

SPORTS & LEISURE

Boycott strikes gold— five times— in China

EAMONN MAHER
Staff Writer

Just having returned from her first trip to the Special Olympics World Summer Games in China, gold-medal-winning rhythmic gymnast Emily Boycott is already making travel plans for when the event will be held next, in 2011.

“Yeah, I want to go to Greece,” said the 24-year-old Acton-area resident on Monday afternoon.

“(Because) I really liked everything about China.”

Boycott’s performances in Shanghai last week earned her five gold medals, the most for any Canuck competitor at the Games, which drew over 7,000 athletes from around the planet.

And as it turned out, audience participation became mandatory in the emotionally charged Shanghai International Gymnastics Centre as the capacity crowds, which included busloads of Chinese schoolchildren and the relentless Canadian Cheer Squads, clapped and sang in time to the athletes’ music.

Boycott’s routines in the rope, ball, hoop and ribbon disciplines, performed to songs such as Shania Twain’s ‘I Feel Like a Woman’ and ‘Mama Mia,’ earned her first-place billing by the judges and therefore she also earned the all-around gold.

It was no easy feat, however, as her lone opponent in Division 4— the most difficult of the categories for Special Olympics rhythmic gymnastics— was an accomplished competitor as well. Slovakia’s Gizela Billikova led Boycott on points in the rope event after the first day on the floor, yet the latter prevailed as the competition progressed.

“I had to get used to the floor, but it was okay, not bad,” she added. “I wasn’t nervous at all.”

“Well, I was nervous,” interjected her mom Debbie, who was an assistant coach for Team Canada’s rhythmic team, winners of 25 medals in all.

“The little girl from Slovakia— well, actually, she is older than Emily— they were a mother-daughter team too, so that was kind of neat to see. The spirit of the Games is very warm and friendly, with everyone high-fiving each other afterward.”

Emily’s confidence in front of the several hundred

spectators seemed to grow as the competition went on, as she posted a sparkling eight-out-of-10 score in the final event, the ribbon, which isn’t her specialty routine.

Away from the gym floor, the Oakville Butterflies’ club member said that the opening and closing ceremonies were spectacular, as were their hosts during their initial three-day stay in Hangzhou. Escorted by police, interpreters and Games’ volunteers everywhere they went, the 83 Canadian athletes and their supporters were greeted warmly by their hosts and treated like celebrities.

“A little boy wanted my Canadian flag, so I gave it to him,” Emily recalled. “There were so many little children.”

Also making the trip to Shanghai were her father, David, sister Amy and brother Matt, who proposed to his longtime girlfriend Courtney Norman of Acton on their visit to the Great Wall of China.

“Everything over there was so well organized, the facilities were amazing and no expense was spared to make the event successful,” added Debbie. “You can see it did a lot to raise awareness for people with special needs in that country.”

Recovering from jet lag and a mild cold, Emily isn’t taking much time off to rest on her accomplishments, although she’s spending quality time with her new orange kitten Asian, a congratulatory gift from sister Beckie. Boycott ice-skated just a day after returning home and has started up her swimming and rhythmic gymnastics workouts this week as well.

(Eamonn Maher can be reached at emaher@independent-freepress.com)

Emily Boycott brought home many mementos and great memories from her participation in the recent Special Olympics World Summer Games in China, including five gold medals.

Photo by Ted Brown



Winning weekend pulls Raiders closer to top spot

A couple of weekend victories extended the Georgetown Raiders’ winning streak to four games as they continue to chase the Hamilton Red Wings for top spot in the OHA Provincial Jr. A Hockey League’s West Division.

The 9-3-1 Raiders are just two points behind the Wings with a game in hand after dramatically rallying to beat the Oakville Blades 6-5 on Saturday and dominating the host Streetsville Derbys 5-2 Sunday evening.

Down 5-2 in the early stages of the third period against Oakville, Georgetown charged up the 450 spectators on hand with three goals in two minutes and 40 seconds

to tie the score and then eventually won in a shootout over the third-place Blades.

Rookie forward Lukas Ciotti scored twice in regulation and delivered the winner in the shootout for the home side, with Anthony Luciani, Justin Lacey and Zak Ray also tallying for the Raiders.

“To come back like that shows strong character and I don’t know how many times we’ve done it this year— four or five maybe,” said Raider head coach James Richmond.

“There are some things we’re worrying about, like special teams and defensive zone coverage, and overall just working on the team game. Turnovers are going to happen

to us and you just try to limit them.”

The Raiders trailed by a goal early on versus Streetsville, but slowly took control of the contest, leading 3-1 after 40 minutes and outshooting the Derbys to 35-21. The power play went 2-for-5 after an 0-for-7 showing at home Saturday.

Mark McGowan scored twice for the Raiders, with singles added by Lacey, Luciani and Jeremy Wick.

Goalie Johnathan McQueen was in net for both Georgetown wins and improved his record to 6-2-1 on the season. His tandem mate, Paul Claxton, practised for the first time Monday since an appendectomy Sept.

28 and isn’t expected back in the lineup for a couple of weeks. Forward Fred Gervasi was also back skating this week after suffering a knee injury last month.

Winger Kyle Essery will miss the next two games due to a checking-from-behind major penalty incurred on Sunday.

This Saturday, the Raiders will face the injury-depleted Derbys again starting at 7:30 p.m. at Alcott Arena. King City’s Jeff O’Neill, who has yet to sign with an NHL club after a couple of seasons with the Toronto Maple Leafs, will be on hand to drop the ceremonial faceoff and sign autographs. The Raiders will travel to Buffalo on Monday.



**GEORGETOWN
TOYOTA**

GAME OF THE WEEK

**GEORGETOWN JR. A
RAIDERS**
vs
STREETSVILLE DERBYS

**Saturday, October 20, 2007
7:30 pm**

Mold-Masters SportsPlex (Alcott Arena)

GEORGETOWN JUNIOR “A”



www.georgetownraidersjra.com