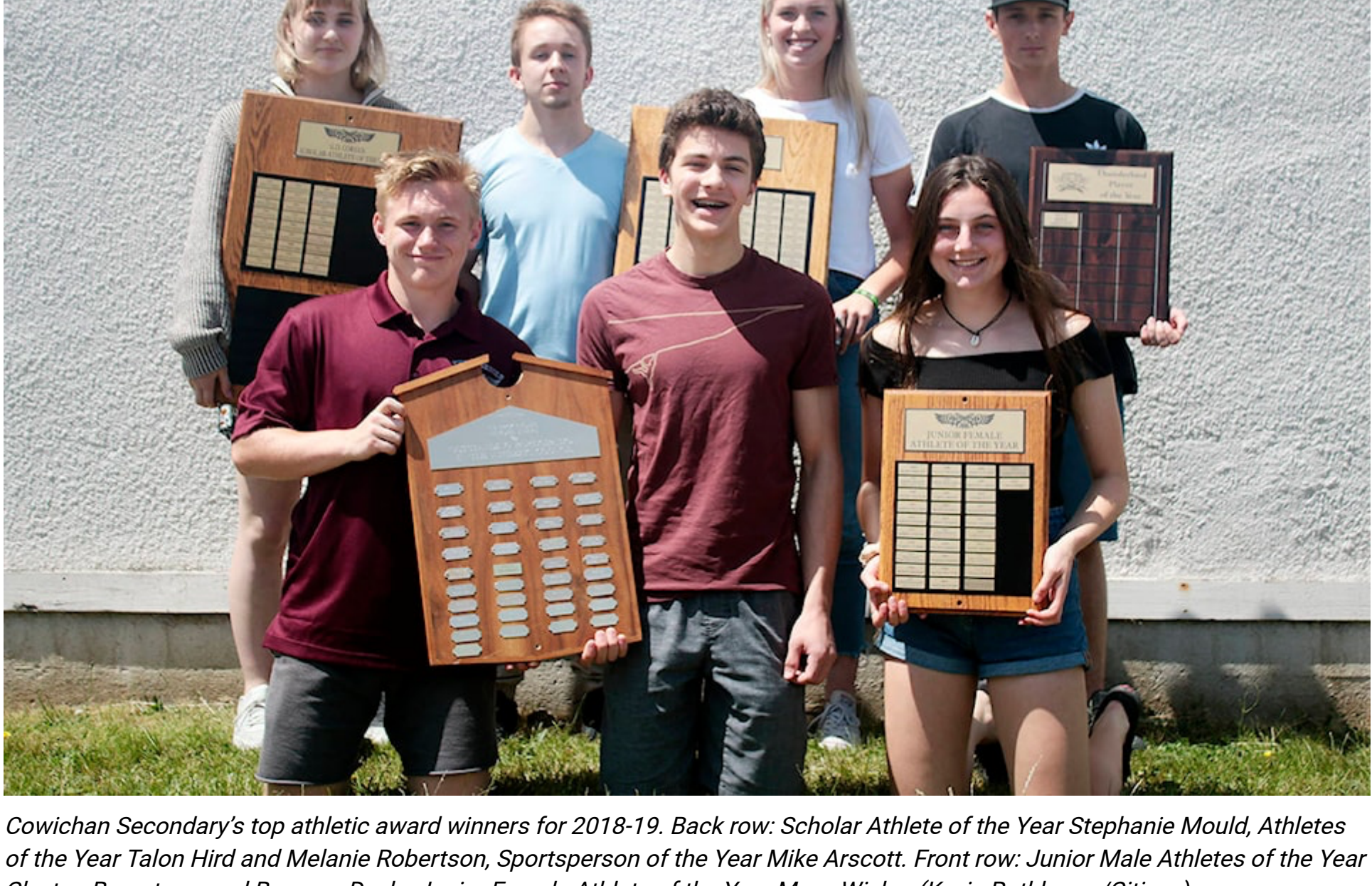


# Athletic achievements honoured at Cow High

Robertson and Hird named Athletes of the Year

Kevin Rothbauer

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Cowichan Secondary's top athletic award winners for 2018-19. Back row: Scholar Athlete of the Year Stephanie Mould, Athletes of the Year Talon Hird and Melanie Robertson, Sportsperson of the Year Mike Arscott. Front row: Junior Male Athletes of the Year Clayton Bergstrom and Brennan Doyle, Junior Female Athlete of the Year Macy Wiebe. (Kevin Rothbauer/Citizen)

A vital member of several Cowichan Secondary sports teams for the last few years, Melanie Robertson capped her time at the school off as Senior Female Athlete of the Year for 2018-19.

