

Acton's royal couple of jousting is now on top of the world

Shane and Cassandra Adams have solidified their position as the royal family of jousting.

The Acton couple brought the world's jousting titles under one roof as they swept the men's and women's division at the U.S. International Jousting Championships in Estes Park, Colorado. It was the second consecutive world title for Shane while Cassandra won the inaugural women's event. Their performance also helped Canada tie England for the team championship.

The couple had many obstacles standing in their path, not to mention an opponent charging at them on horseback with a lance looking to knock them to the ground. Cassandra broke her hand while practising a month before the competition and considered pulling out of the event, "but once I was there we had gone too far not to compete," she said. "I just battled with it and worked through it."

Meanwhile, Shane's grandfa-



Shane Adams and his wife Cassandra recently returned from Colorado where they won the men's and women's titles at the U.S. International Jousting Championships.

ther, Bob Kovarik, died a week before he was to leave for Colorado. He told his family he was going to win for his grandfather but things didn't look good after the first day of competition. Shane trailed by 28 points but rallied on the second day of the competition to win by eight.

"I held the trophy up and said 'This one's for you,'" Shane said,

describing the awards ceremony. "Then I started crying."

The competition is comprised of four events. In rings spearing, competitors attempt to gather hanging three-inch rings on their lance. In spear throwing, they throw at targets from horseback and in shield quentin hitting they attempt to hit stationary targets. But it's the actual combat jousting

that pits the competitors directly against one another, often leaving them battered and bruised.

It's also the event that Shane excels in and that allowed him to make up the points on the final day as he went head-to-head with the leaders. His performance earned him many compliments from his competitors, including one e-mail he received that said "you hit like a truck."

For Cassandra her rise has been quick, considering she just began jousting last year. Though she has trained horses for many years, jousting is a new challenge.

"I just enjoy the skill of horsemanship, trying to control a horse at 25 km-h with a lance and a shield in your hands."

Now that both have reached the top of their field, they are not shy about giving away their secrets. In fact, they have started a jousting school where they hope to continue to support the growth of the sport. They already have four students and numerous more inquiries. Next year they hope to host their own competition with

competitors from across the world. They also continue to perform their medieval show across Canada and the U.S.

But their ride to the top was not made alone. With jousting hardly a mainstream sport, Shane said there is little sponsorship but many costs involved. That means he and Cassandra rely on the support of those around them.

The trip to Colorado, with a side trip to Maine to perform a show, took them away from home for a month. While they were gone Shane's father George looked after their farm and his mom, Annette, looked after their daughter, Desiree. Shane's boss, Vince Morello at BBM Excavating/Bonfield Construction gave him the time off work. Ralph Reinders lent them the horses they rode in the competition and Halton Hills Mayor Marilyn Serjeantson and Staff Sgt. Peter Whitaker of the Halton Regional Police teamed up to provide a kevlar vest, a vital piece of equipment in preventing injuries.

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

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