

# NIAGARA 2022 CANADA SUMMER GAMES

## Quebec edges B.C. for tennis gold in NOTL

### Tents, bleachers gone, courts back to pre-Games

**Mike Balsom**  
The Local

It took nearly eight hours Saturday to crown a winner in the Niagara 2022 Canada Summer Games tennis competition at Memorial Park in Niagara-on-the-Lake. After seven matches, Team Quebec edged Team British Columbia for the gold medal 4-3.

Quebec had a chance to end things much, much earlier, as they won three of the first four matches, known in the team competition as ties.

Team Quebec's Qing Xu Kuang, 16, and 19-year-old Mélodie Collard outlasted British Columbia's Denny Bao and Leena Bennetto respectively in their singles matches, which began at 3 p.m.

Following those matches, Maxime St-Hilaire and Annabelle Xu of Quebec split their singles matches with Team BC's 18-year-old Aram Noroozian and 17-year-old Reece Carter, leaving the score 3-1 for Quebec. All they had to do was win one of the doubles matches to take the gold medal.

Team B.C., however, had something else in mind. Connor Church and Henry Ren dropped Quebec's Ange Kevin Koua and Junhee You in the men's doubles match, while BC's Alessia Cau and Emma Dong beat Josie Usereau and Naomi Xu to knot things up at 3-3 and force an extra mixed doubles match to decide the winner.

Carter and Noroozian got the nod for Team BC, while Collard and St-Hilaire were chosen by their Team Quebec coaches to take them on in the clutch situation. Quebec lost the first set, but stormed back to win the gold 5-7, 6-3, and 10-4. The deciding point was finally made at about 10:40 p.m.

Team Ontario settled for the bronze medal, defeating Alberta 5-1 Saturday morning.

"It was a real nail-biter," NOTL Tennis Club president Hugh Dow says about the final match. "I wasn't there right until the end, but a number of club members were and they said it was just unbelievable the way they went down to the wire there."

Dow was impressed by the quality of tennis on display over the six days of competition. Impressed, but not really surprised.

"I've seen some of them play before at some of the junior tournaments at White Oaks," he says. "I was anticipating a pretty high level. The older group was really playing like you wouldn't believe. There was a particular sound you don't hear that often on our courts, the sound of a tennis ball being hit really hard in the middle of the racquet on a consistent basis. And there were rallies that went on for minutes on end."

Dow, who was at the facility daily during the first week of the Canada Summer Games, says there is a bit of a bittersweet feeling now that the tents are packed up, the temporary fencing is gone and the bleachers on the north side have been removed.

"It's a bit of an anticlimax seeing the club back

the way it was before the games," he says. "I have mixed feelings. It was a wonderful experience and I think that everyone who is involved was absolutely thrilled and delighted with how everything went."

The tennis club had many members volunteering their time each day of the competition. Dow says they and non-member volunteers who gave their time worked very hard to make sure everything came off without a hitch. Many athletes Dow spoke with commented on how nice the volunteers were and how well they were treated by them.

The weather cooperated for the most part, with rain delaying play on Tuesday, forcing some matches to be rescheduled. But they were able to catch up and get everything completed on time. He gives organizers Rosemary Goodwin, Marilyn Francis and Shawna Macfarlane all the credit for ensuring everything ran smoothly.

Besides seeing the high quality of tennis and being able to watch it in the intimate, close-to-the-court

environment of Memorial Park, Dow says a highlight was watching 10-year-old Team Saskatchewan member Isabella Yan compete.

"She was amazing," Dow marvels. "She's tiny, just about to turn 11. Boy, could she move around the court. And she had to hustle, because she was playing against players who seemed to be about twice her size. It's incredible that a 10-year-old could hold her own against them. She was a real delight to watch."

Though the Canada Games staff have packed up and taken away all of the official regalia, there is at least one thing that will elicit misty memories of Aug. 7 to 12 for many club members who were involved.

Actually, make that 13 things, as the flags representing Canada's 13 provinces and territories continue to fly courtside and will be staying put.

"I was playing there yesterday," Dow says, "and I was thinking about how nice they look. It's kind of a nice memory of a wonderful week."



A highlight of the tennis matches at Memorial Park was watching 10-year-old Team Saskatchewan member Isabella Yan compete. (Miranda Langguth)



Melodie Collard and Maxime St-Hilaire win gold for Quebec in the summer games final mixed doubles match at the NOTL tennis courts in Memorial Park. (Ron Planche)

## Local WORSHIP

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Kids Ministry Sign In  
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Online & In-Person

Message:  
Kevin Bayne  
Philemon Part 2

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## Local HAPPENINGS



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**10 Fridays from August 26th to October 28th from 9 am to 12 noon.**

**NOTL Community Centre, 14 Anderson Lane, NOTL, L0S 1J0 \$135, which includes the cost of the ACBL official text book**

Presented by Dr. Chandi Jayawardena, ACBL Accredited Bridge Teacher

For information, please contact Chandi at 905-941-1676 or chandij@sympatico.ca



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