

# SPORTS & LEISURE

## Nurse's stock rising in national rowing circles

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Staff Writer

Awaking for her usual 5:15 a.m. rowing practice hasn't been that difficult for Georgetown's Cristy Nurse recently, especially with the results that all of the hard work has produced.

Nurse took up rowing just two-and-a-half years ago, yet the 21-year-old has quickly developed into one of the top female prospects for an Olympic sport in which Canada actually ranks amongst the best in the world.

Only Great Britain (six) earned more medals than Canada (four) at the recent Summer Olympics in Beijing.

Nurse and new pairs' partner Nora Griffiths of Burlington stroked to victory in the women's under-23 division at last weekend's National Rowing Championships at London's Lake Fanshawe, as representatives of Ontario and Mississauga's Don Rowing Club.

Seeded second heading into the race, Nurse and Griffiths finished the 2,000-metre course in a time of 7:43.42 to win by over two seconds as Ontario took all three podium spots.

"There's a national coaching panel that ranks the teams and we were seeded second, and we were happy and surprised just to be ranked that high, since we only got together as a team in June," said Nurse, who is in the first of three years in the University of Ottawa's Law School graduate program.

Last October, Nurse was a member of the Don club's women's fours team that shocked the 32-boat club division field at the prestigious Head of the Charles Regatta in Boston, winning the three-mile race with a late charge to the line.

Griffiths, a business student at McMaster University in Hamilton, was released from the Canadian under-23 team this past spring



Burlington's Nora Griffiths (left) and Cristy Nurse of Georgetown teamed up to win the women's under-23 pairs' race at last week's National Rowing Championships in London, Ont. Nurse, 21, is working her way toward consideration for Canada's national team.  
*Submitted photo*

and began training at the Don Rowing Club, where she was soon paired up with Nurse by head coach Paul Westbury.

"Nora shopped around, and she knew that we had won the Charles, so she figured there must have been some rowers at the Don who were reasonably good, and at the NRCs, we showed what we're capable of," added Nurse.

"I'm so excited to be rowing with Nora because she's such a highly motivated athlete and she's going to university like I do, so it's really worked well. It's my first year of law school, so it's tricky balancing the huge volume of reading that's required and get-

ting in enough practice, but it makes you manage your time better, and really, the 5:15 a.m. practices aren't much of a problem to get motivated for."

A former basketball player for the University of Guelph's varsity women's team, the 5-foot-11 Nurse now competes with the University of Ottawa Gee Gees' rowing squad, and will train throughout the winter on ergonomic machines.

Her goal is to improve on her times for the 2-km and 6-km test distances indoors after the outdoor season concludes in a month, hoping to earn one of a dozen invitations to Rowing Canada's under-23 devel-

opment camp at the London facility next year.

Beyond that, achieving nationally carded athlete status and eventually opportunities at Olympic qualifying are on the horizon for Nurse, but she said that the 2012 Summer Games in London are likely not in her sights.

"If I have strong results over the winter and I am invited to the London camp, then I could be considered for carding for the national team," she said.

"2012 is coming up faster than you think and there are a lot of other Canadian rowers to be considered too. The thing about this sport is that the elite athletes are hitting their stride in their late 20s and early 30s, and I think that 2016 is more realistic for me to be considered. But at this point, I'm enjoying the races and just trying to keep improving my test scores."

In the short term, Nurse is preparing for the return trip to Boston in two weeks for the Head of the Charles Regatta. The calibre of competition will be much more difficult this year since the Don club's women's fours entry has been bumped up to the top-flight championship division after winning the club title in 2007.

The team will consist of Nurse, Griffiths, returnee Emily Cameron of P.E.I. and newcomer Laura Coltman of Toronto.

"We kind of put it out there last year that there were some fast girls at the Don Rowing Club so we'll have to back that up," the Georgetown District High School graduate joked.

"I definitely feel more confident having been to this race before and I think we should be able to improve on our time with the new girls we've added."

Nurse will also compete for the Gee Gees at the Ontario University Athletics Championships in St. Catharines Oct. 25.

### Bearcats bounced

Victor Thompson (8) of the Acton Bearcats duels at the net with a White Oaks Wildcat Tuesday during their Halton high school senior boys' volleyball match. The visiting Wildcats prevailed in two hard-fought sets, 25-22, 25-19.



*Photo by Eamonn Maher*

*Bag inadvertently left outside arena*

### Raiders' player gear goes AWOL

The Georgetown Raiders' Jr. A hockey club is hopeful that a full set of player's equipment that went missing early Tuesday morning will be returned.

After the team returned by bus from a game in Buffalo Monday evening, a bag of equipment belonging to Raider second-year defenceman Rob Brennan was left by the front doors of the Mold-Masters SportsPlex at around 1 a.m. Tuesday.

As is custom, rookie players are

responsible for unloading the bags of equipment and the team's athletic trainer, Andrew Groombridge, said Brennan's gear wasn't brought inside with the rest of the team's bags.

Groombridge estimates the equipment to be worth between \$2,000 and \$3,000 and the team was scrambling to replace the items prior to tonight's (Friday's) game in Burlington against the first-place Cougars.

The Raiders will also host Streetsville Saturday at 7:30 p.m.

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\*Lease payments are plus taxes. All leases are 24,000 km per year with an excess mileage charge on Matrix and Corolla CE of .07¢ per km and 10¢ per km on Camry LE. See dealer for full details.