

# SPORTS

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## Hickingbottom hurls fire at provincials

**EAMONN MAHER**  
emaher@theifp.ca

Pretty amazing baseball accomplishment by Toronto Blue Jays' outfielder Steve Pearce last week: two walk-off grand-slam home runs in a four-day span.

But Halton Hawks-raised Maddie Hickingbottom also turned in a historic performance of her own at the recent Provincial Women's Softball Association Bantam (under-16) Championships in Stratford, in which she threw two perfect games during a long week of work on the mound.

The Glen Williams fireballer, who turns 16 on Aug. 16, tossed six complete games in her team's 7-0 run to the Ontario title, ringing up 50 strikeouts over 38 innings - remarkably without walking a single batter to earn tournament MVP honours.

One of Hickingbottom's perfect games came in a semifinal 12-0 win over Brampton. A spokesperson for the PWSA said that nobody within the organization can recall a pitcher achieving the feat twice at the Grand Championships.

Hickingbottom allowed just two hits in a 1-0 Oakville victory over the Vaughan Vikings in the final.

"Those were my first two perfect games, so I did surprise myself with how well I pitched," said Hickingbottom, who has five different pitches in her arsenal, including two change-ups, a fastball, a drop ball and her out pitch, the riseball.



Contributed by Hickingbottom family

**Provincial Women's Softball Association executive Don McConnell presents Glen Williams resident Maddie Hickingbottom with the tournament MVP award.**

"It was very exciting to do that, but my teammates made a lot of great plays to help me achieve something like that. Everything was working well."

On Monday, Hickingbottom was in Lloydminster, Alta., suiting up for the Mississauga South West Hurricanes at the Softball Canada Midget (under-18) Championships, where the mound will be located further away from the plate than she's used to.

Then she'll be driven to Delta, B.C., for the national bantam champion-

ship tournament the following week with the Angels, who placed third in last year's event in Montreal.

Entering her Grade 11 year at Georgetown District High School with a 90 per cent average, Hickingbottom has attended all-star camps in the U.S. and already attracted the attention of a number of NCAA programs, but has set her sights on an Ivy League school.

"That's my goal," she stated matter-of-factly by phone from Lloydminster.

"They can't really offer me anything right now because of their rules, so I will try to get myself in front of their people so they can see me pitch."

Hickingbottom has practised almost daily since the age of 10 with her dad Craig and mom Elke says her daughter "gets very grumpy" if she misses a pitching session, even during the winter months. Maddie stepped up her commitment this past winter with an even more intense fitness program and consistently hits 60 miles per hour with her fastball and riseball.

"I've just been really working hard since I decided I wanted to become a good pitcher," she added. "This is the first year I've taken it to another level and it's really paid off."

Another Georgetown resident, Shea Vassos, plays for the Angels as a pitcher, second baseman and shortstop. She tossed three innings in a victory over Tavistock at the provincials.



**Sean Cate of Georgetown earned the gold medal in high jump at the recent Francophone Games in the Ivory Coast.**

Kelsey Serviss photo

## Georgetown's Cate leaps to gold at Francophone Games

The timing was just right for local resident Sean Cate as he soared to a personal-best height and the gold medal in the high jump competition late last month at the Francophone Games held in Abidjan, Ivory Coast.

Twenty-three-year-old Cate joined the 2.20-metre club to take top spot at the Francophone Games, edging out the runner-up from Cameroon by two centimetres.

The six-foot-five Speed River Track & Field Club member was a basketball standout at a North Caroli-

na Christian high school who only took up high jumping four years ago when he shocked coaches at the University of Guelph by jumping 2.06 metres in basketball shoes.

Cate is now ranked fifth among senior men in the country by Athletics Canada and has qualified to compete in the World University Games in Taiwan later this month.

He graduated from the University of Guelph's political science program last year and is now working on his master's degree in management there.



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