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Just off the mark at worlds

Biathlete Hynes falls just short of top-60 goal

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

For biathletes, near misses just come with the territory.

But that doesn't make them easy to accept, especially not in high-stakes competition.

Silke Hynes got a painful reminder of that earlier this month in Nove Mesto, Czech Republic, where she was just a little off the mark as far as her overall goal for the Youth and Junior World Championships.

Aiming to crack the top-60 in her 18-and-under youth sprint (6-kilometre) race — which would have met with a berth to her bread-and-butter pursuit (10km) event — the 18-year-old Miltonian fell just spots shy of that.

The fact that a 62nd-place finish was nine spots better than her world debut last year in Sweden offered little consolation.

Surprisingly, it wasn't Hynes' cross-country skiing that held her back this time around.

A consistently much stronger shooter than skier, she went 7-for-10 on the target range — which represents at least one more miss than her average.

"I usually hit eight or nine out of 10, and if I'd missed one less shot then I would have achieved my goal," said the Milton District High School graduate, now in her first year of studying and competing at Saint Michael's College in Vermont. "It's a tough thing to move past, when you don't race at the top of your game at this high a level. I know I could have done better, and it's frustrating to have to wait another year for a re-do."

Another accuracy lapse awaited Hynes in the opening 10-km individual race, where she placed 57th — up from 73rd last year.

But a much higher rise up the standings was well within her grasp, after nailing 14 of her first 15 shots of the two-round event.

That's when an agonizing brush of déjà vu reared its ugly head.

"I missed four of the last five shots and dropped from somewhere in the mid-30s to 57th," noted Hynes, who because of her dual citizenship (courtesy of her Chicago-area born father) actually represented the U.S. in the Czech Republic. "It was really tough for me because I had the exact same problem in Sweden, missing the same four shots in that same race."

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ON THE MOVE: Silke Hynes competes at the Youth and Junior World Biathlon Championships.

Senior Spartans headed back to Halton v-ball championship

Refocused, revitalized and ready to revisit the championship stage.

The E.C. Drury senior girls volleyball team's bid for a third straight trip to the Halton AA finals looked to be in real jeopardy after a brutal finish to the regular season against Acton.

The loss had coach Kevin Houldcroft quite nervous about Wednesday's semifinals with Lester B. Pearson, despite having beaten them twice this year.

Getting in a couple of good practices — and rediscovering their intensity — the Spartans distanced themselves from their late-season lapse and disposed of Pearson 25-18, 25-20, once again stamping their ticket to the regional championship.

Led by star middle Bri Rector, Drury kept their emotions in check when facing early deficits, and kept the pressure on once they gained the lead.



"We were focused again today, and basically we competed — something we didn't really do against Acton," said Houldcroft.

As she's done pretty much all season, Rector dominated at the net and mixed up her hitting and tipping well to keep the Patriots off balance, while steadily-improving Rebecca Robertson stepped up with eight and five-point serving runs.

Power Tara Galloway and middle Andrea Stoskopf also delivered formidable play.

Finishing second in the regular season at 8-4, the Spartans are now set to face a familiar foe in Thursday's Halton finals at Sheridan College in Oakville.

Drury and unbeaten favourite St. Thomas Aquinas will clash for the title for a third straight year, with Drury winning in 2009 and Aquinas earning championship payback last season.

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