

Bolton pole vaulters earning positive results

It's a small world and the world of pole vaulting is no exception.

Shawnacy Barber's amazing pole vault gold medal at the recent World Championships in Beijing, China, and his gold medal at the Pan Am Games this summer in Toronto has a Bolton connection. Quietly tucked away in a warehouse on Simpson Road in the winter and at Humberview Secondary School during the summer is the not-for profit club Bolton Pole Vault. Shawnacy and his coach/father spent time training with the Bolton club prior to the Pan Am Games. The connection goes deeper. In 2013, Barber broke Olympian Doug Wood's Canadian record in the pole vault, which stood for 25 years. Wood is now one of Bolton Pole Vault's coaches.

Bolton has become a hotbed for pole vaulting in Canada. In three short years, Bolton Pole Vault has asserted itself as the premier pole vaulting club in the country. Young athletes travel from all over southern Ontario in search of coaching in a sport that very few people know much about. The club has four volunteer coaches, all with international experience, all representing Canada in the past and present as athletes or coaches. No other vault club in Canada has a coaching staff like Bolton Pole Vault.

Coaching alongside Wood are Zeke Krykorka, Jeff Hayhoe and Jason Wurster. Krykorka coached Wood and Hayhoe during the '80s and '90s and is Canada's only level 4 certified pole vault coach. Hayhoe, still actively training and competing, recently set a Canadian Masters record, jumping higher than any 40-year-old Canadian in history. Rounding out the coaching staff is Wurster. He is currently ranked second in Canada, behind Barber and is third on Canada's all-time performance list behind Barber and Wood. Wurster placed sixth at the Pan Am Games in Toronto.

The enthusiasm and knowledge of this group has quickly translated to results for the club's athletes.

This season has been a breakout year, with Bolton vaulters claiming three OFSAA gold medals, five Canadian Championship medals and numerous other titles. One of the up and coming stars, 17-year-old Makiah Hunt from Niagara Falls, represented Canada at the World Youth Athletics Championships in Cali, Columbia, jumping 3.70 metres and placing 16th. Hunt travels from Niagara Falls to receive coaching. Alysha Newman, 2014 Commonwealth bronze medalist and Canadian junior record holder, comes from the London area.

The growth and reputation of the club has been very exciting, but room still exists for more jumpers. The club offers free trial sessions and a variety of different programs, depending on competitive level and age. Due to the physical demands of the sport, it is recommended that vaulters be a minimum age of 12.

The 2015/2016 program begins in October, but registration is open all year.

Information on the program can be found at boltonpolevault.ca

