

MacLennan leads sweep in trampoline

By Jake Courtepatte

Early last week, Rosie MacLennan wasn't sure if she would be competing in the Pan Am Games.

The 26-year-old from King City suffered a mild concussion while training on the trampoline about three weeks ago, putting her in danger of failing to defend her gold medal from the 2011 Games in Guadalajara.

"Every day there was a decision," the 2013 world champion said. "I had timelines of when I had to do my routines and I met all those every day. We wanted to make sure we weren't putting my safety at risk. So every day I was getting assessed and made sure I didn't have any more symptoms."

But this Sunday, the five-foot-two MacLennan reigned supreme on the trampoline once again, capturing Pan Am gold in front of a large crowd at Toronto Coliseum, known outside of the Games as the Ricoh Centre.

Hers was the most difficult routine among all the competitors, scoring 53.560 en route to her gold medal.

"I'm ecstatic," MacLennan told the Sentinel. "Competing in front of a home crowd is just so different, so much better. Having the support behind you makes a world of difference, and when you win, the cheering is that much better."

Her lapse in training was evident in the qualification rounds on Saturday, struggling her way to a sixth-place finish.

Few athletes have gotten as much press as MacLennan leading up to and during the 2015 Pan Am Games, entering as both the reigning Pan Am and Olympic champion. MacLennan won Canada's only gold in the 2012 Olympics in London.

She says the expectations put on her were "motivating."

"The expectations on me have always been high since London," said MacLennan. "They don't really bother me though, it just motivates me to be better."

MacLennan's mentor Karen Cockburn, eight years her elder, took the bronze medal. She was the eighth and final athlete to compete in the final, and when the Stouffville native completed her third-place routine, MacLennan could barely contain her excitement.

"We've talked about it before, but nothing really matches that experience," said MacLennan. "It was really amazing. I don't think there's anything that could top that."

MacLennan's winning performance wasn't even her best effort. Her injury prevented her from doing her three triple somersault routine that won her the 2014 World Championships, the first women in history to do so.

Still, her second-best was good enough to once again prove that she is the best in the world.

"I went with what was comfortable and it worked out. I was confident with my routine, and I think that probably had a big impact on how I performed."

The win was part of a gold medal sweep for Canada, in which Keegan Soehn of Red Deer, Alberta, was the champion in the men's event. Jason Burnett of Nobleton finished just off the podium in fourth place.