

Quietly confident athlete

Melanie Jans carries country's colors

By COLIN GIBSON
Herald Sports Editor

The young lady exudes confidence. This should not be taken for conceit or an overblown view of self-worth. Rather, it is meant in a complimentary way - in effect, a simple statement of fact.

Melanie Jans, a 16-year-old Grade 11 student at Georgetown District High School, competed recently in the Junior Ladies World squash championships held in New Zealand and more than held her own in the elite competition.

As a member of the Canadian team in singles competition, she finished in the top half of the field of 65 players.

As a member of the Canadian team in team competition (three members to a team, playing individual matches) Melanie helped her mates to a fifth place finish in a field of eight teams.

Melanie is no stranger to top level competition and has won Canadian titles in two divisions.

She was the under-14 national champion and has twice won under-16 Canadian titles. The most recent national win came last May



Melanie Jans

in Ottawa.

Melanie was introduced to the sport by her parents, Murray and Audrey, who wanted to get their daughter involved in a sport which

would provide lifelong enjoyment.

A 7-year member of the Georgetown Racquet Club, Melanie at first didn't enjoy the game, mainly because her parents were coaching her and she felt a certain amount of pressure to succeed.

Once she began to take lessons, however, she took to the game like the proverbial duck to water.

Melanie plays the softball version of squash because she finds it more technically challenging than hardball squash.

She has no ambition of turning professional in the sport basically because, as she puts it, "There's no money in it."

She enjoys the game because it allows her competitive spirit free rein and it is also an excellent way

of keeping fit.

She is coached by Barbara Digens, club professional at Mayfair Lakeshore Racquet Club in Toronto, who is a former national coach for the English Senior Ladies team.

Melanie still has three years of junior competition left and is eyeing even more national titles. She also is hoping she will again be selected to represent her country in international competition.

Squash is one of Melanie's many - and varied - interests, but it could

lead to a scholarship offer from an American university. At university, Melanie intends on majoring in psychology.

She has played on varsity badminton and senior girls basketball teams for GDHS, enjoys softball and teaches jazz dancing at Halton Hills School of Dancing.

The young lady has a right to be confident and sure of herself. Her athletic accomplishments, to date, set her apart but also represent a striving for excellence that we all might envy.

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