

Olympians took part in pole vaulting event

By Bill Rea

There were some impressive heights hit Saturday as Bolton Pole Vault hosted the annual Outdoor Classic at Humberview Secondary School.

The day included performances by two athletes planning to represent Canada in Rio at next month's Olympics.

Alysha Newman, 22, from London, trains with the Bolton club, and she is the current Canadian women's record holder with a vault of 4.6 metres. She tried unsuccessfully to break that record Saturday. She said the current world's record is 5.06 metres.

Newman said she travels to Bolton two or three times per week to train.

She's been pole vaulting since she was in Grade 9.

'I think it's like any other event,' she said. 'It's always up and down, so you're trying to improve.'

'It's a never-ending cycle,' she added. 'That's why people do it for so long.'

Newman said she's feeling good about her chances in Rio, especially if she can get to the finals.

'It's anyone's day,' she remarked. 'Just making it to the finals is number one. Then making a statement at the finals.'

This will be the second Olympics for Damian Warner, 26, also of London. He will be competing in the decathlon, and pole vaulting is one of the 10 events.

Warner competed in London four years ago, and finished fifth overall after he went in ranked 18th.

Warner said he's currently ranked second of third in the world, so there's a lot to look forward to at the coming Games.

'My training's been going really well,' he said, adding he's planning to go for gold. 'I definitely think I could be on the podium.'



Alina Bilenko, 12, cleared 2.4 metres Saturday.



Decathlon athlete Damian Warner was showing his pole vaulting skills Saturday.