

King trampolinists gain competitive edge heading into Rio

By Jake Courtepatte

Two of King Township's high-flying Olympians will have at their disposal a training device owned by only two other countries, thanks to a fund for developing high-performance athletes.

Gymnastics Canada hosted members of the Mark Lowry Memorial Sports Excellence Fund, including Mark's family, at Skyrider's Trampoline Place in Vaughan last week. There, they presented King City's Rosie MacLennan and Nobleton's Jason Burnett with three sets of 'Horizontal Displacement Devices,' cutting-edge technology for currently only available to Russian and Chinese trampolinists.

The device, which is placed under all four legs of the trampoline, is used to measure how far a gymnast moves away from the centre point of the trampoline on each of their 10 skills. The farther away the gymnast moves, the higher the score deduction.

'We're absolutely thrilled to get this funding, and get this new equipment here,' said Burnett. 'It's going to be revolutionary to our training and we're very excited to test it out to see what kind of benefits we can gain from it. I'm sure there's plenty to come from it.' Skyrider's Trampoline Place, owned by coach Dave Ross, is the main training grounds for both MacLennan and Burnett. Both will be heading to Rio for the 2016 Summer Games in August.

MacLennan is the reigning Olympic gold medalist in women's trampoline, while Burnett will be taking part in his third Games and won a silver medal in 2008.

'Every advantage that we can get is incredible,' said MacLennan. 'I remember talking to Dave and one of the edges that we have over a lot of the athletes is we really want to be here (at Skyrider's) and that's because Dave of the environment that Dave makes, we love the sport and we're really passionate about it. Any support that we can get to try and get that extra edge is so much appreciated.'