2013 October 17 Year End Review 2013 SOSC Micheal Oswald

2013. What a year for Sunshine Coast Special Olympics! Chock full of surprises and accomplishments.

Our fall/winter season was a chance for the swimming, rhythmic gymnastic and curling teams to go to qualifying meets.

At the top of the list is The Provincial Games held in Langley in July. Our athletes worked their absolute best and really showed how dedication and hard work can pay off. Everyone achieved a new personal best and proved that no matter what the challenge we were ready and willing and collectively our athletes brought back over a dozen medals! Truly awesome. Congrats go out to Christel Jensen who will be going to Nationals next year.

The athletes chosen to go to Provincials were Wes Harrison, Christel Jensen, Micheal Oswald, Tracey Schoular, Theresa Prestley and Lindsay Pearson. The coaches were Gary Rogers, Marylin Adams, Marie Telder, Margret (Maggie) Casey and Chuck Bertrand.

2013 also brought us, thanks to Annette Bertrand, a brand new website for our own Sunshine Coast chapter of Special [WWW.SPECIALOLYMPICSSUNSHINECOAST.CA](http://WWW.SPECIALOLYMPICSSUNSHINECOAST.CA) is an easy way for anyone interested in more information to find out facts, see fabulous photos and do some fun reading.

I would also like to acknowledge Jordan McCourt and Sandi Cavalier. It is thanks to them and their fundraising program of collecting refundable bottles and cans that helps donate money to SOSC. This year marked Jordan being awarded the Queens Jubilee Award on February 9. Congrats and keep going strong!

We have a very strong participation in floor hockey as our newly dubbed “Sunshine Coast Bears” had 12 athletes sign up with 5 high school volunteers. Chuck Bertrand is the coach for this sport.

Basketball had two tourneys, in Coquitlam and right here at home in Gibsons. Two North Van teams came to play both the Sechelt and Gibsons teams with Gibsons coming away with a victory after a loss with a 2-point spread.

I peeked in on a rhythmic gymnastics practice and saw how eloquently the ladies are with moves like “Plié” and “Chasse” using ribbons, ball routines, hoops. It really shows the beauty of such intricate movements all very choreographed by head coach Margret (Maggie) Casey and assistant coach Jessica Davey.

For our younger athletic generation, FUNdamentals and Active Start are a wonderful way for the youngins to become the next Special Olympic stars. FUNdamentals is for 7-12 year olds, while Active Start is for 2-6 year olds. These awesome kids play games like beanbag toss and soccer with no net, they sing songs and generally learn and have fun.

The coaches are perfect for this job. Marie Telder and Coral make all the young ones laugh and smile.

Curling continues to be widely popular as well. The team went to a bonspiel in Abbotsford along with 12 other teams. From all accounts, our guys and gals did a fantastic job. There was even a celebration for coach Bill Climie’s birthday.

Now in our spring/summer activities we here on the Sunshine Coast have a lot to be proud of. Throughout the seasons we still attend twice, weekly circuit training in Gibsons at the Rec Centre. Verna and Tanya coach their respective days and sure light us up and push us to do our best workouts all the while having fun.

Softball saw our beloved “Red Socks” enjoying the diamonds at Hackett Park, Kinnikinnick Park and Mclean Park. They went up against the Coquitlam Tigers at Kinnikinnick Park on the Coast. They also did extremely well at Mclean Park in Port Coquitlam with rock solid plays and pitching and batting, coming 3rd in their C2 division!

Golf is a very sought after sport in the warmer months. There is said to be a waiting list! There was a tournament held at the Sechelt Golf Club and the whole team was featured on Global News on Perry Picks. Shout outs go out to the very busy, multi-talented Chuck Bertrand and his wife Annette and to Ken Collard for being the coaches of this popular group.

Bocce (no there was no cappuccinos lol) looks to be one of my picks for the upcoming year. When I went to a practice held at Elphinstone Secondary, I saw a game that unlike the fast paced activities Special O offers, was a chance to lay back and just spend a pleasant afternoon. 7 athletes took part this year along with 4 coaches, John Mcara, Jeannie Barwise, Bill Climie and Judy McDonald.

