie the game 32-32 at the end of regulation. The QMS girls defence and experience paid off in overtime as they pulled out a 40-34 win, capping off an undefeated season.

**QMS Intermediate girls basketball timeline for the past three years of competition.**

**Mar. 5th 2019** - QMS Girls lose in the city championships 29-28 to Bayside after they get a steal with three seconds left and the ball rims out on the layup. Season record was 13 wins and 1 loss.

**COVID-19 shutdown, including all elementary school sports.**

**April 2022** - Return of Area Sports Group (ASG) Tournaments. April 27, 2022 - QMS Girls go 5 wins 0 losses and win the Eastside ASG Tournament.

**Mar. 8 2023** - Return of Hastings & Prince Edward District School Board elementary championships.

QMS Intermediate girls win the District Championship over Bayside in Overtime with a score of 40 to 34. Season record was 16 wins, 1 tie and 0 losses. With the tie coming against Harmony in the round robin of the Eastside ASG tournament.

**Record in the last three seasons: 34 - 1 - 1**

The Quinte Mohawk School 2023 players were Frankie-Lin Maracle, Angel Middleton, Brooklyn Maracle, Kahnawerihson Brant, Jordyn Brant, Valorie Maracle, Marissa Hill, Molly Cook-Martin, Isabella Bernhardt, Mikenna Ford, Cassie Lloyd, Farah Weldon, Torrie Spence & Victoria McCourt. The coaches Jamie McCourt and Justin Shakell.



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# SANDERCOCK ACHIEVES BIG MILESTONES

## With U.S. Late Model Series Win

Trenton's Charlie Sandercock became the first Canadian to win the RUSH Dirt Late Model Series' Battle of the Bay Speedweek in the United States.

According to a release from the RUSH series, Sandercock has won Flynn's Tire Touring Series events in two Canadian provinces, but had never won one across the border in the United States. That changed April 15 as Sandercock passed Bryce Davis on lap four and survived several restarts throughout the 30-lap event for that first feature win by a Canadian driver in the 88 years at the historic Winchester Speedway in Virginia.

Sandercock's fourth career Tour victory at four different speedways was worth \$3,000.

Forty-two cars were on hand for the final night of the fifth annual "Battle of the Bay" Speedweek. Several rain showers throughout the afternoon and early evening tried to put a damper on the event, but track owner Greg Gunter pushed on and had the track ready to go about four hours after the scheduled start time. Fifteen new cars on Saturday night brought the total count to 61 different cars from seven states plus Ontario, Canada that competed in Speedweek. It was the first time since the inaugural Speedweek that all four nights were completed. Winchester has completed their Speedweek event all five years with 41 or more cars.

"Hats off to the track crew for sticking it out as it didn't look promising for a while," the 37-year-old Sandercock stated in the release. "Track conditions worked out for us and I can't believe this happened. There are a lot of racers that were behind me and I knew I couldn't give up until the last lap was done and here we are. I'm a high side kind of driver and always prefer it. I feel more comfortable than rolling around the bottom. The track kind of came to us tonight. It's huge for me to cross the border and come down here and win whether it's Virginia, Pennsylvania, or New York. I've raced with these guys for a long time and there's a lot of stiff competition. We qualified for all four features and made three dashes - I didn't think we'd do that good this week but here we are (in victory lane) finishing it off."

Sandercock placed fourth in the Late Model division last year at Brighton Speedway. The 2023 season kicks off Saturday, May 6.

Check out Sandercock on Facebook at Charlie Sandercock Racing.



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# QUINTE SKYHAWKS

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte

Peter Gabriel loves football. He gave other sports like hockey, soccer and lacrosse a shot when he was younger. Nothing appealed to him the way football later did.

"I think football is like no other sport. You can have all shapes and sizes, it doesn't exclude anyone - you can have a big 6-foot-4,300-pound guy and then you can have a 5-foot-5, 135-pound guy. Both have extremely great skill sets, but at totally different positions and you value both of them at the same level," Gabriel said. "I just love the whole team concept about it."

There weren't the opportunities for Gabriel and other youth in football when he was a youngster playing like there are today, but then again he played a key role in bringing football to the Quinte region.

He had to wait until high school to play and there was no summer club football.

Gabriel moved to Belleville in the early 2000s and began coaching at the former Quinte Secondary School as a volunteer. Over the years he heard from players about the lack of opportunities in the area outside of high school football. "Most times if guys were really serious about football they were going to Kingston to play," Gabriel said.

In 2017, he explored the possibility of a rep football program as there was an application opportunity from the formerly named Ontario Varsity Football League. Following approval, they spent that year preparing for the inaugural 2018 season.

"Starting the club from nothing with no money, especially football, is an adventure in itself," Gabriel said. "We spent the year fundraising, getting corporate sponsors, all those kinds of things, but the reason why it started is just because of the pride from the guys that I was coaching saying 'coach why don't we have something here?'"

Once just a vision to develop football locally at the grassroots level has propelled the Quinte Skyhawks to great heights.

The Skyhawks fielded its first junior varsity team in the Ontario Football Conference in 2018. The following year they had a senior varsity team as well before the 2020 and 2021 seasons were cancelled.

"We were really moving forward well. We were really concerned when COVID hit because we were so new and what that was going to do," Gabriel said. "Slowly we climbed out of COVID and were wondering if the people were going to come back."

Registration numbers were down a bit in 2022, but the teams did well and made the playoffs. "This year the response has been astronomical where we're having to do tryouts just because there's so many guys coming out," Gabriel said. "That's been a really exciting thing."

Leading up to tackle football, the Skyhawks organization first introduced the sport to young players with touch-flag football since 2016. Peter and wife Brenda founded No Limits Youth Organization (nolimitsyouth.ca), which has dance, basketball and football in 2012.

Registration for the 2023 Skyhawks Flag Football League, for ages 6 to 13, is now open. The season runs from late August until the end of October, concluding with the Pumpkin Bowl.

"It's a great introduction for football, probably the best way for kids to get involved in football at a non-contact level," Gabriel said. "It really showcases speed and agility and introduces them to what every kid wants to do - catch, run and score touchdowns. It's a very fast moving game and we've had great success over the years and that's how we started."

A flag football program was the foundation, but the Skyhawks over the years have added rep teams at the U14, U16 and U18 levels as well as a Canadian Junior Football League U22 team. The plan is to introduce a U12 team next spring as well.

Providing club rugby is a great way to inspire players beyond only playing high school football, should they have bigger aspirations.

"Playing next-level football where they actually see peers across Ontario with that kind of talent. Competing at that level with them just instills confidence, bigger self-esteem and it sets the stage where I just believe if you can drive passion through a kid through sport, drive a passion through their lives, they'll drive a passion through their schooling and their education will just keep them on track," Gabriel said.

Great coaches help keep the program growing as well and Gabriel said he always tells players how fortunate they are to have the calibre of coaches they do to learn from.

Head coaches are Aaron Liscombe for the U14 Skyhawks, Mark McFaul at U16 and Justin Shakell at U18.

"I couldn't be more blessed to have the coaching staffs that we have at all three levels," Gabriel said. "All the coaches at these levels are coaching either high school or have played at the next level and they love what they're doing."

Continued next page ...



Some Skyhawks alumni are now joining the coaching ranks as well.

"The great thing about our U14 team is we're seeing some of our Skyhawks players who now play on the U22 CJFL team, they're giving back and they're coaching," Gabriel said.

Gabriel expects the U14, U16 and U18 to have their first home games in late May and fans can expect a number of tripleheaders for a chance to see all three teams in action on the same day. Games are played at Mary Ann Sills Park and Loyalist College.

"It's going to be great to see all the fans out again," he said.

As for the U22 Skyhawks, there is optimism for the CJFL season despite a couple of challenging seasons.

For starters, they have a new coach following the hiring of Sean Mellor from the Ottawa area, two years after serving as the assistant offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach during the Skyhawks inaugural 2022 season.

"This year it feels different. The first two years was kind of finding our way," Gabriel said. "The hardest thing is losing. It's hard to build a program and recruit people when you're not winning games so we're optimistically hopeful this year."

The Quinte club has received some interest from international students and a spring camp is in the works. In addition, National Signing Day is June 1.

"Things are going to speed up really quickly for the junior team," Gabriel said.



In March, it was announced that Belleville's Loyalist College was launching a new \$50,000 sponsorship agreement with the Skyhawks.

Gabriel said the Skyhawks organization connected with Loyalist College as soon as the CJFL team was launched as there is a strong focus from the organization on the development of student-athletes.

"We see the huge value they bring to our program and they also see the value of trying to reach a demographic, to reach more and more students, especially in this region, especially the Toronto to Ottawa corridor," Gabriel said, noting players from outside the Quinte region can now join the Skyhawks and attend college at the same time.

