

Matthew Swanston is up for Junior Athlete of the Year

By Rebecca Ring

A longtime Rockwood family has a lot to be proud of in their grandson's accomplishments.

Matthew Swanston, grandson of Walter and Virena, is one of three finalists for a prestigious Canadian Sport Award. The multiple medal-winning swimmer has been short-listed for Junior Athlete of the Year. The ceremony will take place next Tuesday, February 24 in Ottawa at the National Gallery of Canada.

A member of the Newmarket Stingrays Swim Club, 17-year old Swanston spent last weekend in Halifax competing in the Eastern Canadian Championships where he cleaned up, winning six gold and two bronze medals. He has set numerous national and provincial records in his age group.

Swanston comes by his talent honestly. Both parents are world-class swimmers. His father, Alan, a senior coach with the club, is in the University of Waterloo Sport Hall of Fame and his mother, Avril (Peaker), is in



JR ATHLETE OF YEAR? Swimmer Matthew Swanston, who has family roots in Rockwood, is one of three finalists nominated for Jr Athlete of the Year. The Canadian Sport Awards ceremony will take place Tuesday. - Submitted Photo

the University of Guelph Sports Hall of Fame. Alan was headed for the 1980 Olympic Games in Moscow, but missed out because of Canada's boycott.

Matthew's younger brother Jeffrey seems to have inherited these swimming

genes as well, as he is also a medal-winning swimmer in the same club.

Swanston works hard for his success. He practices two hours before school and two hours after school almost every day. He is no slouch academically either,

maintaining an average in the 90s. He has won a full scholarship from Stanford University, where he will continue swimming competitively and study this fall. Even with all of this work, Swanston says he makes time for a social life, including a girlfriend, who is also a national level swimmer.

The 36th Canadian Sport Awards are presented by the True Sport Foundation. The other two finalists in Swanston's category are Alex Harvey (Cross Country) and Sarah Reid (Skeleton). Swanston was nominated by Swimming Canada, after being named Junior Male Swimmer of the Year. "Being a finalist for this award is definitely unexpected," he says, "It's kind of cool because it's for all sports, not just swimming."

The day after the ceremony, award recipients and nominees will visit two Ottawa schools where they will share with students their success stories, challenges and benefits of sport in Canada. Right after that, Swanston will swim in the Junior Provincial Championships in Nepean.



TALES OF HEARTBREAK: The Eden Mills Writers' Festival held a fundraiser last Friday "Unlucky in Love" where four authors read and six poets competed in a "poetry slam." Author Paul Quarrington told his sad tale to music. - Rebecca Ring Photo

Unlucky lovers pack fundraiser

By Rebecca Ring

Last Friday, there was standing room only as folks jammed The Bookshelf ebar in Guelph for a fundraiser benefitting the Eden Mills Writers' Festival. Theme of the evening was "Unlucky in Love" to celebrate Friday the 13th before St. Valentine's Day. Four Canadian authors were featured – Sandra Sabatini, Paul Quarrington, Stephen Henighan

and festival founder, Leon Rooke.

Sabatini read from her new novel, Dante's War, due to be released March 11 with a launch at The Bookshelf on the 16th. Set in WW II, it tells the story of two young Italian lovers, Angelina and Dante. He is deployed to North Africa with the Italian forces while she contends with Nazi occupation in her small Italian village.

In keeping with the evening's theme, Sabatini read an excerpt about Anselmina, an "old hag" who lives on a mountain in the village and has the "evil eye." Years earlier, she lost her own husband. Disregarding a formidable superstition, he walked under a ladder she was on and her bucket fell on his head, killing him. Now, she loathes Angelina, so deep in her young love, and hands her a knife telling her the world would be better off without her. Instead of succumbing to

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Letters

Vet Clinic saves pet

Letter to the Editor

Thanks to all the Rockwood Veterinary Clinic vets and staff and those who by their quick actions, saved the life of a Rockwood cat caught in an animal trap.

Mocha (the miracle cat) is now recovering at home. Thanks again for saving our pet.

*The Kennedy family,
And pet sitter Ralph*

Contract ratified

By Rebecca Ring

The Upper Grand District School Board ratified collective agreements reached with its Secondary Teachers and Secondary Occasional Teachers, represented by OSSTF District 18 (Ontario Secondary School Teachers Federation).

The contracts are in effect from September 1, 2008 to August 31, 2012 and are compliant with the Provincial Discussion Table (PDT) Agreements under the Ministry of Education. The unions ratified the agreements in late

January.

The settlement includes a three per cent salary increase each year, with additional funding for professional development, benefits, and staffing for regular teachers, which are fully funded by the Province.

The Occasional Teachers rates of pay are based on the regular teacher salary grid. Their contract stipulates that the Board will call short-term occasional teachers for work using an electronic qualifications-based random order system.



Selects prepare for season

The Rockwood FC Select U12 games, under the coaching of Dave Rimmer, have been training inside at Rockwood Centennial on Saturday mornings to prepare for the 2009 soccer season.

In order to be able to evaluate the girls' strengths, Coach Rimmer organized a Rockwood Invitational

PowderPuff game and invited the Guelph Select girls to a Saturday morning outdoor game. The game was held on the mini soccer fields which were well covered in snow, played in full snow gear, and played using an oversized exercise ball.

Due to wind chill, the game was kept to just under an hour but both teams played

hard. The initial warm up of jogging around the field in 30cm of snow and full winter gear provided a good workout, not to mention the 45 minutes of hard played soccer action that followed.

The girls quickly adjusted to falling through the snow every few steps, to the larger ball and to the heavy footwear and played an action packed game with plenty of exercise, great enthusiasm, some excellent footwork and lots of laughs.

The Rockwood girls will meet the Guelph girls again in a traditional indoor soccer game on Feb 21 in Guelph. The players are ready for a rematch and the parents are eagerly anticipating watching a game without shivering.

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