

Country Day School snowboarders bring home the gold

By Robert Belardi

The Country Day School can add a few more medals to their collection.

The snowboarding program won the Conference of Independent Schools Athletic Association (CISAA) gold for the second year in a row. It was the fifth consecutive medal for the boys' team and second consecutive for the girls.

It gets better. Late last month, the most talented athletes from the program, travelled to Alpine Ski Club to compete in the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA).

The program walked away with their fifth consecutive OFSAA podium. King City resident Jeevan Gosal won gold for the second year in a row in the individual competition. Another King native, Dillan Walker, finished just shy of the bronze in fourth place; his older brother Cole Walker won gold back in 2018.

As a team, the boys finished in first place. Led by Gosal and Walker, the team consisting of Liam Wishart, Ryan Bannerman and Benjamin Smylie got the job done.

The girls' team, consisting of Angelica Tait, Tegan Asprey and Hailey Fauchere, gave it their all in this year's competition.

CDS's girls' team won OFSAA last season and the boys won the competition two years in a row prior to that.

Since taking over as coach of the snowboarding team in the second year of the program back in 2014-2015, Jennifer Weening spoke with the King Sentinel on the phone while currently on maternity leave, about two of the reasons behind the school's success.

"Parent commitment, and the creation of the culture around the program," said Weening.

The parents financially supported the program to hire professional ski coach and owner, of Mixed Movements, Andrew Robertson, to provide proper training and preparation for these competitions. The school has currently superseded the parents and taken on the payment now. Robertson has been a part of CDS, for the past seven years.

"We've had parents over the last few years, purchasing extra medals to make sure that every member of the team that wins CISAA gold, silver or bronze takes home a medal," Weening added.

Parents attend the hills to support the children. Former King City residents Paul and Julia Sward, began the purchasing of backpacks and hoodies for the program, adding the apparel in support and growing the culture of it.

The students have added their own contributions. The snowboarder's, meet to wax the boards on days of the competitions, and solidify what it means to be a part of a team.

This sport is one of the leading examples of a tight-knit community. The camaraderie has been exceptionally strong within CDS, and also between the other teams.

Everyone gets along with everyone. It's a laid-back atmosphere.

Although snowboarding can be argued as one of the most unknown sports in high school competitions, it is most certainly growing. Weening learned to snowboard back in high school and said there was very little opportunity anywhere for it. Student athletes have a huge opportunity to compete in high levels of this sport right through school.

She stated that the school's program can feed into amateur programs outside the classroom that children have the chance to compete in events such as Snowboard Cross.

"If you're not doing this with your school, you may not even know that stuff is out there," Weening said.

With a prosperous snowboarding program finding success in recent years, it might be safe to judge, the school will continue to be a fierce competitor for years to come.