"It definitely means a lot," said Robertson, who represented Cow High in field hockey, ice hockey and rugby this year. "Being recognized is awesome.

Robertson's best sports memory from her high school years is winning the AAA field hockey provincial championship as a Grade 10 in 2016, something the team came close to matching this past fall, when the Thunderbirds finished second.

"Definitely a lot of memories stand out," she said.

Having wrapped up her time at Cow High, Robertson will attend the University of Victoria next year, where she plans to study recreation and health education, and hopes to play field hockey for the Vikes.

Talon Hird will get a rare opportunity to repeat as Senior Male Athlete of the Year next year after taking the 2018-19 honour as a Grade 11, something he wasn't anticipating.

"It was really unexpected for me to win," Hird said. "It's flattering, really, that they count me as one of the best athletes in the school, especially since all the other nominees were in Grade 12.

"I came in thinking I might be nominated, but I was almost sure I wouldn't be winning."

Hird won his weight class at the provincial wrestling championships for the fourth straight year, and also placed fourth at nationals in freestyle — one spot away from being an alternate for the national team and second in Greco-Roman. Not content to compete in just one sport, he also ran the 100m for Cow High's track team.

With another year of high school left, Hird is aiming for a fifth-straight provincial title next year and a national championship in freestyle.

The Scholar Athlete of the Year is another wrestler, Stephanie Mould, who had no problems balancing her athletic pursuits — which included a second-place finish at provincials and a third at nationals, as well as training with the national team — with academics, where she has also been tremendously successful.

"Your social life is involved with either of the two," Mould said. "You're either working out with your friends or studying with your friends. You don't really just hang out."

That's not a chore, however.

"Wrestling is my favourite thing to do, so I find that more fun," she added.

Mould will head to Simon Fraser University next year to study chemistry and compete for the wrestling team.

The Sportsperson of the Year is Mike Arscott, recognized for his effort and leadership with Cow High's boys ice hockey program, which had a particularly strong year, winning the Cowichan Valley league and becoming the first public school in recent memory to win the senior division at the Ross Cup tournament.

"Obviously, I wanted the team to do well, to do the best I could and for all the guys on the team to do the best they could," he said.

Apart from school sports, Arscott also plays baseball and house hockey, but got a lot of enjoyment out of school hockey this year.

"It's a lot better [than house]," he said. "It's more competitive, more fun."

Enrolled at Vancouver Island University next year, Arscott says he may try out for the hockey team while studying math and physics with the goal of becoming a high school teacher.

The Junior Male Athlete of the Year award was shared by two-sport star Clayton Bergstrom and national-level rock climber Brennan Doyle.

In Grade 10, Bergstrom was named MVP of the senior boys basketball and junior boys rugby teams, and competes in both sports outside of the school as well. Doyle, meanwhile, finished first in the adult national championships in speed climbing, and second in bouldering and third in lead at the youth nationals.

Both were aware of the award, but neither one expected to win.

"I thought about it a little bit, but as it came up, I wasn't too sure," Bergstrom said.

"It wasn't one of my goals for the year, but it was kinda cool to win," Doyle added.

Bergstrom will play Tsunami rugby this summer and hopes to get the call from Team BC, while Doyle will head to Italy late this summer for the world championships in bouldering and speed climbing, and to Ecuador in the fall for the Pan Am championships.

Macy Wiebe was surprised to be recognized as the Junior Female Athlete of the Year.

"There are a lot of amazing athletes at Cow High doing so many different sports," she pointed out. "It's awesome Cow High has so many successful teams. You never know who's going to win."

In addition to playing rugby for the school, the Cowichan Rugby Football Club, the Island Tsunami and Team BC, Wiebe also played soccer, but her biggest accomplishment, she said, was winning the Las Vegas with Team BC.

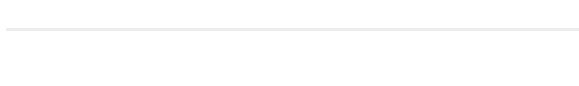
Unfortunately for Cow High, Wiebe won't be back for Grade 11 as she is headed to the Rugby Canada development academy at Belmont Secondary in Langford next year.

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