The sponsorship and agreement includes a Skyhawks bursary fund to support learners completing their post-secondary education while pursuing their dreams on the football field. The bursaries will provide essential financial support to any Skyhawks player who is also a full-time registered student in good academic standing at Loyalist College. We are at an exciting time for our young program and the future looks bright bringing graduating High School football players an opportunity like never before!

The vision never seems to stop and we are always looking for ways to create more opportunity for youth of all ages to experience the sport of football. Stay tuned to there websites and check out there social media platforms for more exciting opportunities to be rolled out in 2023!

Go Skyhawks!

Check out the Quinte Skyhawks regular website at [skyhawksfootball.ca](http://skyhawksfootball.ca) and the CJFL team at [skyhawkscjfl.ca](http://skyhawkscjfl.ca)

Skyhawks Photos by W. J. Smith Photography





# TWEED HAWKS U18 TEAM Celebrates OMHA Championship Victory



By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte

For the Tweed Hawks U18 team, it was more than just winning an Ontario Minor Hockey Association championship.

Perhaps greater was the example of lessons hockey, and all sports, can provide along the way and the opportunity coaches have to play a positive role in the life of a youth on and off the ice. "Our coaching was definitely our reason for getting there - we couldn't have done it without our coaching for sure," said Hawks' player Sam Gale, who scored the overtime winner to clinch the OMHA U18 Tier 3 victory. "We're different people from what we were at the start of the year and I can say that with confidence because we now truly even in real life can say that we have a different mindset towards things that we want in life and we can say that we were able to dedicate ourselves and really give it our all. I just give the credit to our coaches for being able to push us that far."

Tweed went undefeated in five games at the OMHA's U18 Tier 3 Championship Weekend April 7-9 in Windsor. In round-robin play, the Hawks defeated Elmvale Coyotes 3-1, Hanover Falcons 8-2 and West Lorne Comets 6-1.

The most lopsided Silver Stick victory for Tweed, though, came in the semifinals as they handed the Delhi Rockets an 11-0 drubbing. "We went into that tournament, we knew what we had to do and we were steamrolling," Gale said. "We knew we were going to be on track for a good outcome and that semifinals game was just kind of unreal to us that we did that."

Gale suggests there were nerves on both sides in the OMHA championship final against the TCDMHA Rebels from the Township of Chatworth and District organization in the Owen Sound area. The Rebels had played in a number of close contests throughout the tournament before needing extra time against Tweed in the final.

"I think both teams were a bit nervous because they saw we beat the last team by quite a bit but either way we both put up such a great fight and it was such a nail-biter game for us all," Gale said. With the teams tied at the end of regulation time, Gale scored just over a minute into overtime to give Tweed a 4-3 victory and the OMHA championship. "It's kind of one of those things you never really think you're going to be able to accomplish in your life," Gale said of scoring

a championship-clinching goal in overtime. "I saw the left corner wide open so I took the shot and there it was. It could've been any of us on the team. It was really just a moment of all that hard work and dedication the whole team had put in. It just all paid off in that moment right there."

Tweed U18 Hawks team members are goaltenders Ryan Grove and Tucker McKichan along with captain Niilo Ahola, assistant captains Eli Prance and Chaz Cassidy as well as Cameron Hunt, Luke Walker, Drew Lessard, Jack Shalton, Owen Whyte, Jeremy Hunt, Jacob Heard, Felix Sterner, Wyatt Daisley, Chris Brown, Ayden Else, Reid Whalen, Hayden Blackburn and Gale.

"This specific group has gone through quite a lot together. At the start of the season we were a bit up-and-down, we weren't very consistent. We had taken the season along, winning some games we should have, losing some games we shouldn't have but it really just came down to dedication and listening to what our coaches had to say to us," Gale said. "In practices we were adding some skating drills and just fine-tuning all the things that we needed improvement on, but definitely the biggest thing was being able to take what our coaches had to say to us and being able to perfect it out on the ice and in games."

Gale said head coach Paddy Cassidy deserves full credit with pushing the players to realize their full potential this season. "He led us there, he was the one who pushed us, he changed all of our mindsets 100 per cent from not thinking that we were 100 per cent going to be winning OMHA's to him really putting it into our heads that we need to dedicate ourselves and really work for it if we want to get something and that's what we did," Gale said, also thanking the rest of the staff includes assistant coaches Cory Brown, Dave Prance, trainers Andy Hunt and Jake Gunning and manager Mike Else. "They were all pushing us just to be the best we can be."

Upon returning home, a parade was held in Tweed as Hawks supporters turned out to celebrate the OMHA champs. "That was amazing. The whole community was out there cheering for us," Gale said. It was a surreal moment really. It was just a moment of happiness. We all got to go around and celebrate, just have that moment with the whole town really. It was just a great experience."

# HOCKEYSTICKMAN'S EXPANSION Retail and Pro Shop in Belleville!



By: Joey Walsh HockeyStickMan.ca

Hello Total Sports reader! We've been getting a lot of questions about the large building that is being constructed behind our current storefront, and would like to give you the opportunity to read about the future first... Here are the exciting plans.

The new warehouse at 365 Maitland Drive has always been part of the plan since we bought the property in 2018. The expansion was delayed through COVID, but this summer our dream is finally becoming reality.

We need the space to service our online store and professional team partners; for shipping/receiving, and warehousing. However, as a hometown boy, I know Belleville is a hockey town and the area deserves a high quality hockey specific retail space. A large portion of the new building will be open to the public, and it will have an inventory unlike anything else in the world. The new HockeyStickMan Warehouse will feature the largest selection of Pro Stock sticks, equipment and apparel in Canada. We source these directly from the 175+ teams that we work with, and previously have not been able to showcase in Belleville.

It will also be home of the Pro Blackout, where players can get a top of the line stick for under \$150. In addition to the huge savings, the Pro Blackout line features sticks for kids all the way through to adults. Starting in 2023-24, we will be stocking over 30 different curves in various sizes, from old favorites that you can no longer find, to star player replica patterns all in sizes to fit your game.

The Belleville Warehouse will also stock new release inline retail products that customers are looking for and demand. To provide the best value possible to our customers, we also focus on closeout purchases. When we can source closeout deals and make them available for wholesale prices it has always been a winning formula.

Our goal is to save hockey families money on great products, and this has proven to be a tremendous way to do just that. It has already been a busy 2023 when it comes to closeouts with more opportunities in our sights. This also gives us a great opportunity to provide value and selection to our younger customers.

One of the biggest changes is that we are adding the HSM Elite Pro Shop to the Belleville Warehouse. It will be one of the world's first retail locations with the Elite sharpener and profiling machines. These are fully automated systems used by the Leafs, Canadiens and many other teams throughout pro and college hockey. The Elite profiling machine gives you a precision skate profile and the sharpener is designed to follow and maintain that profile perfectly. Translation - a perfect sharpen every time! Pro shop services have been heavily requested at our Belleville location, but we couldn't offer anything until it could be done right. With a plan to provide select services to online customers, and to sell pre-profiled steel to our customer base throughout the world, the investment in Elite machines now makes sense.

Interior construction is now underway and we intend on opening the new HSM Belleville Warehouse by August 2023. There is still 2000 square feet of space that is not allocated and we are considering sport related partnerships or rental of the space. A lot of people have said that this warehouse belongs in the GTA, but Belleville is our home and we take pride in doing it here. Plus we know that people will drive to visit us, it's conveniently located just off the 401 for that reason! I invite you to join me in the excitement of what this building can become.

Joey Walsh,  
HockeyStickMan

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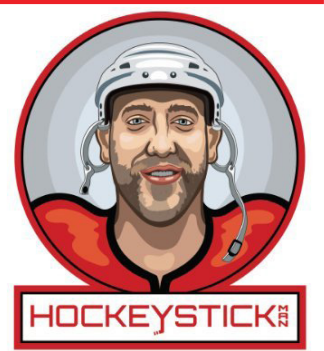
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# Dukes News



## Dukes Kids Summer Camp is Back...

## Coming in August

Photo: Amy Deroche / OJHL Images

The Wellington Dukes are excited to finally have our Kids Hockey Summer Camp returning in August. Though the exact date is to be determined, it will be a full week/ full days hockey development camp for kids of all ages - male and female. Save your spot by pre-registering today! Contact our Director of Sales & Marketing, Kelly Martin at 905-914-7454 or email [BOQTotalsports@gmail.com](mailto:BOQTotalsports@gmail.com)

## WATCH FOR ANNOUNCEMENT OF DATES!



Photo: Ashley Goodwin



Photo: Ed McPherson/ OJHL Images



Photo: Alisha Martin

TOTAL SPORTS QUINTE

## THE HANGAR PRO SHOP

### Operating The Hangar Pro Shop a Natural Fit for Ryan Isbister

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte

There was a time Ryan Isbister never would have considered work in hockey.

