

SPORTS

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Moses backstops Ontario A squad to silver



GRAHAM PAINE / CANADIAN CHAMPION

SILVER LINING: Nicci Moses displays the silver medal she helped the Ontario A Under-16 girls field hockey team earn recently in B.C.

Shines at invitational national showcase

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Though hardly a stranger to guarding the field hockey net, Nicci Moses only made a full-time commitment to the role for the recent invitational national championships at the University of British Columbia.

Moments into the tournament opener, the 15-year-old Miltonian was likely questioning that decision.

"It was pretty nerve-wracking being out there for that first game and they scored two goals quite early, largely due to mistakes on my behalf," admits Moses, recalling a humbling start against Alberta's Under-16 squad. "One went through my legs and on the other I just misjudged my net."

However, the local field hockey player — whose introduction to the sport came shortly before moving here from her native England two years ago — would eventually show why she was picked as the Ontario Under-16 A team's starting goalie.

Fortifying her efforts

Quickly gaining both confidence and composure once her teammates fortified their efforts for a 5-2 comeback victory over Alberta, Moses would post three shutouts in an unbeaten run to the finals.

"I thought I did pretty well (after that shaky start) and my teammates really did a lot to help me out."

The biggest of her perfect performances was no doubt a 1-0 semifinal squeaker against the Under-14 contingent from B.C. — which the local net-minder knows only too well is the perennial hot-bed for field hockey in Canada.

"We had a competitive trip there with E.C. Drury last fall and those teams out there absolutely annihilated us," she explained. "B.C.'s a real powerhouse."

But that didn't keep Moses and her provincial cohorts from holding their own in a respectable 4-0 championship loss to B.C.'s Under-16 team.

Her team's 5-1 run included a 10-0 dismantling of Ontario's Under-14 club and a 6-0 whitewash of the Under-14 team from Alberta.

A late addition to the provincial team after another goalie dropped out, Moses was in net for every game out west — something that didn't surprise her two other coaches in the least.

Plenty of talent: coaches

"Nicci's presence on the Ravens certainly helped us get as far as we did in the season," remarked E.C. Drury graduate Lisa Brown, who's competed at the national level herself and coached Moses and company to the second round of the playoffs in this summer's Halton Rec Field Hockey league, following a solid regular season. "When Nicci wasn't holding her own in the net making crucial saves, she was helping on defence with strong hits and a good sense of field play."

Added Drury head coach Geoff Sheppard, "It wasn't a surprise to see her as the (provincial team's) lead goalie. I knew there couldn't be a Grade 10 student in Ontario with her skills."

With high-stakes goaltending experience now under her proverbial belt, Moses feels fairly certain she's found a permanent home between the pipes.

"Oh yeah, I don't think I'll be playing out much anymore," said the national silver medalist.

Also part of the recent national showcase, which featured teams from Ontario, Alberta and B.C. only, were fellow Miltonians Shaelyn Johnston and Stephanie Takeuchi.

School-mates of Moses at Drury, the two served as forwards on Ontario's Under-16 B squad, which finished seventh. Takeuchi collected a handful of assists, while Johnston scored once and added three helpers.

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