

Zhou and Zhang strike silver for CDS at OFSAA Mixed Doubles Badminton



By Jim Stewart

The mixed doubles team of Rayna Zhou and Zhi Wei Zhang captured OFSAA silver medals at the provincial high school badminton championships played at Trinity College School in Port Hope. Zhou and Zhang inscribed their names last week into the historical records of Country Day School by winning the Cyclone's first-ever OFSAA medal in badminton. Kim Sillcox, Director of Communications and Marketing for the prestigious private high school in King City, praised Zhou's program-building and the breadth of her racquet sports experience: "Rayna is responsible for helping to start a Badminton team at CDS upon her arrival in Grade 8. That first year, she played up a few times with the Senior School team before taking a two-year hiatus during the pandemic. Having played since she was a young child growing up in China, she started taking lessons and playing recreationally in Grade 5 after playing competitive table tennis and tennis." Sillcox noted that Zhou "won CISAA Gold (in 2022) in Senior mixed doubles Badminton with her partner Richie Zhang '23. In September of this year, Rayna started playing in provincial tournaments once again and has won numerous medals, including a gold and bronze in singles, a gold, silver and bronze in doubles, a gold in mixed doubles and silver in doubles in the championship tournament." In addition to Zhou's impressive medal haul over the last two years, Sillcox also credited the Grade 12 student's determination to battle back from injury and assume the mantle of leadership: "This spring marked her final season playing for CDS. Since there were more girls on the team than previous years and Rayna was recuperating from an injured tailbone, she chose to play doubles instead of singles and has been mentoring her teammate Klara Gong in Grade 9. She and Klara advanced to CISAA on May 24 and finished (in 5th place)." The CDS Communications and Marketing Director also praised Zhou's playing partner for his badminton acumen and a pair of CISAA bronze medals in singles he earned in 2022 and 2023: "Zhi Wei Zhang has played Badminton since childhood as well and joined the CDS team in Grade 9. Last year, and again this year in Grade 10, Zhi Wei won the CISAA Bronze medal in singles. He has also played competitively outside of school for the past five years. In May, Zhi Wei competed in the national championships in both singles and doubles." CDS Badminton Coach Josh Collins spoke with pride about the evident qualities demonstrated by both Zhou and Zhang as student-athletes: "Not only are they provincially-ranked players, but they understand what it takes to get to the next level and apply the daily character traits of being

committed, dedicated, determined, and resilient during phases of setbacks. To me, that's where the real proud moments in coaching happen. With her graduation on the horizon, Zhou has her eyes set on an outstanding post-secondary destination and degree. According to Kim Sillcox, the OFSAA silver medalist who hopes to play Badminton while pursuing Chemical Engineering at the University of Toronto.