

King athlete captures gold at North American Youth Championships

By **Robert Belardi**

King's Tristan Tobin captured the gold medal at the North American Youth Championships in Traverse City, Michigan, last week.

The 14-year-old, in her first appearance at NAYC, finished in first place alongside her teammates Mathilde Candele, Livia Martin, Taylor Wood and Ashlynn Crowley.

It all came down to a jump-off against United States Zone 2, when the young Canadians rose to the occasion to bring home the silverware.

When asked what it meant to her to represent Team Canada, Tobin said she couldn't be happier that all of her hard work paid off.

"It made me really happy that I was determined enough to set a goal, and really work for it and all of my hard work had paid off. It was just the best to see that play out and to see all of my hard work pay off. It was surreal. Everything. We even had a press conference after we were asked lots of questions. It was a really fun to experience," Tobin said.

Tobin, who was previously a King Weekly Sentinel newspaper carrier, set a goal at the height of the pandemic to train day-in and day-out with the hopes of joining the Young Riders team. She even presented her dreams to her parents through power point slides.

Her older sister, Reese, who was previously involved in the sport, and her mother Jenny, who also rode horses when she was young, became her inspirations.

She hopped on her sister's old horse Dartagnan Z (Dart), a Zangersheide Gelding Horse, and trained in Schomberg at Gryphon Farms by Mac and Christi McQuaker.

She received a written letter from the Chief Executive Officer from Equestrian Canada, Meg Krueger and the rest is history.

"I was extremely nervous at the thought of competing for Canada and I've never done anything like this before. It was very overwhelming as I was not expecting as many people to be there. It was an amazing facility, I had so much fun with all of my teammates and I couldn't have asked for it to go any better," Tobin said.

As for her parents, Kyle Tobin and Jenny Dwight, it was an incredible experience for them, to witness their daughter compete for Canada. The moment that Tobin donned the Canadian national team scrim, that was the moment where it really hit home.

"That was the moment where it really hit, because that was the moment where wow, this is really Team Canada. She put on her polo, the horse has his little Team Canada stuff on, for me that was the moment where it hit," Dwight said.

"It's like a pre-Olympic. It really hits home quickly. You realize the purpose of the whole event and you represent the country as a team, and to know your kids are a part of that, is awesome. We were there as a family; my son was there as well. All of us were there to support and cheer on," Kyle Tobin said.

Following this experience, Tobin is still processing every moment. For the first time in her life, she represented her country and stood on a podium. Also, after their victory, the team was given \$1,000 and chose where they would like to donate it.

"As winners we were given \$1000 from an organization called justworldinternational.org and we were given the opportunity to choose which charity to donate it to. We chose Clean drinking water for Kids in Cambodia," Tobin said.

It is unknown what is next at the moment, but Tobin can't wait to don the Team Canada crest once again.