

Sports

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Lisa Brown will compete with Team Ontario's Under-19 B squad at the indoor nationals, while fellow Miltonian Deb Fullerton (inset below) will coach the A team.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Brown bound for field hockey nationals

Drury senior earns spot on Ontario Under-19 'B' team

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

E.C. Drury's field hockey program has its first bonafide success story.

Writing it is Lisa Brown, who recently earned a spot with Ontario's B team and is set to compete at next weekend's Canadian Under-19 indoor championships in Calgary.

"It feels great. I've never made anything like this before," said the 18-year-old, a standout with the senior Spartans last fall and an MVP for the Richardson Division squad at the Halton all-star game.

The provincial newcomer seemed a little surprised to make the cut, although longtime Drury coach Geoff Sheppard believed the honour wasn't unexpected.

"When Lisa came here in grade nine, we knew with her size and strength she had potential, and since that time she's improved by leaps and bounds. It was just a case of her getting exposure to this (provincial) level."

Brown's Team Ontario inclusion, he added, is a strong indication that the work he and others have done to introduce the sport at both E.C. and among local pre-teens is paying off.

"Usually with a program like this it takes about five to seven years to produce a marquee player," said Sheppard, who's run weekly clinics off and on since 2000. "We're now in that range and we've got our first marquee player."

Heading west with her provincial teammates on Thursday, Brown said switching gears to indoor field hockey has been quite an adjustment — since with a smaller playing surface and no grass the game is significantly faster.

"The technical aspect of the sport is even more important indoors," explained the five-foot-nine-inch left wing. "You've really got to have your skills honed."



Deb Fullerton

Brown has been working hard to do so over the past several weeks. And while she was no slouch to begin with in terms of technical proficiency, the up-and-coming field hockey player figures her berth onto the provincial program has as much to do with a less tangible attribute.


"I think one of my strengths is that I'm pretty coachable. I really try to listen to every little thing they're teaching."

Fellow Miltonian Deb Fullerton concurs with that assessment. An instructor with the provincial program and head coach of the Under-19 A squad, she figures Brown has the potential to be in the Ontario field hockey ranks for years to come.

"Lisa's got the size and strength that we're looking for," said Fullerton, a former junior provincial competitor who moved to town two-and-a-half years ago. "We've got Under-21 and Under-23 teams as well, so she's got the opportunity to develop within the program."


The two provincial squads will be in different divisions for next weekend's round-robin competition, but may eventually cross paths in gold-medal play — since Ontario is a perennial contender in field hockey.

Suggested Fullerton, "Yeah, that could very well happen."



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