Now after gaining locker room and equipment manager experience with local Ontario Junior Hockey League clubs, Isbister is now operating the rebranded Hangar Pro Shop at the Duncan McDonald Memorial Gardens in Trenton.

"I never watched hockey, never played hockey," the Canadian Armed Forces veteran remarked.

Isbister served 19 years in the military and is open about his struggles with PTSD and depression. He sought new hobbies following his medical release in 2016 and at one point participated in a mental health course. He met another veteran who enjoyed playing hockey in his spare time.

Fast forward a couple of months and Isbister was invited to play for a Highway of Heroes team against Toronto Maple Leafs alumni during a charity game in Kingston. He lacked hockey-playing skills, but the Trenton Golden Hawks offered to train him as a goaltender. He played in the game and has memories to last a lifetime.

"I got scored on by Wendel Clark and all those former Toronto Maple Leafs," he recalled.

Isbister enjoyed the experience, though military injuries prohibited him from playing hockey much longer. He joined the Golden Hawks as locker room manager, keeping it clean, doing laundry as well as other necessary tasks.

"Over time I started learning the skills of what it takes to be an equipment manager," Isbister said.

When the emerging COVID-19 pandemic shut down the OJHL playoffs in 2020 and with the long wait for the league to return to action, Isbister continued learning in his spare time, with a big focus on improving his skate sharpening skills.

"I went to Guspro in Chatham which are the ones that make Blademaster skate sharpeners for NHL teams as well as the Trenton Golden Hawks and the Wellington Dukes," he said. "I got some really cool customized training from them on certain techniques of skate sharpening and I just honed my skills in my spare time through the pandemic."

Isbister went on to spend this past season as equipment manager for the Wellington Dukes. He took a lot of pride in the responsibilities of the role.

"There's a lot behind the scenes that a lot of people don't know. It's not just sharpening skates and giving them sticks whenever they break," he said. "I guess some need a certain profile done, maybe some don't". - every skater has their own unique sharpening on their skates on their blades so some of them need profiles and some of them need a different hollow of a sharpen - and then as well as if a rivet breaks on a skate you've got to fix that, give them laces, you're fixing their gear, you're sewing the socks, you're sewing the jerseys and you're also maintaining a very high standard of cleanliness within the locker room. You're just in such a closed confined space and someone could catch a cold and you just want to make sure you're having the cleanest possible locker room for the players just to keep them game ready all the time."



Ryan Isbister, who was the equipment manager for the Wellington Dukes, sharpens a skate blade prior to a game in Trenton in November 2022. (Photo by Amy Deroche/OJHL Images)

Now back in Trenton, Isbister - a second-year graphic arts student with the Toronto Film School - was involved with the rebranding of the pro shop, which was formerly known as the Trenton Golden Hawks Pro Shop. With the Duncan McDonald Memorial Gardens often referred to as The Hangar, that name also made sense for the pro shop, Isbister thought.

"This means it's a community orientated type of pro shop rather than just a specific team because we have the Quinte West Golden Hawks, we've got the Trenton Golden Hawks so it's something different, but something everyone can recognize," Isbister said.

Skate sharpening is available for hockey, but not figure skating, although plans are in place for that to happen.

"We're not there yet, but we will advance pretty soon. There's a strong figure skating community within Quinte West," Isbister said.

The Hangar Pro Shop is closed for the season but Isbister anticipates reopening at the beginning of August. Hockey accessories will be available as well as apparel, skate sharpening, repair services and equipment sanitation services.

As he moves forward at The Hangar, Isbister appreciates the Golden Hawks and Dukes giving him the opportunity to learn his own set of hockey skills. He loves the roles he's been in, whether as equipment manager or running a pro shop, because he gets to see the up-and-coming hockey players of various ages working to achieve their goals and developing as players.

They are quick to thank him for giving them their best chance for success on the ice.

"That type of gratitude is why I am grateful to the teams of the OJHL and the skills they gave this veteran," Isbister said.



# THRILLING OJHL PLAYOFFS

## For Local Junior A Hockey Fans

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte



Wellington's Creo Solomon and Trenton's Julian Gervais battle for the puck during Game 4 of the OJHL South-East Conference final April 12 at the Duncan McDonald Memorial Gardens. (Photo by Amy Deroche/OJHL Images)



The Trenton Golden Hawks celebrate Jordan Fuller's overtime goal April 14 in Wellington to win the OJHL's South-East Conference. (Photo by Ed McPherson/OJHL Images)

The 2023 Ontario Junior Hockey League playoffs provided excitement for local junior A fans.

A year ago, both the Trenton Golden Hawks and Wellington Dukes were dispatched in the first round during non-traditional best-of-three divisional matchups.

This time around, the regular best-of-seven series returned in addition to 1-to-8 conference seeding.

Fans were eventually treated to a battle of Quinte area teams in the South-East Conference final with Golden Hawks eliminating the Dukes in five games. Trenton advanced to the OJHL's Buckland Cup championship series, but were overmatched by the Collingwood Blues which will now represent the league at the Centennial Cup national tournament May 11-21 in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba.

Collingwood clinched the league title with a 2-1 overtime victory April 28 to win the series in five games.

Lucas Robinson gave the visiting Golden Hawks a first-period lead but Mark McIntosh answered back with two goals for the Blues. McIntosh capitalized on a power play 11:31 into the third after the Golden Hawks were called for too many men on the ice and then scored the winner just under three minutes into the extra frame.

Three of the five games in the series went into overtime with the Blues winning two of them.

Collingwood jumped out to a 2-0 series lead with victories of 2-0 and 5-1. The Golden Hawks cut the deficit to one with a 2-1 Game 3 overtime victory thanks to Jordan Fuller's fourth game-winning goal of the playoffs. The Blues responded with two straight wins including 3-2 in overtime in Game 4.

Fuller was also the OT hero in Trenton's Game 5 series-clinching game against Wellington on April 14.

While that series ended in five games, the games were close with the Dukes 4-1 win in Game 2 being the largest margin of victory. Trenton won the series opener 3-1 and following Wellington's victory prevailed 4-2 in Game 3, 3-2 in Game 4 and 2-1 in Game 5.

Wellington had only lost once heading into the conference final after dispatching the St. Michael's Buzzers in five games before sweeping the Haliburton County Huskies four straight.

The Golden Hawks also won its opening series in five games over the Cobourg Cougars. They went on to knock out the Toronto Jr. Canadiens - the top team from the regular season - in seven games.



The Trenton Golden Hawks won the OJHL's South-East Conference, defeating the Wellington Dukes in five games. (Photo by Ed McPherson/OJHL Images)



Trenton Golden Hawks goaltender Ben Bonisteel makes an overtime save during Game 4 of the OJHL championship series against the Collingwood Blues on April 26. (Photo by Ray MacAloney/OJHL Images)



Above: Trenton Golden Hawks Billet family at the Wellington Duke Dome L-R Mike Amodeo billet dad, Tara Amodeo billet mom, Quintynn Amodeo billet brother, Molly Amodeo billet sister, Allison Rhodes billet sister, Missy Rhodes billet mom and Janet Cowell billet Nan/ Below; Best fans in the OJHL!!!



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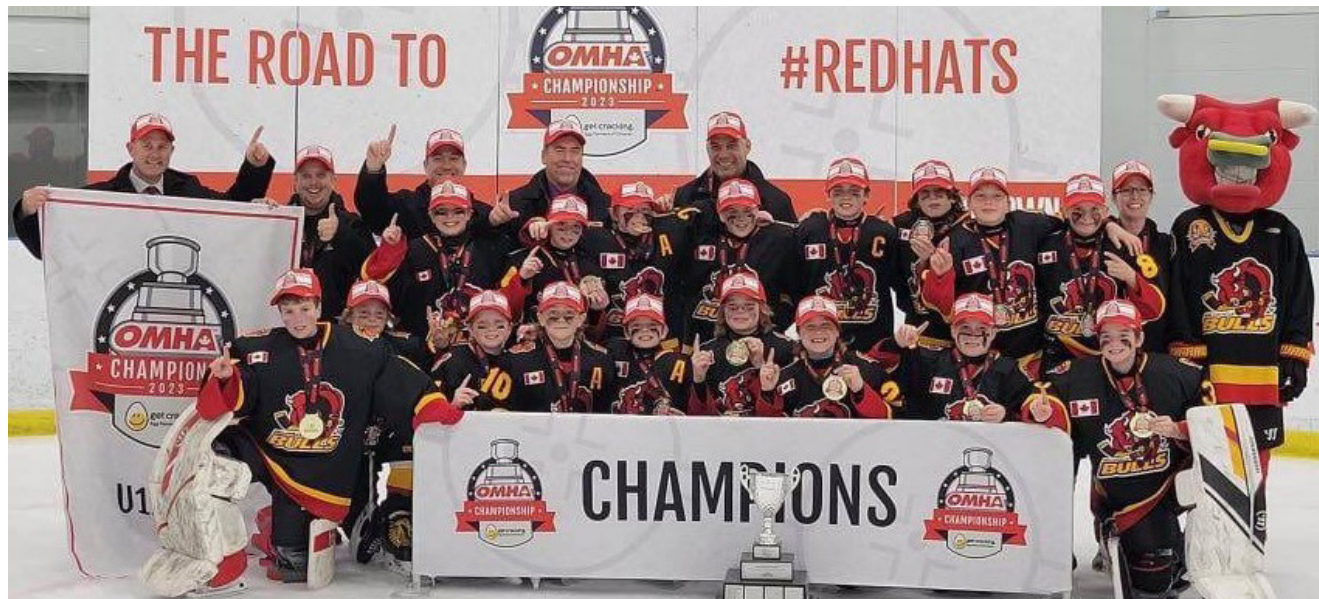
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# DUVANCO HOMES U12 BULLS

