

# SPORTS & LEISURE

## Andrews ready for the world(s)

**EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

Star shot-putter Kaitlyn Andrews of Georgetown has earned a trip to the World Junior Track & Field Championships early next month in China, although she joined the ranks of the last-minute club to get there.

Andrews, who turned 18 yesterday (Tuesday), was expected to win her second consecutive national shot put title easily—which she did—with a toss nearly two metres farther than the runner-up. But the challenge at Sherbrooke, Que. for the recent Acton High School grad didn't come from another competitor; Andrews had to beat the international standard of 14.40 metres in order to qualify for the worlds, to be held Aug. 15-20 in Beijing.

Her personal best in the shot put is 14.59 metres, set back in April at the Penn Relays, but Andrews had just a June 1-July 23 window set by Athletics Canada in which to meet the qualifying standard in official competition. She hadn't been able to surpass the standard heading into the nationals and her chances didn't look good after three fouls and successful throws of 13.65m and 13.85m. But Andrews came through with a toss measuring 14.44m on her final attempt to qualify and will leave Aug. 8 with 29 other Canadians to attend the world championships.

"My goal is to achieve a new personal best, and to attempt to make the top 12 (at the worlds)," she said. "Competition at the world level is so high and the top competitors are so good that I have to be realistic in viewing my chances. I'm going to Beijing to gain experience and to compete against the best junior athletes in the world."

Andrews will get little time to recover from her overseas jaunt as she begins classes at Stephen F. Austin State University in Texas in late August.

*(Eamonn Maher can be reached at emaher@independentfreepress.com)*



Acton's Kaitlyn Andrews (centre) receives her gold medal for winning the girls' shot put at the Canadian Track & Field Championships in Sherbrooke, Que. Joining the two-time national junior champ on the podium are silver medalist Dominique Thibault of the Ottawa Lions and third-place finisher Julie Labonte of Quebec.

*Submitted photo*



Never having competed at a national-level meet before, Halton Hills Blue Fins' club member broke through on the weekend in Calgary, picking up three gold medals and a bronze.

*Photo courtesy Mike Ridewood*

## Blue Fins have a golden girl

**EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

For the first time in the organization's 25-year history, the Halton Hills Blue Fins swim club can boast a national champion—times three.

Twelve-year-old Tasha Truscott churned her way to three gold medals and a bronze at the Age Group National Swimming Championships in Calgary this past weekend, turning the heads of some Swim Canada officials looking for future Olympians.

Truscott, who hadn't returned home to Georgetown by press time Tuesday, was attending her first national-level meet in Calgary. After finishing third in the 50m freestyle on Thursday, she reeled off race victories in the 100m butterfly (1:05.97), 200m butterfly (2:30.19) and 100m free. Her time in the 100m fly just missed breaking a Canadian record that has stood for 15 years.

"Everything worked out. The preparations we made to travel out there and in the months leading up to the meet really paid off," said fourth-year Blue Fins' coach Rob Masson, a former national team swimmer himself. "We discussed before leaving about how things like the altitude change and jet

lag could be detrimental to performance. You're supposed to drink one litre of water for every hour that you're in the air, and that's a lot of water for someone Tasha's size. But she and her teammates adapted really well."

Masson noted that understandable nervousness may have played a role in Truscott's bronze-medal effort in the 100m free because it was the first final of the meet, just after opening ceremonies in front of a large crowd. The Blue Fins train out of the 25m Georgetown Indoor Pool, so Masson entered the team in a meet in London a week prior to the nationals in order to adjust to the 50m lengths they would encounter at the Talisman Centre in Calgary.

"Tasha worked really hard all year and her times steadily dropped, which is a good thing and a bad thing because you can only keep improving your personal bests for so long," the head coach said. "But we kept the work level up heading into the nationals because we didn't want the aerobic fitness levels to fall off."

Also representing the Blue Fins in Calgary was Elizabeth Skuriat, who beat her previous-best time in the 1,500m freestyle by 14 seconds. The 12-year-old placed 18th in that event

in a time of 20 minutes, 24.94 seconds, which Masson said is an incredible feat considering the altitude factor. Skuriat finished 20th in both the 400m individual medley (6:13.30) and 200m freestyle (2:30.64). She was 29th in the 200m backstroke in 2:55.02.

Billy Pavlopoulos pulled off a 14th-place result in the boys' 14-and-under 50m breaststroke in a time of 35.04 seconds despite having his training hampered by a shoulder ailment. He also placed 22nd in the 100m (1:19.51) and the 200m (3:00.47) breaststroke events.

Blue Fin member Marc Laforet recovered from having his appendix removed just 10 weeks ago and was entered in six events in the 14-and-under boys' age group. His best results came in the 100m butterfly (25th, 1:10.24) and the 50m free (27th, 27.85).

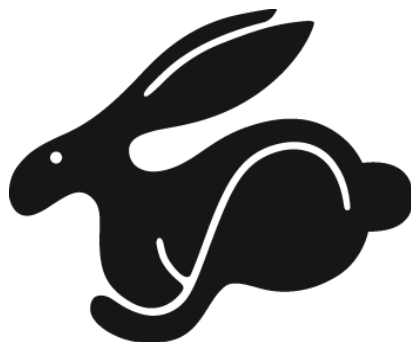
Another highlight for the club was a bronze-medal-winning performance by the 11-12 girls' 4x200m freestyle relay team at the Ontario championships earlier this month in Ottawa. That relay foursome consisted of Sophia Cieplucha, Truscott, Chelsea Burton and Skuriat.

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