

ALL 6 STOUFFVILLE ATHLETES MEDAL

Jenna Caira made it 6-for-6 when her Canadian softball team won gold at the Pan Am Games Sunday.

All six Games athletes from Whitchurch-Stouffville won a medal at the international sporting event that concluded last weekend.

The other medallists:

- Paul Koert and Andy Skelton won gold with the men's softball team.
- Lisa Sanders struck gold with her synchronized swimming teammates.
- Belinda Trussell won a silver as a member of the Canadian dressage team.
- Karen Cockburn bounced back from injury to win bronze in trampoline.



METROLAND PHOTO/RON PIETRONIRO

Jenna Caira leads Canada to victory in the Pan Am Games semifinals in Ajax Saturday.

Redemption 'golden' for Caira against USA

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During the 2011 Pan American Games in Mexico, Jenna Caira learned how it felt to lose the gold medal as a member of Canada's women's softball team when they fell in the final to the United States.

But when the 25-year-old Gormley native returned to pitch and serve as a co-captain on this year's Pan Am team, she and her teammates got to experience what it's like to be on the other side.

Canada defeated the States 4-2 in a dramatic final that went into an extra inning at the President's Choice Ajax Pan Am Ballpark Sunday.

While Caira did not pitch in the final game, one day earlier she handled starting duties and picked up her second win in the tournament in Canada's 7-4 victory over Puerto Rico.

That enabled Canada to advance and set the stage for their rubber match against the previously unbeaten U.S. in the gold medal finale.

A member of the national team since 2009, Caira said the Canadians learned from their two head-to-head setback losses to the U.S. during the tournament.

"It always feels good to win, particularly when our team has worked so long and so hard," Caira said. "It's especially good to beat the U.S. as they are the defending champions and a very good competitive team."

"The fact that we lost to them earlier during the tournament was irrelevant. We learned from those losses and executed our plan perfectly (Sunday). Today (Sunday) is what really mattered and what everyone will remember.

"We were really

pumped. We all knew what we had to do. We prepared for months for this day. It was a very special moment."

Caira said she was ready to go in.

"Whether you are on the field or on the bench, you are a key member and contributor to this team. Today (Sunday) I cheered my teammates on," she said. "As a co-captain I also have a leadership role and I try and motivate and encourage my teammates at all times. I also watch the game and try to pick up some things that my teammates can use to our advantage."

*... wearing their
 Team Canada
 shirts with (my)
 No. 29 on the
 back.'*

Winning the gold medal in front of family and close friends made it extra special.

"It was cute to see my five-year-old nephew, Andrew, and my two-year-old niece at the games wearing their Team Canada shirts with (my) No. 29 on the back," she said.

"In fact, I was really surprised to see so many of my teammates from the four national championship teams that we won. It was a very emotional time for all of us."

As for what's up next in her career, the Seneca College student said she will enjoy the moment for the time being.

"I'm taking a few days to spend with friends at their cottage. Beyond that, time will tell, once I have had some time to enjoy our success at the Pan Ams," the Toronto resident said.

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