## Strong Foundation Leads to OMHA Victory

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte



Members of the Belleville Bulls Duvanco Homes U12 AA team made the most of their opportunity to compete at the Ontario Minor Hockey Association championships April 7-9 in Kingston.

A 7-3 loss to the King Rebellion in the opening game didn't deter the players, despite the fact they hadn't faced much adversity throughout the season. Bulls head coach Dustin VanSoelen chalked it up to nerves, not to mention facing a bigger and stronger opponent.

"We got down by a couple goals and that was pretty rare for us this year. We didn't learn real well how to play from behind because we didn't have a lot of opportunities," VanSoelen said. "We just knew from there we had to play our best and run the table. There wasn't any more room for error."

Belleville bounced back with a big 9-0 victory over the Milton Winterhawks, a result that later proved crucial towards the goal-differential tie-breaker in the standings. The Bulls defeated the Niagara Falls Flyers 3-1 to complete the round-robin schedule.

There was a three-team tie in the standings, with Belleville and King advancing with a goal-differential of seven while Niagara Falls had four. In the semifinals, the Bulls prevailed 3-1 over Richmond Hill, a team they had previously competed against in Silver Stick competition that VanSoelen said was structured well defensively, but seemed to struggle offensively. "They kept the game close and battled hard," he said.

Belleville was matched up in the OMHA championship game against the Halton Hills Thunder, the last remaining undefeated team during the tournament following a 2-1 semifinal win over King. The Bulls jumped out to a 3-0 lead and allowed minimal shots in the first period en route to a 6-1 victory to capture the OMHA title.

"We talked about one of the toughest things in the tournament of this calibre is to go undefeated – we knew that was going to be a challenge for them, however I think they looked across at our loss early on and they had just beaten that team and I think they might have underestimated the Belleville Bulls."

VanSoelen said the team talked about opportunities at the beginning of the season and continued that theme throughout the campaign.

"They knew full well to earn a berth to the OMHA championships is somewhat rare for minor hockey players in Ontario and then to get the opportunity to play in the final on a bigger stage, we had a lot of fans come from Belleville," the coach remarked. "The rink was fairly rowdy

and certainly in our favour for support. They came out, they were ready and you could tell they wanted it. They played three full periods, skated right through to the end. When that final buzzer went, you saw the gloves and the helmets start flying off and the celebration was on. It was really cool."

U12 Bulls players were Brody Randle, Carter VanSoelen, Charlie Crawford, Domenic Di Genova, Elijah Jones, Jack Woods, John Dorey, Tyler Patterson, Lincoln Walt, Lucas Jaymes Dupont, Luke Babbs, MacArthur Wylde, Mark Redden, Rowyn Haley, Ryan Brearley, Ryden Ray and Taguen Doran. Along with coach VanSoelen on the staff were assistant coaches Brian Kehoe, Chad Clark, Jeff Diamond, trainer Josh Jones and manager Holly White.

Looking back, coach VanSoelen considers an early season tournament win in Burlington where the team went 5-0 to be a great building block. The Bulls went on to have huge success in the regular season with a 25-1-1 record.

They didn't suffer their first loss until the tournament hosted by Belleville Minor Hockey, losing to the Eastern Ontario Cobras, though met them again in the final and won.

In December, the Bulls won the Georgina Regional Silver Stick to qualify for the International Silver Stick Finals in Newmarket in January against some of the top teams from Ontario as well as HoneyBaked from Detroit.

Belleville was edged 3-2 in the semifinals by HoneyBaked, which went on to lose 1-0 in the championship contest. The Bulls went 2-1-1 during the tournament and every win and loss was decided by one goal. "It was really good hockey for them and sort of showed them what it takes to bring it together in the end," VanSoelen said.

A strong team foundation, built throughout the season, set the stage for the U12 Bulls to win the OMHA championship.

"What makes the team special is just 17 kids that were willing to come together, buy into a system, certainly defence first was kind of the message all year long that we look after our own end and goals will come," VanSoelen said. "In the last four games of the OMHA championships against some of the best teams in Ontario, we only allowed three goals. That's what we feel was sort of the basis of a championship team."

Belleville SENS paid page



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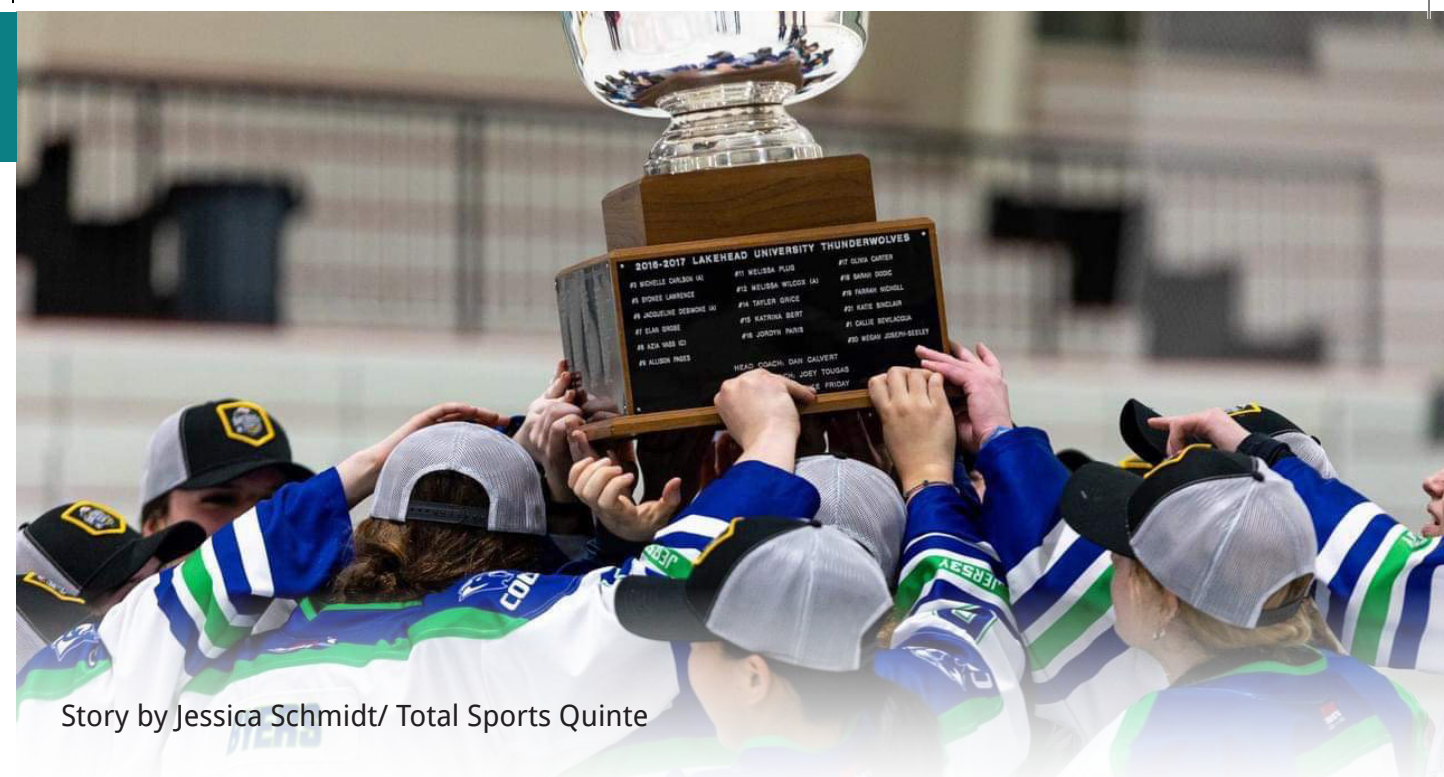


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Story by Jessica Schmidt/ Total Sports Quinte

**This story is in loving memory of Joe Belanger. Cassidy was his dear student. She like all of us in the local sports network adored him and miss him dearly.**

Congratulations to Emily Moore of Tweed and Cassidy Dobson of Belleville the 2023 Women's Hockey Champions Sault College Cougars Womens D2. Emily was MVP & former Wellington Lady

Dukes Cassidy Top Goalie in the league.





