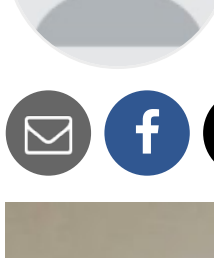
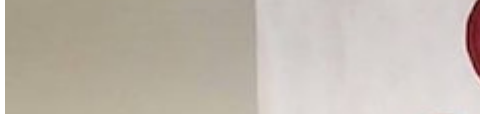


# Best of the T-Birds honoured at awards night

Oliver Castle and Emma Dewit named Athletes of the Year



[Kevin Rothbauer](#)  
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Cowichan Secondary major athletic award winners, from left: Junior Female Athlete of the Year Jessica Castle, Sportsperson of the Year Brandon Reymerink, Athletes of the Year Oliver Castle and Emma Dewit, Scholar Athlete of the Year Julia Cutt, and Junior Male Athlete of the Year Talon Hird. (Heather Goodman photo)

Oliver Castle figured one of his teammates from the Cowichan Secondary School senior boys basketball team would be named Male Athlete of the Year at the school’s annual awards banquet last Tuesday.

But when one of them, Brandon Reymerink, was named Sportsperson of the Year, it started to sink in that Castle was a contender despite being in Grade 11.

“It was kind of surprising,” Castle admitted. “I expected it to go to Brandon or Jaden [Bhopal] because they’re a year older. As soon as Brandon got the other one, it was down to me and Jaden, and it was a real possibility.”

Most accomplished as a swimmer, both for the high school team and the Duncan Stingrays club, Castle also represented Cow High in basketball, soccer, track and field, and volleyball.

Castle was the lone male swimmer to represent the school at the provincial championships in November, but his highlight of the season came from one of his team sports, basketball, in which the Thunderbirds finished third at Islands and challenged second-place Belmont for a berth at provincials. The sense of camaraderie as the team peaked in the postseason stuck with him.

“In that moment, I knew that’s what it was like to be in a team sport,” Castle said. “It was a cool experience to be part of that.”

Castle admitted he had been disappointed to miss out on the Junior Male Athlete of the Year award a year ago, but he has now made it his goal to be a two-time winner of the senior award.

“I was bummed last year, but it went to Aidan Doyle, who is on the national team for climbing, so you can’t argue with that,” he said. “I hope to repeat it next year.”

The 2018 Female Athlete of the Year award went to multisport phenom Emma Dewit in her final year at Cowichan Secondary.

“It meant a lot to me,” Dewit said. “Sports are a real passion of mine. It’s an honour to get this award and wrap up my high school career on a high note.”

Dewit, [who was named Junior Female Athlete of the Year in 2016](#), didn’t deny that she was hoping to win the senior award this year.

“I think I said in Grade 10 that my goal was to win in Grade 12,” she said. “I was happy when I won it. I worked hard for it.”

Dewit represented Cow High in cross-country, track and field, basketball and soccer this year, and also competed in club soccer and flag football outside school. She’s heading to UVic next fall to study sciences and play soccer for the Vikes. Most of her highlights from her high school years came from her athletic pursuits.

“I’ve enjoyed sports here,” she said. “I’ve made some good friends and memories along the way.”

Brandon Reymerink, who was Male Junior Athlete of Year two years ago, was named Sportsperson of the Year for 2017-18, and was pleased to be recognized for his efforts on and off the court.

“It was really important to me,” he said. “It means more to me than just playing sports. I’m a pretty competitive person, so I was taking a look at the bigger awards, and I thought this one was special because its about more than just athletics.”

In addition to starring for the senior boys basketball and volleyball teams, Reymerink was on Athletic Council, helped with scorekeeping, and helped coach the Grade 8 boys basketball team.

Like Castle, Reymerink had special memories of taking the senior boys basketball team to third place on the Island, something he didn’t necessarily see happening at the start of the season.

“That was a good moment for us to get that far and a good end to my time here,” he said. “I’ve been playing with the same guys for four years.”

Reymerink is off to VIU next year, where he plans to major in P.E. and minor in French, perhaps to pursue a career in education.

“My time at Cow High was enjoyable,” he said. “I’ve been here four year. Sports are what I enjoyed the most.”

Julia Cutt was especially surprised to be named the G.D. Corsan Scholar Athlete.

“I didn’t even know the award existed,” she said. “I was super excited and really honoured. I put a lot of work into my studies, so it’s nice to be recognized for that as well as my passion for sports.”

Cutt, who represented the school in basketball and cross-country, admitted it’s not always easy to excel in sports and in the classroom.

“I think it’s important to be well-rounded, so that’s something I strive for,” she said. “It’s difficult, but it’s important to me.”

The senior girls basketball season, which saw the T-Birds win two tournaments and contend for a berth at provincials, was the sports highlight of the school year for Cutt.

“We came together as a team,” she said. “We were solid. That was really good for us.”

Cutt will study engineering at UVic next fall, with the goal of eventually going into architecture.

Jessica Castle, a star in multiple sports like her older brother, Oliver, was named Junior Female Athlete of the Year.

“I was really excited to win,” she said. “It’s kind of a payoff for all my work. I played a lot of sports and put a lot of effort into trying my best. This is a nice reward for that.”

Castle competed for Cowichan Secondary in basketball, senior girls soccer, track and field, and cross-country, and is also a member of the Maple Bay Rowing Club. The biggest highlights of the season for her were winning the Island championship in cross-country and reaching the provincial championships in junior girls basketball. She doesn’t have any specific goals for her next two years at Cow High, other than to enjoy playing sports.

“I just want to keep doing what I like doing,” she said.

The Junior Male Athlete of the Year for 2017-18 was Talon Hird, who in his first year at Cow High won his third consecutive provincial wrestling championship.

“It means a lot to get recognized for all the hard work I’ve put in to get to the level of success I’m being rewarded the trophy for,” he said.

Hird also ran in the 100m at the Mid Island track championships and played hockey outside school. He competed at the national wrestling championships in Edmonton, where he won the Greco-Roman title. He wants to return next year and win gold in freestyle.

Hird won his first two B.C. titles representing Queen of Angels School, and is on pace for five, the most one athlete can achieve.

“It felt really good. My coaches are always pushing me to strive for five, so it felt really good to accomplish that.”

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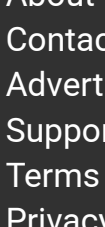
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