

Shelburne-born athlete wins Canadian U20 Javelin title



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A local Shelburne Athlete launched her way to the top of the Canadian U20 Javelin title, securing the win after years of committed training and practice. Ava Campbell, born and raised in Shelburne, is now training in British Columbia and claimed the national title after qualifying with several personal-best performances earlier this season.

Competing in difficult rainy conditions, Campbell said her year-round outdoor training on Vancouver Island proved an advantage over many competitors who train indoors during the winter.

"The competition itself was, well, the weather was pretty bad," she said. "That was a bit of a setback, but kind of an advantage for me. Living on the island and living in B.C., we're pretty used to the rain, and my coach makes us train in the rain all the time, so that was a little bit of an advantage in my standpoint, because in Ontario, a lot of the girls don't train in the rain, because they have the option to train inside for the winter."

The victory was made even more memorable by the opportunity to witness some of Canada's Olympians who were present at the same meet, as well as returning to Ontario for the national championships.

Winning the Canadian title represents the realization of a goal that began during her first year of high school. Campbell first picked up the javelin in Grade 9 after being encouraged by a teacher and coach who wanted more girls to take up the event.

"I started throwing javelin in Grade 9, and it's been a goal of mine ever since," she said. "My coach at the time was also my social studies teacher. She got me into throwing because she wanted more girls to throw, and at first I actually hated javelin, but over time, I've kind of known that I wanted to go farther with this and maybe try and hit the Olympics."

The move west marked a turning point in her development. Training under an Olympic-level javelin coach and benefiting from the

ability to practice outdoors throughout the year helped elevate her performances to the national stage.

"In Grade 11, I moved out to B.C., and I stuck with Javelin, and that's when I met my Olympic-level coach, and I realized that I might be able to go farther with this," she said. "It's definitely been an adjustment to come out here, but I think it's had a really positive effect on not only myself, but on my athletic career as well, because I do get to train outside all year round, and not just in the spring and summer, which is really nice."

Along the way, she also learned the importance of balancing intense training with proper recovery after working through an injury during high school.

"I know Javelin is really harsh on the body," she said. "It hits all your major joints, so doing that kind of thing has made me appreciate my body more, and respect the recovery aspect of it, and not just the training. My coach always says that rest and recovery is training too, which we've had to work on, but I'm getting there."

Campbell credits the consistent encouragement of her family in both Ontario and British Columbia for helping her stay motivated throughout her journey.

With the national title now secured, Campbell has her sights set on even bigger achievements. She now continues to work toward qualifying for international competition with the long-term goal of one day representing Canada at the Olympic Games.