

Callista Daly brings home medal as one of the top student-athletes

Written By **Brian Lockhart**

Local athlete Callista Daly is ranked as one of the top student-athletes in the province after finishing second in Senior High Jump at the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) track and field meet in London.

The meet was held at Western University from June 6 to 8 and featured the best high school athletes from across the province.

Callista was the only athlete from Centre Dufferin District High School to qualify for OFSAA this year. It was her second consecutive year qualifying for the provincial championships.

To get to OFSAA, Callista first competed at the District 4/10 championships held at the University of Guelph, then went on to compete at the regional level at CWOSAA in Brantford.

She has won CWOSAA three years in a row.

"I love jumping at CWOSAA because I won it the two previous years in Grade 10 and Grade 11 and it was in the same place again so I'm comfortable jumping there," Callista said. "It was nice to add the third medal. I also did the triple-jump there and qualified for OFSAA West."

After winning at CWOSAA, the next step was to compete at OFSAA West in Windsor.

Unlike other OFSAA sports, track and field athletes must qualify at a regional OFSAA meet to be able to go to the final OFSAA competition.

This is due to the large number of events and athletes that participate in track and field competitions and the field has to be narrowed down to accommodate all the events over three days.

At OFSAA West, Callista qualified with a jump of 1.58m.

"I always find that OFSAA West is the most stressful," Callista said. "In Grade 10, I had a really bad meet at OFSAA West and I didn't qualify for OFSAA. Last year I had a lot to make up and OFSAA West went well last year. This year I had a lot of things going on. I had all my future coaches there, we were back in Windsor, and I didn't have the best practice the week leading up to it, so I had a bit of a shaky meet. But I jumped 1.58 and that was enough to be second. I qualified for OFSAA with that. There was a lot of good competition."

Around 3,000 athletes from high schools across Ontario arrived in London for this year's OFSAA event. It is one of the largest track and field meets in North America.

"Last year I was seventh at OFSAA so this year it was my goal to be on the podium," Callista said.

She said it was a bit daunting to arrive at the meet as the only competitor from her school.

"It is a little intimidating," Callista explained. "A lot of these schools are coming in on buses with 20 kids, and I'm walking in with my Dad and my coach."

CDDHS track and field coach Mathew Leggett led the high school team to a successful season this year with a lot of good results from the student-athletes.

?It is a pretty serious competition,? Callista said of being at OFSAA. ?You have to go to an athlete control centre before your event ? an hour and a-half before your event. You have to sit in there by yourself. You're not allowed to have your phone or headphones. They come around to make sure your spikes are the right length. You're not supposed to really talk to anybody. Then they march you over to your event. They line you up and introduce everybody and where they're from, and then the competition starts.?

The senior high jump starts at a height of 1.25m and increases by five centimetres at each level. Callista started jumping at the 1.45m level so she wouldn't waste energy at the lower heights she knew she could easily clear.

Callista cleared a height of 1.60m ? good for the silver medal.

Callista's athletic ability has been noticed by scouts.

She has already signed with the University of Windsor and will join its track and field team in the fall.