Soccer (one of those high paced sports I was referring to) was a great sport to witness. I went to an exhibition game between Sechelt and Gibsons and saw both sides well matched in all parts of the game, from goal tending, to moving the ball down the field to defensive maneuvering. A combined team travelled to Ladner on June 15th and won 2 of their 3 games in a tournament.

Of course we also had our customary Volunteer Appreciation Banquet held at the Gibsons Legion. Athletes, coaches, volunteers and parents all attended and were treated to a couple of performances, one by Micheal Oswald reading poetry dedicated to the tireless efforts of coaches and volunteers and also a wonderful rhythmic gymnastic routine with a certain performance only practiced once!

At an SOSC AGM it was announced that a stunning 7 new athletes and 16 new volunteers took part in this years activities.

One of our coaches had a thrilling experience this past summer. Laurie Miller got to travel to Torino, Italy for The World Master Soccer Tournament. She described to me how proud she felt to be a part of such a huge event. Laurie also said she loved marching with of all her fellow athletes and to be Canadian and doing a sport she loved in a city rich with soccer finesse.

Marie Telder has been promoted to assistant head coach for the swim team, however she is also due for knee surgery so I ask that everyone send her best wishes and we hope for a speedy recovery and return.

Practices for the fall/winter season sports have begun and everyone is enjoying being back in the swing of things!

Our winter banquet is being held at the Sechelt Legion on December 14th. It will be there that the winner of a raffle will be drawn. The raffle is to support Special Olympics here on the Coast and prizes include a signed Canucks hockey stick, a le Crueset Sauce Pan and $20 gift certificate from Seasoned Kitchen, a Canucks gift basket from Pharmasave and a $150 gift certificate from a local vintner. Tickets are 3 for $5 and all profits go to fund Special Olympics in all its endeavors.

As athlete reporter for SOSC, it was high time I figured to take a trip to the curling rink in Gibsons to catch up with the coaches and athletes who love the sport.

There are 10 athletes and 3 coaches. The coaches’ names are George Proudfoot, Dave Sandness and Bill Climie. The athletes under the tutelage are Brian Ware, Michael Brooks, Michael Beckman, Amber Maher, Bruce Stuart, Shelly McCuaig, Theresa Bystead, Jordan McCourt, Cleo McClarty and Dustin Archer.

I had a little time to chat with some of the athletes. I talked with long time player Shelly McCuaig who said she has been curling “from the beginning”. She enjoys going to bonspiels for competition.

I spoke with Theresa Bystead and she said it is a great way to “socialize” and that is a “happy thought” Very nice.

Amber Maher had curled for 3 years previously but has been back for a couple of months and she likes it because it’s “fun” and “it’s good to be back”

Bruce Stuart has been curling since “bowling ended” which is “7 years” He enjoys throwing the rock into the house using “in and out turns” and “playing different positions.”

I also talked with newcomer Michael Beckman who is in his first year of curling. He said he “had never done it before and wanted to try it” Such a brave approach.

The whole team will be going to a fun bonspiel in Abbotsford in January which I’m sure will be a blast.

On Tuesday, November 19th in Sechelt on a crisp evening on the Sunshine Coast I attended a floor hockey practice at Sechelt Elementary gymnasium.

What I saw from the get was athletes who were eager to play, and a coach, Mike Gojevic who was more than happy to teach.

There were laughs and smiles as each athlete walked in and put on their gear, whether they were a goalie and they were decked out head to toe in pads and helmets, or a player with helmets and a stick.

Mike Gojevic, the assistant coach, along with helpers Kelly Van der Heide and Jennifer Hoey smiled with, laughed with and most importantly *played* with each athlete, creating an atmosphere of joy and teamwork.

Adam Casey is one athlete I’d like to center in on. Adam came in wearing a signed Detroit Red Wings jersey, signed by Todd Bertuzzi. Adam’s mom came and showed me an article his sister had written that had gotten published in a Detroit newspaper about Todd and Adam’s friendship. Truly amazing how one person can connect with another no matter how they play.

I also want to thank the gang for letting me; “the press” take a running shot on goal, though I missed by a good bit. I definitely had fun and look forward to attending another practice in the future.

Well that's all I have to report for 2013 SOSC! I look forward to the New Year and all the sports fun ahead!

This is Micheal Oswald, Special Olympics Sunshine Coast reporter signing off…See you next year!