OMHA - Photo pages of athlete/team wins - OMHA championships - winners double page spread

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## -Belleville Beast swimmer Francis Brennan feature

# LOCAL BOWLERS

## Earn Medals at Ontario Winter Games

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte



Thirteen-year-old Isaac Kerr of Belleville and Gracie Hagan, 14, from Brighton earned medals in bowling competition at the Ontario Winter Games in February.

Both bowl out of Presqu'ile Lanes in Brighton and were the youngest members on their respective regional U18 men's and women's teams.

"It was awesome, there were a lot of really good bowlers," said Hagan, whose U18 women's team captured gold at the Winter Games. "I was the youngest player on my team and my teammates were great. I've never won anything like that so when we won I was proud and so were my parents."

Kerr said he entered the Winter Games with the goal of earning a medal and his team did just that, claiming silver in the U18 men's division. It was a gruelling two days of competition with 13 games being played. He's more accustomed to three games in league play and up to five during tournaments. "We were so tired and exhausted after seven games on day one. We had four playoff games on the morning of day two," Kerr said. "We made it to the gold medal final and thought we had won, but the score was incorrect and we had tied. We had to play one more game, a tiebreaker to get the gold but unfortunately we didn't win it. I know that to succeed we needed endurance and focus during all 13 games. Competing at the Ontario Winter Games and earning a silver medal was an amazing experience." Hagan, whose team had 12 games, also found the schedule demanding, noting "my biggest challenge was endurance. It's hard to stay focused playing 12 games especially when you're tired."

She was introduced to bowling through family as both her grandmother

and father were bowlers. In fact, her dad was a youth bowler at Presqu'ile Lanes, she noted. "I love bowling because I enjoy being active, meeting new friends and competing against the best players," Hagan said.

Hagan will also compete at the Youth Bowling Canada national championships in Regina, Saskatchewan from May 7-9. "I'm looking forward to meeting new people and facing even tougher competition," she said. "My goal for next season is to continue working hard to get better and to make it to the YBC national championships as a senior." Kerr, meanwhile, had aspired to compete at the Ontario Winter Games for a few years. He was only 10 the last time the event was held and the minimum age requirement is 12. He bonded with his teammates in short order and faced strong competition from teams representing regions such as Thunder Bay, Windsor, Toronto and Cornwall. "The experience was pretty awesome, it was very different compared to any other tournament that I've competed in," he said. "My team was great and I definitely want to do it again in 2025. It was a great feeling to bowl against the best youth bowlers in Ontario and to win a medal."

Kerr got an early start in bowling, first taken to the lanes when he was just three and eventually joined a YBC league in Belleville. His dad even got him his own bowling balls to use. He improved in quick fashion and began winning medals and trophies. "In 2020 I was tuned up and ready for the YBC national tournament, but as for many other things, it was cancelled due to the pandemic," he said. "When I heard I wasn't going to Calgary I was sad because it felt like all my hard work was for nothing."

It was disappointing for Kerr he couldn't bowl due to COVID provincial restrictions and on top of that his league in Belleville was discontinued.

Then he made the move to Presqu'ile Lanes in Brighton. "It felt great because everybody welcomed me and my sister into their YBC youth program like we are family. I am so happy to be back bowling again," Kerr said. "I definitely love the family feel of the bowling environment. You can play as an individual and on a team," Kerr said. "I love target games. The amount of focus and strength that you need to succeed is a challenge I enjoy. I really like my friends at Presqu'ile Lanes and other bowling alleys that I have made over the years. Most bowlers are nice and welcoming and want to have fun. Sometimes the fun turns into a friendly competition."

Entering his final year as a bantam-aged player, Kerr has three specific goals for next season including raising his scoring average, winning a provincial championship and competing at the YBC nationals with aspirations of winning there as well. "I would love to keep bowling for the rest of my life and even compete professionally in Canada," he said.

Kerr invites more youth in the Quinte region to give five-pin bowling a try. "You can meet new people and going to tournaments is exciting," he said.

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# BELLEVILLE LAWN BOWLING

## Club Set for Another Year of Bowls



By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte

After a year that saw a provincial championship being played in Belleville in 2022, the Belleville Lawn Bowling Club is looking forward to its 123rd year of operating as a club.

As part of this year's activities and as a way of introducing the game of lawn bowling to those that have never played, the Belleville Lawn Bowling Club will be participating in National Bowls Day.

Lawn bowls is an accessible, edge-of-your seat fun team sport that brings generations of players together.

"We're thrilled to be part of National Bowls Day," says Michael Lindon, chair of National Bowls Day in Belleville and club secretary. "The city of Belleville has always supported various sports locally, and National Bowls Day will give many locals the opportunities to get out and try something new."

National Bowls Day is happening at local clubs all across the country on June 3 and it's the perfect opportunity for newcomers to gather with friends, family and their community to see what bowls is all about. The Belleville club will be offering free learn-to-bowl instructions, refreshments, something to eat and an opportunity to meet others that are also interested in learning more about lawn bowls.

One of the goals for this year is introducing the club's youth program for those under the age of 18. Youth Bowlers can compete for the Earl Mayer Youth Bowler of the Year Plaque. To be eligible bowlers 18 years or younger can earn valuable points at each sanctioned youth bowls tournament across Ontario.

The more you enter, the better your chances of being crowned Bowler of the Year.

Anyone who attends all sanctioned youth bowls tournaments receives a bonus of 25 points towards their total.

Points are available in both male and female divisions. Every participant receives one point for entering each sanctioned youth tournament.

The Belleville Lawn Bowling Club is also looking for local businesses or individuals to become a sponsor, which will contribute to the successful

hosting of events with prizes and refreshments. This will provide the best experience possible for all ages.

That support will also enable the club to expand its equipment inventory and will go a long way to assist in the support of the Belleville Lawn Bowling Club facility and the wonderful long-standing sport in the community.

Belleville's club will host a number of events from June until September that are open to all registered bowlers in Ontario. Bowlers attend from many parts of Ontario. The Belleville Lawn Bowling Club will also be hosting eight tournaments. This year, tournaments will start with two dates set in June, on the 14th and 28th and all tournaments start at 10 a.m.. July will see competition on the 15th and 24th, with the latter designated as the District Chair Tournament.

Dates in August are the 2nd and 17th with the tournament schedule to wrap up in September on the 6th and 21st. The Belleville Lawn Bowling Club moved to 69 Centre Street as part of the City of Belleville's upgrade to the Hillcrest Community Centre redevelopment in 2020.

The City of Belleville recently completed the development of two new greens that club officials believe will soon rival the best greens available in the province.

Belleville lawn bowlers are on the greens from early May to late September, weather permitting. Club events - known as jitneys - are the staple of the club and are friendly competitions held three times a week during the mornings and evenings. The level of competition also varies. Just turn up and teams are made up at random.

**Club members look forward to seeing everyone on the greens this season.**

**Check out the Belleville Lawn Bowling Club online at [blbc1932.weebly.com](http://blbc1932.weebly.com)**

Nesda Technologies pending



# BELLEVILLE SOCCER CLUB

## Gearing Up for Busy Season

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte

Registration numbers have soared for the Belleville Soccer Club for the upcoming 2023 outdoor season.

About 1,250 players are signed up for the club's recreational leagues while there's an additional 250 in the development and competitive program.

"We have had a huge influx of registrations this year, more than I have ever had by far since I have been at the club," said head administrator Jordan McConnell, who has been with the Belleville club for more than seven years. "Luckily many of our parents registered really early which gave me the opportunity to order more uniforms twice as we kept maxing out what we had anticipated."

There are 114 recreational teams and 16 rep and development teams.

"We even have some children on the waitlists," McConnell said. "We are doing everything to find them jerseys and get them a spot."

Despite a lot of uncertainty rebounding from COVID restrictions, last year also saw growth for the organization with just under 960 recreational players and 185 in the development and competitive program.

Soccer seems to be growing everywhere, which is wonderful," McConnell said. "In Belleville, our small midsize fields have completely maxed out. We actually have no other space to put nets and kids. Hopefully we can work with the city this year for next summer so we can try to find more greenspace and field space so we can accommodate more players next year."

McConnell reports the club's indoor season, which runs from October to April at the Loyalist Sports Dome, was also a success this year with double the highest previous registrants.

