

# SPORTS & LEISURE

## Sports Hall of Fame adds five new members

**EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

The second-annual Halton Hills Sports Museum Hall of Fame gala induction ceremony welcomed five new members this past Thursday and also produced some surprising revelations.

Three retired athletes— star gymnast Katie Rowland, National Hockey Leaguer Adam Bennett and standout squash player Melanie Jans— as well as builders John Toebes (Acton house league minor hockey) and Gerry Ockenden (Acton Aqua Ducks' swimming) received their awards in front of about 200 spectators at the John Elliott Theatre.

Ockenden, the current public school board trustee for the area, founded the Aqua Ducks' swim club more than 20 years ago and countless youths have graduated from the program.

He said that developing Olympic-class swimmers wasn't necessarily the main goal of the club, but that he was fairly confident that his pupils would turn out to be "proud and productive citizens in our society."

What might surprise some former Aqua Ducks is that Ockenden literally became a swim coach by the book.

"He can't swim. A lot of people don't know that," chuckled Ockenden's daughter Julie, who joined her dad as Aqua Ducks' coach after finishing her competitive career.

"He just decided that there were kids in Acton who needed somewhere to stay out of trouble and he could help out with that. He wanted to make it affordable to swim and I think he did an wonderful job over the years of keeping it going and making it fun and competi-

tive."

The 34-year-old Jans, who now resides in Vancouver, earned several Canadian championships and three Pan-American Games gold medals in squash. She served as guest speaker for the ceremony, discussing her experiences and what characteristics can lead to success in life, while also recalling memories her fellow athlete inductees for 2008.

"I remember being in awe of Adam Bennett in high school and I used to teach ballet to little Katie Rowland when she was like, this big, and I just remember her springing around the floor, leaping up, I swear, above our heads and I was thinking, 'God, this is scary. She's going to be awesome.'"

Toebes, who turned 82 on the eve of the ceremony, helped establish the annual peewee house league tournament in Acton and along with late wife Martha formed the backbone of the organization for many years.

"My first impression was that he was definitely here for the kids and he was always with his wife for the house league events," said John Archibald, who nominated Toebes for the hall of fame.

"John was a really quiet guy (but) he was in the background doing all the leg-work. He was the backbone of house league hockey in Acton. He just loved kids in general and loved to see the looks on their faces when they scored a goal."

Bennett turned a superb three-year stint with the Ontario Hockey League's Sudbury Wolves into a sixth-overall selection by the NHL's Chicago Blackhawks in 1989. And while a 1994 knee injury derailed his career, the 37-year-old Georgetown native remains immersed in the sport through his popu-



The 2008 Hall of Fame inductees for the Halton Hills Sports Museum were presented with their awards at a ceremony Thursday at the John Elliott Theatre in Georgetown. Pictured above (forefront, moving clockwise) are: John Toebes, Melanie Jans, Adam Bennett, Katie Rowland and Gerry Ockenden. The award being held by the inductees was designed and produced by Andrew Kuntz of Glen Williams Glass.

Photo by Ted Brown

lar 3 on 3 Hockey leagues and by coaching his daughters, Kaitlyn and Jillian.

"I want to thank my parents and family, because an athlete's dedication is matched only by their parents' dedication," said Bennett of his mom Gail and dad Keith.

"The long trips to the arenas, to the gym— my dedication was their dedication, and I say thanks mom and dad for doing that for me."

Rowland's dedication consisted of training 20 to 30 hours a week for all but three weeks of the year, starting off with the Halton Hills Gymnastics Club at age seven.

Now 27, she became a national champion in 1998 and went on to have a spectacular career at Penn State University, which included three perfect 10 scores in

competition for the Nittany Lions.

"Representing Canada at the World Championships and the Commonwealth Games and competing in 10 national championships was a thrill for me," said the legal assistant at a Washington, D.C. law firm.

"During my senior meet I scored my 10 on beam. It was already such an emotional day to begin with, knowing it would be the last time I'd be competing at Penn State. Gymnastics is about striving for perfection and achieving the ultimate goal of performing a perfect 10."

Pictures and profiles of the inductees will be displayed in the HHSM's Resource Centre, located in the upstairs hall of the Mold-Masters SportsPlex, later this year.

## Slumping Bulldogs lose crucial ground to Oakville Buzz

**EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

A three-game losing streak with just a week left in the Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. B regular season schedule has drastically changed the playoff outlook for the Halton Hills Bulldogs.

And what's stinging the most about the team's two most recent losses is that the rival Oakville Buzz pulled off third-period comebacks over the Bulldogs to get the inside track on the South East Division title.

On Thursday at home, the 'Dogs held leads of 4-0 and

6-2 on the Buzz, yet lost 8-6 in overtime. Halton Hills also carried a 5-4 lead into Sunday night's rematch at the Glen Abbey Rec Centre before three quick goals put the hosts back in charge, eventually scoring a 9-7 victory.

The 13-5-0 Bulldogs have been in second place in the OLA's East Conference through much of the season but slipped to fourth after the losses to 14-3-0 Oakville. The top eight teams in the conference make the playoffs and while Halton Hills could still grab third spot with a couple of wins to close out the schedule, a first-round matchup with the Barrie Tornado is also a possibility.

The 'Dogs will close out the regular season with home

games on Thursday against last-place Mississauga at 8 p.m. and a crucial contest with their South East Division foe, the 14-4-0 Mimico Mountaineers, on Saturday beginning at 7:30 p.m.

Thursday's loss to the Buzz was the first defeat at home for the Bulldogs in eight starts. Evan Whillans (2), Kody Lyons, Pat Saunders, Kyle Davis and Ryan Haynes scored for the home side.

Local resident Brendan MacDonald made his debut with the Bulldogs Sunday after being acquired from Toronto Jr. A Beaches and scored his first goal just over

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