

## Played in Caledon Cougars? organization ? Local hoopster to represent Ontario at U17 National Championships

The old adage that the road to success is paved with unexpected twists, turns and occasional heartaches has proven true for local basketball star Mikaela Dodig.

She has been on an unrelenting quest for a much-coveted spot on Team Ontario's basketball U17 roster.

Mikaela received the good news that she will wear the Ontario jersey this summer after a long weekend of tryouts at the newly constructed Toronto Pan-Am facility in February. She is spending June and July at training camps in preparation to represent the province in top-level U.S.-based tournaments and at the National Championships in Edmonton at the end of July. In addition to the training schedule, the U17 team also participated at the prestigious SLAM Challenge in Montreal at the end of June which saw them compete against older CÉGEP and college-aged teams from Quebec, and others from Ontario and the Maritimes.

The Grade 12 student at Bill Crothers Secondary School in Unionville is entering her ninth year of competitive basketball. She took up the sport at seven as a member of the then newly-founded Caledon Cougars Basketball Association. From the first day, Mikaela worked feverishly to hone her skill sets and develop a passion for the game while competing against bigger and older players at the highest level of club basketball. She continues to find ways to excel on the court through her composure, vast knowledge of the game, stellar defence and hustle, and through an array of offensive weapons which contribute not only to team success, but assist in helping her teammates improve their game.

Mikaela's perseverance through the disappointment of coming up just short of making the team on three prior occasions is a testament to her work ethic and commitment to her on-court development.

Her first attempt at making Team Ontario as a U15 player was fraught with difficulty before it began, having contracted a viral infection the night before tryouts. Mikaela was among the very last cuts the next year prior to her selection as an alternate on the U17 team last summer. A rigorous and self-imposed training schedule consisting of many early mornings and late nights on the court and in the weight room, coupled with her ever-present positive outlook played a big part in helping her achieve a long-term goal.

The entire Caledon Cougars family looks forward to tracking Mikaela and her Team Ontario teammates as they aim to bring the National Championship back to Ontario this summer.

The Caledon Cougars are continuing their tradition of excellence this season with the midget girls winning a provincial D1 championship and all six girls' teams finishing in the top eight in the province. Several boys' teams also finished several divisions higher than last season and continue to demonstrate growth and improvement. The club operates winter competitive travel and house league teams, summer recreational and elite camps, summer AAU travel teams and player development opportunities for boys and girls aged six to 19.

For more information, visit [www.caledoncougars.ca](http://www.caledoncougars.ca)