Another focus for the club is providing quality training and development programs for youth. Thanks to some club coaches like Rob Terry, Tom Moran and, most recently joining the development crew, Mike Zanette, development programs are now being offered year-round. There are currently around 135 kids training on Saturday afternoons for five weeks.

"Children and youth seem to want more and more soccer and we are trying to find a way to give that to them," McConnell said.

An exciting new initiative for the Belleville Soccer Club this summer is offering an Adaptive Soccer Program for children ages 4 to 12 who have exceptionalities. The league will be suited for children with special needs and could be better supported through an adaptive program rather than the traditional soccer league.

"We had two parents that were very willing to help and really take the coaching and facilitation lead on this to allow us to launch this program this year," McConnell said, adding more volunteers are still sought for the program that will be held Saturdays at 10 a.m.

"It will be held on the Field of Ability this summer which we are very thankful to have to allow us to provide a very inclusive soccer program," McConnell said.

The need for volunteers isn't limited to just the adaptive program as the increase in overall registration numbers adds to the need for more help. "Throughout all of the soccer seasons we are very lucky that we have so many volunteers that make sure we can run all the programs. Without them it would be impossible," McConnell said. "This summer alone, we need at least 130 people for teams, from coaching to managing teams, just helping at the fields, helping find sponsors, helping prepare equipment and organize festivals."

McConnell said the club appreciates the support it receives from the community. "This summer we have also had a huge interest in team and club sponsorships, so many wonderful companies and individuals from our surrounding community that have sponsored teams," she said. "We are so grateful because the sponsorships allow us to ensure that we can keep equipment purchased, year-end festivals are able to happen. We didn't quite get all house league teams sponsored this year, but we were close."

**Anyone wishing to volunteer or provide sponsorship can reach out to the club.**

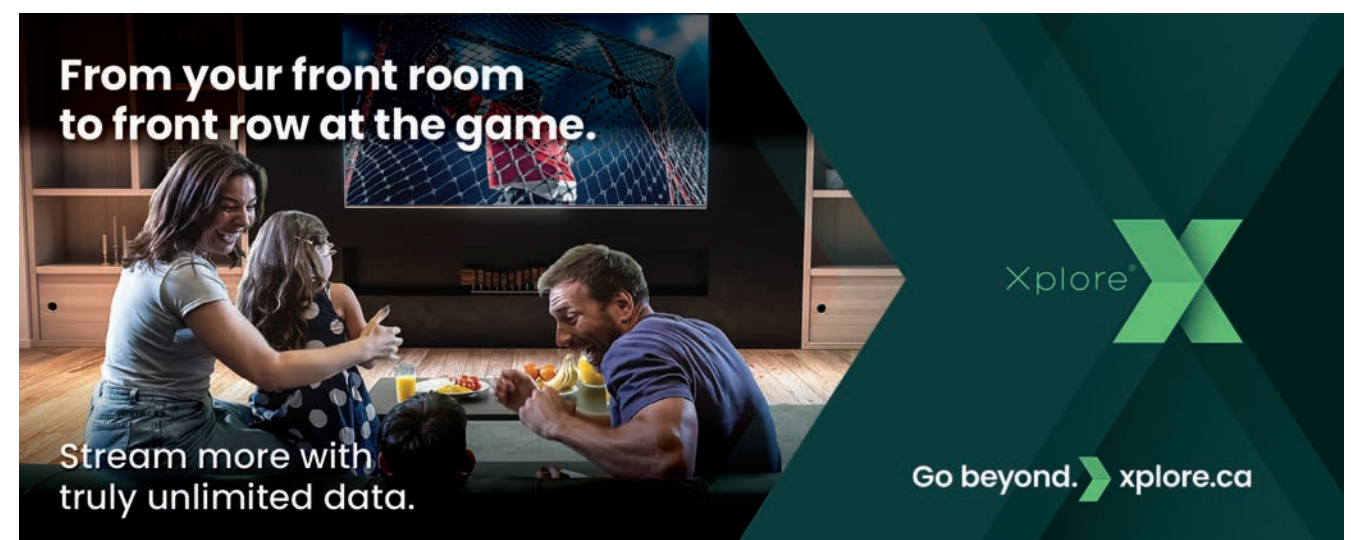
**Check out the Belleville Soccer Club at [bellevillesoccerclub.ca](http://bellevillesoccerclub.ca)**

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# CHLOE CHOINARD

## Excelling in Synchronized Skating

Figure skater Chloe Choinard earned a national title at the 2023 Skate Canada championships held in Oshawa in January.

Choinard is a longtime member of the Stirling Figure Skating Club and was coached locally by Lindsay Newbery.

This is the second national title for Choinard who was the 2019 Junior Pair Champion with former partner Mathieu Ostiguy. The 20-year-old made the change to synchronized skating this season with top Canadian team NEXXICE out of Burlington.

In January, the team earned gold at the Mozart Cup in Austria and claimed bronze at the Spring Cup in Milan Italy in February. They were named to the world team competing in April in Lake Placid where they placed fourth in the world.



# BELLEVILLE BULLDOGS

## Welcome Everyone to Give Rugby a Try

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte



With a neverending drive to grow the game, the Belleville Bulldogs welcome everyone to give rugby a try.

Anyone interested in playing, whether that's youth or adults, is encouraged to contact the club. There's no official end to registration, though teams would require players to be signed up before their first league game. "We really don't want to turn anyone away," said Bulldogs' Director of Rugby Jo Robinson. "I know it's growing, but it's not a mainstream sport."

There have been challenges in recent years and some teams have taken a hit more than others. Numbers are great on the women's side at the junior and senior levels and the youth flag rugby program remains strong as well.

The men's side has been challenged as the Belleville club was unable to field U18 and senior teams in 2022 due to insufficient numbers.

Robinson said that's not limited to the club level, but saw fewer teams than usual last year in the high school ranks as well. The upcoming boys rugby season looks more promising for both school and club rugby, she predicted.

Early registrations showed the men's team to be making a return to action this season and the outlook was good for the U18 boys Bulldogs to make a comeback as well. "We had a really strong U16 boys team last year," Robinson said of the 2022 Toronto Rugby Union champs, adding some of those players could move up. "A lot of the boys are keen to continue to play and we've got some coaches in place which really helps," she remarked.

Robinson reiterated the importance of expressing interest in playing as soon as possible as players are welcome to join the teams. In fact, there were so many U16 girls last year that two teams were fielded to compete. "I think a lot of parents and athletes think that there's cuts, but being one of the most inclusive sports out there we're just trying to grow the game," Robinson said.

In late March, the Bulldogs held an indoor rugby session at the Loyalist Dome for junior boys from U14 to U18. Led by Pieter Kort along with guest players and coaches, the event attracted 50 players.

Saturday, April 29 was another big opportunity to learn the sport as the Bulldogs hosted a free Try Rugby Day, also at the Loyalist Dome with different sessions for U4 to U12 players, U14 to U18 boys and for U14 to U18 girls.

The very youngest age groups received a basic introduction to the sport while older players focused on key fundamentals like ball handling and decision-making. There was little or no contact for the sessions and another key focus was to have fun. "That's the main goal," Robinson said.

Don't let cost be a deterrent either to joining the club as it supports

players with financial restrictions. Club members have been helping cover registration fees for players and anyone can donate to 'Support a Bulldog' on the club's website. "There's lots of retired players or adults out there who really want to get youth playing so that's all that program is - pick an amount you want to donate and we'll make sure it goes towards funding a youth player in need. "We did a lot of recruiting last year and we funded a few U16 boys because we really wanted to make sure we had a U16 boys team," Robinson added, noting the importance of developing players to move up to the older age groups.

Robinson said the club is looking forward to the return of the senior men's team, which will boost the overall atmosphere. "We've got lots of guys coming out of the woodwork from years previous to really make it happen," she said. "We did miss it without the men."

That's because of the social aspect of the sport, with Bulldogs' teams supporting each other. Even opponents come together as well. Junior teams exchange player of the game honours while older teams get together off the pitch as well. "There's not many other sports where you go out and pound each other for an hour or 80 minutes, tackle each other and then go out," Robinson said. "There's a lot of camaraderie through the entire rugby community. In the senior leagues you go out and do the post social where you go to the pub and buy your opposite a drink or something. There's just a lot of camaraderie and respect."

Rugby is for everyone, Robinson said, regardless of size and experience.

"We do encourage people who don't have any experience to come out and give it a try.. We just want to grow the game within our area."

Check out the Belleville Bulldogs at [bulldogsrugby.com](http://bulldogsrugby.com)





# VICTORY BARBELL CLUB

## Athletes Compete at Ontario Winter Games

Left: Madalyn Tyrer

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte

**Ethan Yuke** won a gold medal in weightlifting as four young athletes, ages 13 to 15, from Belleville's Victory Barbell Club competed at the Ontario Winter Games in Renfrew back in February.

