

Caledon Citizen Student Athlete of the Week: 'Set Piece Specialist' Sarah Smith stars for Wolfpack's Senior Girls Soccer team

By Jim Stewart

Honor Roll student-athlete Sarah Smith is off to the University of Guelph to study Human Kinetics in September, but not before she brought a bundle of positive energy to her Wolfpack Soccer team this season.

Head Coach Andrea Czyrka applauded Smith's ferocious efforts on the pitch in the Spring as Robert F. Hall rolled to an impressive 7-1 regular season.

'Sarah is one of the grittiest athletes I know. When she is faced with a challenge, she does not back down or shy away, but rather tackles it head on. Sarah never gives up. Her determination and focus on the field make her a relentless defender and fierce opponent.'

Coach Czyrka also praised the Grade 12 student's academic prowess.

'Academically, Sarah is a diligent student who strives to maintain a minimum average of 90% in all of her classes, pushing herself to go above and beyond course expectations. Sarah works well independently, taking on the responsibility for her own learning while also collaborating with her peers to share her knowledge and enhance her understanding of material. She is an outstanding Honor Roll student who demonstrates excellent work habits and has a true passion for learning.'

The veteran Head Coach is most impressed by 'Sarah's love of soccer.'

'It is evident every time she steps on the pitch. She is a true team player and gives 100% effort in everything she does. What impresses me the most about her is her sportsmanship and drive on the pitch. She communicates with her teammates and is always there to support or works to make space for the attack. She is a strong, fierce opponent and never hesitates or shies away from a challenge. She is always there for her teammates and often sacrifices herself to ensure the success of her team.'

These on-field qualities manifested themselves in a series of performance highlights emphasized by Coach Czyrka.

'Sarah's grit and drive doesn't stop on the defense line. She is a major threat on the attack as she manoeuvres her way up the field distributing the ball or attacking on set plays. She is a set piece specialist, thriving in the box from the delivery of a corner kick. In the semi-final match against St. Marcellinus, Sarah scored an unstoppable header goal off of a free kick. This goal followed 3 header attempts in the previous game which all hit the cross bar and were only inches away from the back of the net. Opponents underestimate Sarah's determination for the ball.'

Three-sport athlete Sarah Smith took time from her post-secondary plans at the University of Guelph to respond to our interview questions:

Caledon Citizen: What qualities did you demonstrate in your sports season to earn Student-Athlete of the Week honors?

Sarah Smith: 'As an athlete, I believe that I show qualities of leadership, dedication, and perseverance.'

Caledon Citizen: What were your key statistics and performance moments from the 2023-24 season that you are most proud of?

Sarah Smith: 'This season, we finished the year off as finalists in the OFSSA-bound tier. In our regular season, we went 7-1 with only one loss to St Martins in our very first game.'

Caledon Citizen: In addition to your high school sports team(s), what other community teams do you play for and at what level?

Sarah Smith: ?I am currently playing League 1 soccer with Rush Academy.?

Caledon Citizen: How would you describe yourself as a student at Robert F Hall? To which sports teams and clubs do you belong?
Honor Roll?

Sarah Smith: ?I am very dedicated both on and off the field. I've worked very hard to maintain a 90+ average and have received Honour Roll in all my four years at Hall. I've also had the opportunity to play on teams such as flag football, volleyball, and soccer.?

Caledon Citizen: What are your post-secondary plans regarding prospective academic/athletic destinations?

Sarah Smith: ?Next year, I will be attending the University of Guelph to study Human Kinetics.?

Caledon Citizen: Who is your role model in terms of the person you admire the most?

Sarah Smith: ?My biggest role models are my parents. I've played soccer for almost all of my life and both my mom and dad have watched close to every single game of mine whether that be for my school or club team. Not to mention, they take a lot of time out of their busy days to take me to and from practice. They are my biggest supporters and continue to push me to be my absolute best self every day.?

Caledon Citizen: How do you feel about being nominated as the Caledon Citizen's Student-Athlete of the Week?

Sarah Smith: ?I am very honored to have been nominated for the Student-Athlete of the Week. I've dedicated a lot of my time into the team ensuring to attend all of the practices and put in the hard work on game days. I'm very thankful that my dedication to the sport has paid off.?