

UNDERDOG TEAM WINS BRONZE AT PROVINCIAL WINTER GAMES

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It was midway through the provincial Special Olympics bonspiel when Mikey Crane, a visually impaired curler, made a key takeout. Crane was already playing without his usual athlete assistant, who had shattered his kneecap prior to the provincials.

A few shots later skip Kim Sullivan's final stone would secure two points for the Acton Rocks team, leading to a high five between Sullivan and lead Scott Foot. Watching from the sidelines, coach Janice Foot was thrilled. "We're really playing like a team," she thought.

It had been a little more than a year since the team, which also includes third Mark Humenyk, had played in its first bonspiel. But despite its unusual path to the Provincial Winter Games in Sault Ste. Marie, the Acton squad, part of Halton Hills Special Olympics, defied the odds to win the bronze medal.

Though the members

of the rink had been curling for seven years, they had never played in a bonspiel until last year. They had never even curled as a team with defined positions.

When the team's coach stepped down a few years ago, the program might have ended. Though the number of curlers in the program had dwindled from 20 to four, Foot stepped in simply to keep the team going.

"It's a small family, but everybody is dedicated to the sport of curling," she said.

Though she was a qualified Special Olympics volunteer, Foot had to get her coaching certificate to be the team's coach of record.

So when she entered the rink in the qualifier for provincials last year, she was really just hoping to get the team some game experience. They got two games in before a freezing rain storm forced the cancellation of the rest of qualifier.

As per the guidelines, with the qualifier cancelled, the Central Ontario representatives were determined by a draw



Acton Rocks photo

The Acton Rocks curling rink won the bronze medal at the Special Olympics Provincial Winter Games in Sault Ste. Marie. The team didn't play in its first bonspiel until last year, but beat Collingwood to claim the bronze medal. Team members are: (from left) Mark Humenyk, Scott Foot, coach Janice Foot, Mikey Crane and Kim Sullivan.

and the Acton rink was among those selected.

The team began working on its game to prepare for provincials. Two new curlers to the program this year, Jason Jim and Jeff MacDonald, helped the team with its preparations.

At provincials, the team qualified for the semifinals. Though it lost that game, it rebounded to beat Collingwood in the bronze-medal game. What impressed Foot the most was how her team handled the victory.

"They weren't jumping around and celebrating. They were very humble. It was really about integrity and sportsman-

ship," the coach said. "People were asking us as we came off the ice, 'Who won?' As a Special Olympics coach, I wear my emotions on my sleeve. I started to cry."

Foot said the Acton Curling Club has been very supportive in providing ice time for the team. That proved to be important as the team trained leading up to provincials. And their extra time on the ice paid off.

"To come home with the bronze medal was exhilarating to say the least," Foot said. "They really had to become a team. We're very proud of them. They truly stole the hearts of so many people at the Games."



Ryan McCullough photo

Sandy Chapman will be inducted into the Toronto Rock's Hall of Fame Apr. 5. The Acton native won four of his five NLL championships with the team during his 17-year career.

ACTON'S SANDY CHAPMAN TO JOIN TORONTO ROCK HALL OF FAME

Acton lacrosse athlete Sandy Chapman will join the Toronto Rock Hall of Fame.

Chapman will be one of five players inducted prior to the Rock's April 5 game against the Buffalo Bandits. Chapman, the most recently retired of the inductees, will be honoured with a special pre-game tribute highlighting his playing career.

Chapman played 194 games with the Rock, the third most in franchise history, and he also has fourth highest all-time ranking in loose balls with 783. Chapman won four of his five National Lacrosse League championships in Toronto, where he

played 13 of his 17 NLL seasons.

The Rock drafted Chapman in the first round of the 2001 NLL draft.

Chapman, Kasey Beirnes, Colin Doyle, Josh Sanderson and Aaron Wilson will join the six inaugural inductees, who were honoured in 2014.

"We have assembled our second class of great players worthy of induction into the Rock Hall of Fame," said Jamie Dawick, the team's owner, president and general manager. "The five players being inducted are being recognized for their tremendous contributions to this franchise and were all members of championship teams."

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