Yuke is only 15, but says he has been lifting since he eight thanks to the support and guidance from coach Gary Lewis, who also happens to be a neighbour to his family.

"He was always talking to me about lifting. I used to play hockey and he'd always say you're not a goalie you're a lifter," Yuke recalled. "I enjoy lifting because it's a fun sport and I enjoy the challenge. My coach is amazing and all the lifters at Victory are a lot of fun and encouraging to be around."

At the Ontario Winter Games, Yuke captured gold in his division, snatching 87 kilograms (191 pounds) and jerking 105 kilograms (231 pounds). He didn't believe Coach Lewis when informed of his win.

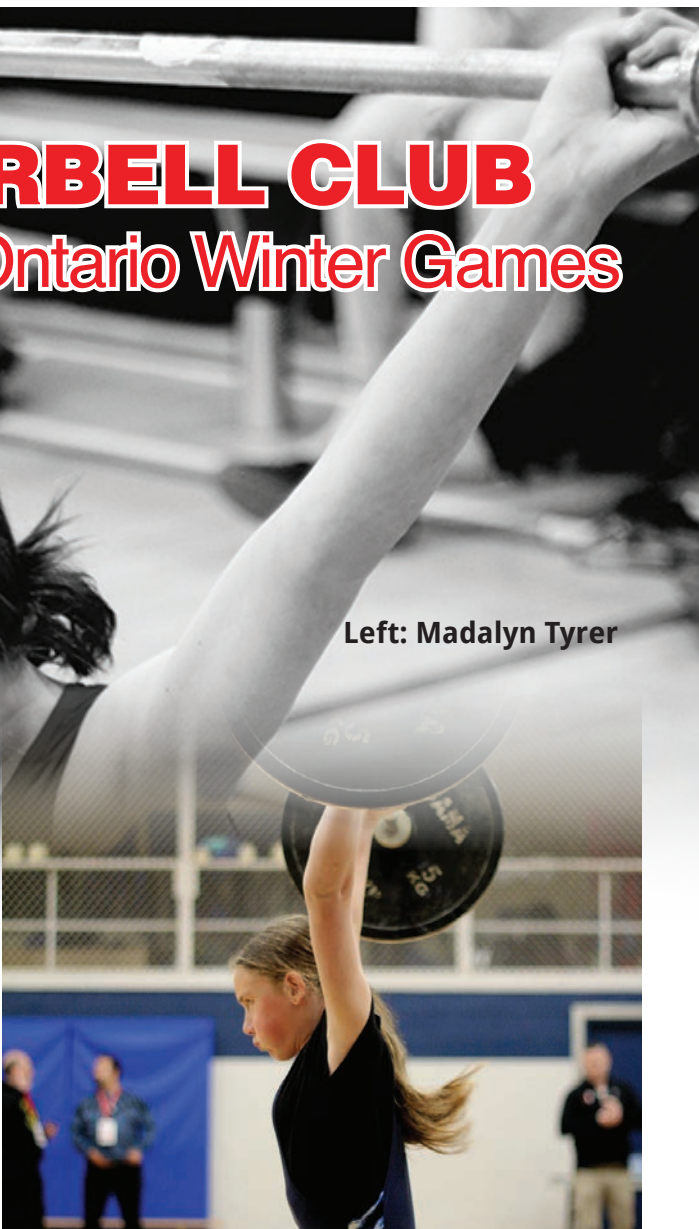
"Winning the gold medal at the Ontario Winter Games was awesome/ It's hard to put into words exactly how I felt. I actually didn't even believe my coach at first when he said I'd won. It was all very overwhelming," Yuke said.

"This was the biggest competition I'd ever been in and it was an honour to just be there. It was an amazing experience and a great feeling to step on that podium surrounded by such fantastic lifters. I also had a lot of people cheering me on because my dad (Sheldon) went to high school in Barry's Bay so there was extended family and friends there as well as my Victory family."

Victory Barbell Club was also well-represented at the Ontario Winter Games by **Madalyn Tyrer, McKenna Vanluven and Ryker Pigden**.

The club is located at 222 Sunrise Drive, just over the Norris Whitney Bridge heading towards Prince Edward County.

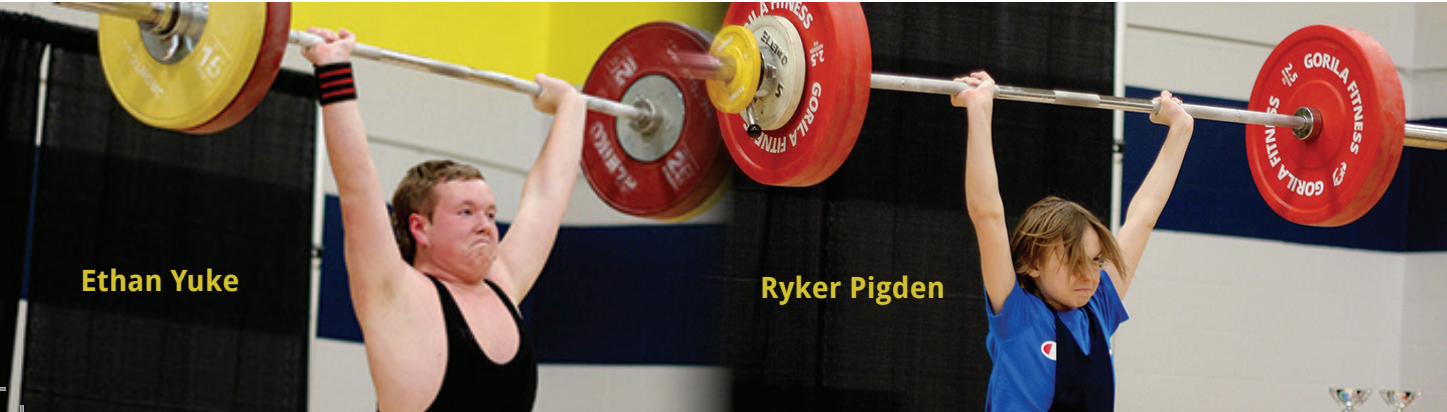
Follow the Victory Barbell Club on Facebook.



Above: Mckenna Vanluven



Victory Barbell members (front, from left) Ryker Pigden, McKenna Vanluven, Madalyn Tyrer, Ethan Yuke, (back) Sarah Condon and coach Gary Lewis at the Ontario Winter Games.



Ethan Yuke

Ryker Pigden

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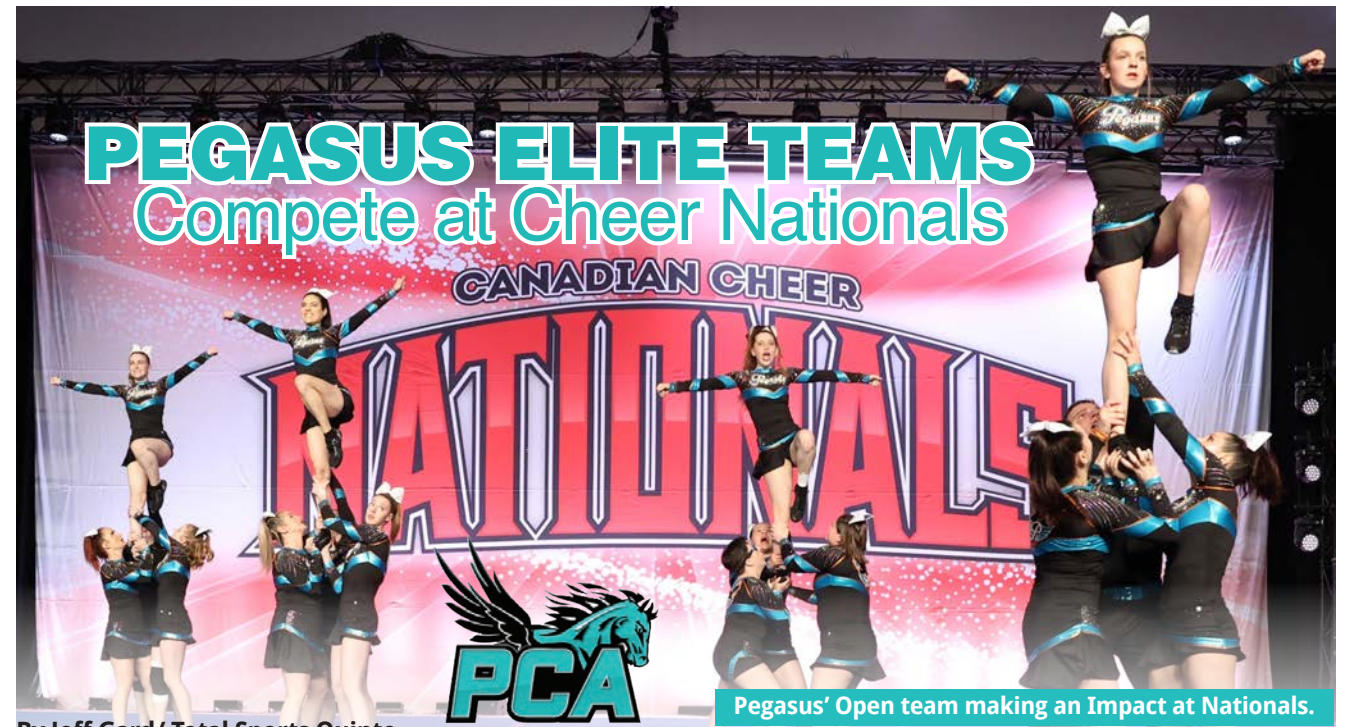


