New junior record set at pole vaulting tournament

Pole vaulting is still a relatively new sport in this area, but things received a boost July 6 with 310 Running's Outdoor Pole Vault Classic.

It was held at Humberview Secondary School in Bolton.

The highlight of the day was the setting of a new Canadian junior record.

Alysha Newman has been coming to Bolton to train with 310 Running coaches Zdenek Krykorka and Doug Wood since she arrived home from her freshman year at Eastern Michigan University. She was at the July 6 event, where she cleared an incredible 4.31 metres. With this jump, Newman is now ranked sixth in the world among junior vaulters.

She was among more than 50 vaulters of all ages who travelled to Bolton to compete in the largest all-comers pole vault meet in Canada.

The club operates out of a facility on Nixon Road in Bolton, under the tutelage of Caledon East resident Wood. He said they have been operating under the wing of Scott Skimming of 310 Running. ?We've kind of piggy-backed on his infrastructure,? he said.

Wood was a national record holder in the pole vault, clearing 5.65 metres. He competed for Canada in the 1992 Olympics.

Wood said pole vaulting is an obscure and expensive sport.

He said there was a girl in Orangeville who was interested in giving it a try, but no programs locally available. He was able to get some of the trades people he knew through his work in the construction industry (he's a construction superintendent in Toronto) to put up some money to get things going. He added the landing pit they use costs about $20,000.

?High schools can't afford to have the proper equipment,? Wood observed.

Wood said he got interested in pole vaulting when he was in Grade 10 and never lost interest. ?It's impossible to walk away from something when you get better ever time you do it,? he said.

The young people in the club seem to feel the same way. ?They just gobble it up,? he said.

Joseph Famulari of 310 Running was putting everything he had into this vault.Photo by Bill Rea