

SPORTS & LEISURE



BMXer on a roll

Local BMX racer Kyle Pearson doesn't believe in off-seasons and has been tearing up tracks at a couple of big races recently. The 16-year-old finished first in all 11 FourCross races at the Toronto International Bike Show to earn a pair of gold medals, while also getting a bronze against adult pros from across North America in the BMX Cruiser class. After having won gold at the show the past two years Pearson will now have to race Pro next next year. He also recently finished second in the Junior Sprint category and third in a scratch race at the CANAMQUE Challenge at the Forest City Velodrome in London. The Grade 10 Christ the King student is gearing up for an international event in Victoria, B.C. May 27-30, the Canadian championships in Bromont, Que. July 1 and the world finals in B.C. July 24-30 in Victoria. *Photo courtesy www.dropmachine.com*

Midget Rebels tops in Halton

Georgetown District High School's midget girls' volleyball team completed a full-court sweep of the Halton championships by the Rebels' program as they brought home the gold medal in the regional tournament held recently at Burlington Central.

GDHS's senior and junior girls also captured the Halton titles for

their respective leagues in 2006-07.

The Midget Rebels had little trouble in their round-robin pool play, easily defeating Christ the King and T.A. Blakelock in straight sets. This gave the Rebels the number-one seed, which would match them up with fourth-ranked Assumption.

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Atom Raider hockey player finds success elsewhere on ice

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

As captain of the Georgetown Raiders' Atom additional entry rep minor hockey team, 10-year-old Matt Carr is regarded as a strong-skating centre who relishes the bodychecking aspect of the game.

And now the Grade 5 George Kennedy Public School student has found another sport in which he can put his talents on blades and ice to use. He took up short-track speed skating last year and became the first member of the Milton Speed Skating Club to record times fast enough to qualify for an Ontario Cup event, which was held in Brockville last month, finishing 10th out of 30 competitors in the Bantam boys' division.

For someone whose hockey commitments keep him from practising as often as his short-track opponents, Carr was thrilled with the result.

"I've made a commitment to to hockey first—that's my priority—and then comes speedskating. I really enjoy doing both," he said. "(Speedskating) has helped me a lot with my skating for hockey. I don't find it much different, but in speedskating with your stride you have to push out to the sides. Sometimes you trip because the skates are so much longer. You get used to it."

Although minimal body contact is permitted in the often-frantic short-track oval races, the sharp, long blades and high-speed wipeouts can lead to serious injuries. More than one competitor was stretchered off at the Brockville meet, Carr's mother Dawna said, but she pointed out that safety is a primary concern in the short-track community and that Matt could just as easily get hurt playing hockey.

"The physical side of short-track is what sells it, but that's not what it's meant to be and isn't what it's all about. It's really a tactical sport," said Todd Landon, director of sport development for the Ontario Speed Skating Association and founder of the Milton club three years ago.

"It's not a timed event like long-track speed skating. The first person who crosses the line wins, and like in hockey, positioning and strategy with your teammates is very important. For a young skater, Matt's intuitive. He knows where he needs to be and what strategy to use in a pack situation. He's also shown he can compete at a high level."

Carr's specialty is the 500m distance, for which he holds a personal-best qualifying time of 1:04.23, and he also competes in the 222m, 333m and 666m events. His combined point total from those events earned him an overall bronze medal at the Western Ontario qualifier in Brampton earlier this year and he set best times in three of the four races in order to qual-



Matthew Carr of Georgetown became the first Milton Speedskating Club member to ever qualify for an Ontario Cup race after placing third in the overall points standings for the Bantam division at a regional meet in Brampton, scooping up a bronze medal.

Photo by Eamonn Maher

ify for the Ontario Cup in Brockville, which he called a great learning experience in his first exposure to elite-level competition.

"I did improve my times and the pressure wasn't that bad because after you do your first race, you don't have much time to wait until the next heat," Carr added. "It's just kind of weird with all the people staring at you and all the timers beside the track."

Due to playoff commitments to his Raider hockey team, which is currently facing Ancaster for the Ontario Minor Hockey Association Atom AE Group 1 championship, Carr missed an Ontario Cup short-track event in Quinte and was ineligible to compete in the provincial championships in Ottawa, although he would like to race at an upcoming regional meet in Kitchener. He has also registered for a summer camp in Cambridge in August and moves up to the Midget age group next year.

Carr's six-year-old sister Kelsey has also taken up short-track racing and picked up a silver medal in Brampton in the Cradle Division and won a 500m race at a mini-meet at the Dofasco club. She competes in the 111m and 222m events as well. Three other Georgetown residents, Philip, Lydia and Charlotte Geng, have enjoyed fine seasons in 2006-07.

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