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## PEGASUS ELITE TEAMS Compete at Cheer Nationals



By Jeff Gard/ Total Sports Quinte

**Cheerleading isn't just about the throws, the flips and tumbling.**

It's noticeable, Pegasus Cheer Athletics coach Rachelle Provost says, when the athletes are genuinely loving what they do. "Cheerleading is a difficult sport with a lot happening at once. It takes tremendous amounts of strength, flexibility, time, and practice. When they go out on the mats and have a ton of fun, that's what really makes them stand out against the other teams," Provost said.

Three of Pegasus' All Star Elite teams competed at the 2023 Canadian Cheer National Championships in Niagara Falls from April 14-16. The event attracts 8,000 competitors from across the country, especially Ontario, Quebec and Alberta. Provost said there was even a team from Mexico.

Pegasus' U16 team, Equinox, placed an incredible fourth in the Level 1 division. There were also great results from the Eclipse U12 Level 1 team placing ninth in their division and the Open team (ages 15+), Impact, placing sixth in the Level 3 Non-Tumble division.

With their enjoyment for the sport, Provost said, Pegasus athletes make the sport look easy, even though it's not. "We expect what they put in at practice is what they put on the floor and all three teams did that. We're very proud of their results," Provost said.

These teams have been training since June 2022 with Equinox and Eclipse training in the gym five hours twice a week and Impact three hours once a week. "Nationals was their final competition of the season so it was a wonderful tribute to their hard work," Provost said. "All three of our teams hit zero, which means there were no deductions or legalities. It's a really big deal when you hit zero in the cheerleading world."

It's been a great season for the teams, including Equinox - a team of six - winning gold, silver, and bronze medals at their three other competitions, in addition to Nationals. Eclipse, a team of seven, traveled to Ottawa for a premier bid event called Big East Showdown. "They were competing against teams that were three times their size at some competitions," Provost said of Equinox and Eclipse.

Impact, a team of 17, won two competitions earlier in the season. "We had 116 athletes in our competitive program this year which is our largest registration to date," Provost said, adding that season 10 which starts in May 2023 is expected to exceed those numbers.

Perhaps, Provost said, that's in part to once again being able to offer full programs. Pegasus was shut down for in-person training for 102 days during the first COVID restrictions. "Ever since then families have been wanting activities where their child can get fit, make new friends, and try new things. Socialization and building friendships has been a large part of our program," Provost said.

"Cheerleading is a complete team sport. You need every member on the team to put stunts up and perform a full routine. I think a lot of

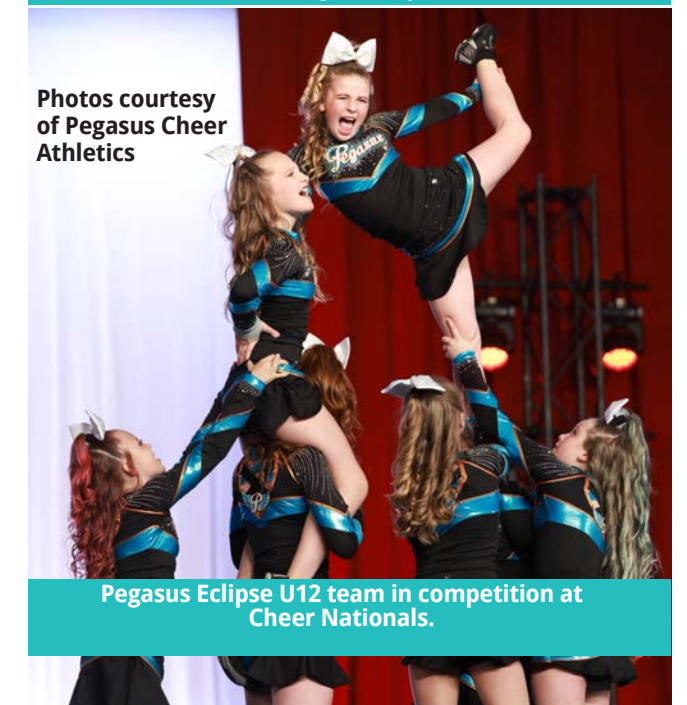
Pegasus' Open team making an Impact at Nationals.

parents are seeing the benefits in team sports post-COVID, having those connections every week, and building on life skills."

**Check out all that Pegasus Cheer Athletics has to offer, including the rebranding of its recreational program, at [pegasuscheer.com](https://pegasuscheer.com)**



Members of the Pegasus Equinox U16 team



Photos courtesy  
of Pegasus Cheer  
Athletics

Pegasus Eclipse U12 team in competition at  
Cheer Nationals.



# QUINTE DOLPHINS

## Ride the tide to keep swim program growing

By Jeff Gard - Total Sports Quinte



The Quinte Dolphins Swim Club is committed to providing the tools necessary for each swimmer to maximize their potential and realize excellence in competitive swimming at all ages and levels.

Our club will work to ensure that our programs are offered in a family-friendly way that provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment. The goal is to foster individual confidence, develop time management skills and self-discipline within the framework of healthy team spirit.

Our focus is on the individual; our vision is for the TEAM

That's the mission statement for the Quinte Dolphins, based in Picton at the Prince Edward Fitness and Aquatic Centre, as a dedicated group of volunteers hopes to see the swim club continue for many years to come.

Board chair Cathy Duggan said the club was treading water, though, as the COVID-19 pandemic and provincial restrictions continued. Longtime coach Jim Anfield, who also took on other tasks such as registrar, treasurer and equipment manager, kept a few swimmers in the pool when possible, but ultimately made the decision to step away, which the club understood. "We didn't have a head coach and then we lost a few executive members as well and we really thought it was going to be over," Duggan said. "Another parent contacted me and said 'I don't want this to be over so would you work with me to try and see if we can save it.'"

That parent, Beth Vader-Kuijpers, also happened to be a former Dolphin and went on to swim and coach at Queen's University. She joined the Quinte club and coached through a season, but couldn't commit long-term due to other commitments. "We were in a very difficult place," Duggan said. "Beth was great and did so much to not only coach but kind of reimagine the program with so many families coming on board, but it just wasn't sustainable for her. It's really difficult to hire coaches. We're a small club, we can't offer someone a full-time salaried position."

That's a struggle shared by a lot of swim clubs, Duggan noted, but fortunately for the Quinte organization Andrea Taylor stepped up and became head coach last summer. "Andrea has been athletic all her life and has been a serious long-distance runner and equestrian athlete,"

Duggan said. "She heard about our search that was not going well."

Duggan said Taylor was willing to get the specific qualifications required to be a swim coach because as a former Dolphins swimmer she knew what a great opportunity the program is for local youth. "If it hadn't been for her being willing to come on board and undertake a really steep learning curve, and Beth is still a mentor to her, we would've been done in terms of our program," Duggan said. "It has meant a lot for us for her to come on board."

Despite some struggles, the Dolphins have managed to grow from about 12 to more than 50. Many are in the development program while about 12 to 14 are competitive swimmers. Their season runs from September until the end of June.

"Beth likes to say it's one of the few sports where it's both individual and it's a team sport at the same time. You swim your own race or your own leg (in a relay), but at the same time there is a very strong sense of team," Duggan said. "My daughter, the first meet she went to, she came home and said 'I totally lost my voice because I've been screaming for my friends, cheering them on.' That's a really great aspect of swimming and it's fun. They encourage each other, they support each other, they root for each other. If it's not fun, what's the point?"

There are Jr. Dolphins development programs for ages 5 to 8 and 7 to 12. The competitive program includes divisions Intro to Competition, Competitive District Team and Competitive Travel Team.

Program descriptions, prices and schedules are all listed on the club's website. You can also follow the Dolphins on Facebook for the latest updates.

As always, the Dolphins organization could use more help. "It's very dependent on volunteers, like so many things, and community support," Duggan said. "We really value this team and we do want it to be around for a long time."

**Check out the Quinte Dolphins at [quintedolphins.ca](http://quintedolphins.ca)**

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