

Quebec strikes gold in Summer Games tennis in NOTL

Somer Slobodian
Local Journalism Initiative
The Lake Report

It was a long and exciting week at the Niagara-on-the-Lake Tennis Club.

And, on Saturday, deciding the gold medal winner for the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games required an extra match.

The Games brought some of the best young tennis players in the country to NOTL to compete.

On Saturday, team British Columbia and team Quebec went head-to-head for gold.

They played six matches, each one the best-of-three sets.

During the final, British Columbia and Quebec played six matches, two each of boys, two of girls, and one each of boys and girls doubles.

Whoever wins the majority of the six matches, wins gold.

However, since both British Columbia and Quebec won three matches each, they had to play a seventh



Above: Quebec's Kuang Qing Xu sends a serve back to British Columbia's Denny Bao. Top right: A large crowd at the tennis gold medal game at the NOTL tennis club. Bottom right: British Columbia's Leena Bennetto plays for gold. SOMER SLOBODIAN PHOTOS



match of mixed doubles. This is when the teams consist of one male and one female each.

In the seventh and final match, Quebec's Mélodie Collard and Maxime St-Hilaire battled against

B.C.'s Reece Carter and Aram Noroozian. After an intense finale, Quebec won the mixed doubles match, taking home the gold.

British Columbia won silver and Ontario took bronze.

Tennis isn't the only sport to be played in Niagara-on-the-Lake during the Games. Starting Wednesday, the sailing competition will hit the water off the NOTL Sailing Club.

Final tennis match thrills spectators at Canada Summer Games



Ross's Ramblings

Ross Robinson
The Lake Report

It was a fun and raucous Saturday evening at the tennis courts in Memorial Park, as the final match unfolded between the two mixed doubles teams from Quebec and British Columbia.

It was obvious that law-abiding NOTLers were continuing to respect COVID-19 physical distancing guidelines as there was always ample room between the few spectators who sat in the temporary bleachers.

Some friends told me they hadn't been able to watch the Canada Games tennis matches because they were

too busy baking peach pies to be sold at the St. Vincent de Paul Church Peach Festival the next day.

Others were Simonizing their cool cars once last time, primping for the annual Kinsmen Car Show near the Scout Hall.

Everyone has their passion, and I respect that. Heck, I just love watching people competing at a high level, doing what they love doing. A few years ago, I drove five hours to Kemptonville, way over just south of Ottawa, for a weekend of watching the Ontario plowing matches.

That is an annual highlight in the United Counties of Leeds and Grenville.

For a guaranteed good time, go online to determine where the next National Horseshoe Pitchers Association tourney is getting ready to start clangin'.

Yes, there is so much to do, but still, it was sad that great young athletes were pretty much ignored at some of our Canada Sum-



'Twas a long evening of cheering for young Canadian tennis players for the Kamatovic family of Niagara-on-the-Lake. Quebec and British Columbia played a thrilling final match under the lights and a peach-tinted full moon.

mer Games venues. 'Twas amateur sport at its best and everyone who spectated felt better about our great country's future.

Far from Bill 21 and official language laws and other political necessities, it was joyful to hear and watch the athletes as they "did what they love doing."

Quebec and British Columbia, two traditionally strong tennis provinces, had played determined, hard, fast and fair games as the round robins progressed, and a heart-stopping comeback by B.C. had forced the deciding match under the lights.

As an extraordinary treat, a full moon rose in the eastern sky, which created a tableau that will never be forgotten by any of us in the dry stands.

Finally, we could forget about trying to decipher the online scheduling, who was playing whom and coming to terms with the fact that a "tie" really meant a "match." At least, I think so. Would someone please tell me again why the sports bureaucrats use the word "tie" when one side comes first, and the other side comes second?

As the non-playing

team members spontaneously gathered on Court 3 to watch the match on Court 2, cheering every point won by their team, B.C. team manager Simon Cass and his rowdy pals from the West Coast raised the excitement level with drumming and cheering.

The Quebec contingent was equally vociferous and we spectators were having a great time watching a brilliant match.

In the end, the Quebec and B.C. athletes and support staff all won. One team scored the last point and got the gold medals. The other team got the silver medals.

The young Canadian athletes were magnificent, with both their skills and their sportsmanship.

As the decibel level increased, a neighbour from adjacent Nelles Street had walked across his backyard to approach the enthusiastic drummer. "Uh oh, a confrontation."

Drummer Cass and noisy spectators looked

concerned. The referee had already requested a couple of noise and enthusiasm reductions.

NOTLer Ken Chan smiled and said, approximately, "My guests and my family have been loving the noise and action over here. We hope you will keep it up for the rest of the match."

Please permit me to give a shout out to some locals who got into the Canada Games, watching from the temporary bleachers as teenaged Canadians from coast to coast played the best tennis ever seen in these parts.

Jim Thackray, Wendy and George Dell, Judy and Gerry Pepe, the Kamatovic family, Brenda Bell and Earl Shore, Joy and Steve Janzen, NOTL Tennis Club prez Hugh Dow and many of the tennis venue volunteers made time to cheer and be awed from the bleachers.

Huzzah!

We are so fortunate to live in Canada ... in 2022.