

Teenager playing for Canada at Vancouver lawn bowls event

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As a competitive lawn bowler, Nicole Leblanc has an impressive playing resume.

A big part of which includes one silver medal and three bronze she claimed while bowling at the Canadian championships.

Not bad considering Leblanc is just 17 years old and has only taken to the green since she was 13.

A junior member of the Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club and currently in her first year attending the University of Guelph, where she's majoring in biomedical sciences, Leblanc will be taking her game to another level later this month.

This time around, she will be doing it as a member of Team Canada that will compete against the United States in the North American Challenge in Vancouver from Sept. 29 to Oct. 1.

UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

With Canada and the United States each sending two male and two female five-bowler teams, Leblanc is looking forward to the next challenge in her budding career in a sport perceived as being one catering more to individuals far older than her.

"It feels amazing to be selected to play in this event," she said from her university residence. "I've been competing at the Canadian nationals every year. But to compete at the next level is very exciting."

To procure a berth on one of the two Canadian female teams, Leblanc recalled it began earlier this year when she was invited to participate at a training camp in Vancouver.

It was during the course of the

camp, which was conducted in May, when the participants were eventually chosen to represent Team Canada.

Leblanc was included in that select group.

Introduced to the game through her older brother Alex who got into playing it just one year before she did and competing for her first four years in Uxbridge where she still resides before moving to the Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club this year, Leblanc is scheduled to compete in triples as the lead bowler and in fours as the second bowler for Canada.

Adding to the challenge Leblanc is expected to encounter is her age as she is expected to be one of the younger competitors.

AGE GAP A 'CHALLENGE'

The age gap though, does not intimidate her.

"I've only been bowling for five years now which is not that much experience," she conceded. "I will be competing with and against others with 10-plus years of experience."

"It will be helpful in challenging me to play up to their level. Many would view this though as a very good accomplishment for me still being a novice bowler."

While confident Canada has what it takes to win their matches against the United States in the upcoming competition, Leblanc hopes her international debut will be the first of more appearances in representing Canada.

"I hope to be promoted from junior marginal development team to the national squad. This would allow me to compete more internationally. I plan on working hard to obtain this goal and competing in the North American Challenge will be the first step," she said.



Nicole Leblanc of the Stouffville Lawn Bowling Club will play for Team Canada against the United States in the North American Challenge in Vancouver from Sept. 29 to Oct. 1.

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