

= Summer Mortimer =

Summer Ashley Mortimer ( born April 22 , 1993 ) is a Canadian paraswimmer who initially competed internationally for Canada , but switched to the Netherlands national paralympic team in 2014 . She has won seven world @-@ championship finals for Canada and the Netherlands , and four medals for Canada at her first Paralympic Games in London : two gold , one silver and one bronze .

Mortimer competed in the 2008 Canadian Olympic Trials as an able @-@ bodied swimmer , and retrained as a paraswimmer after a trampolining accident . She began competing at the international level in 2010 with an SM10 classification , setting world records in the process ( one of which she broke again in qualifying for the 2012 Paralympics ) . Competing in six events , Mortimer won medals in all four individual races . She holds world records in the S10 50- and 100 @-@ metre long @-@ course freestyle and the 50- 100- and 200 @-@ metre backstroke . In 2013 Mortimer applied to join the Netherlands national team , and announced her transfer in June 2014 . Winning three medals ( two gold and one silver ) at the 2014 IPC championships , she set two European records and expressed disappointment for not setting world records .

She will not be competing in the 2016 Summer Olympics , citing " serious health reasons . "

= = Career = =

Mortimer began swimming at age two ; her mother is a co @-@ owner of the Oakville Swim Academy . At age nine , she began swimming competitively . As a member of the Hamilton Aquatic Club and the Golden Horseshoe Aquatic Club , Mortimer competed at the 2008 Canadian Olympic Trials for the Beijing games .

She is classified SM10 , the least @-@ disabled paraswimming classification . SM10 is open to those with " very minimal weakness affecting the legs ; Swimmers with restriction of hip joint movement ; Swimmers with both feet deformed ; Swimmers with one leg amputated below the knee ; Swimmers missing one hand . This is the class with the most physical ability " .

= = = Paraswimming for Canada = = =

A serious injury at a competitive trampolining event shattered most of the bones in Mortimer 's feet ; she was nationally ranked in the sport . When she began trying to walk again , she relearned swimming .

Unaware that the Worlds were being broadcast , Mortimer was caught by surprise and stuck her tongue out at the camera . Her relaxed attitude continued at the Olympics , where she said that although there may be " some underlying arrogance " , she was not consciously trying to send a message to her rivals . Mortimer wears an elastic band which she snaps when aware of a negative thought ; " incredibly hard on myself " , it helps her realize the frequency of her " down " thinking and changes her mental perspective .

As a former able @-@ bodied competitive swimmer , she is annoyed by the idea held by some able @-@ bodied swimmers that paralympic swimming is a " joke " . " The Paralympics are so much harder than the able @-@ bodied side of sport . I know from first hand . It 's way harder " ; Mortimer said that she knew " truckloads of able @-@ bodied athletes who constantly make fun of the Paralympics " . She hopes for a change in attitude , noting how much change fellow medalist Benoit Huot has seen since the 2000 Paralympics in Sydney .

= = = World @-@ level competition = = =

At the 2010 IPC Swimming World Championships in Eindhoven , Netherlands , Mortimer won four gold medals and set five world records . In November of that year , she was Female Paraswimmer of the Year at Swimming Canada 's Big Splash .

At the April 2012 Canadian Olympic and Paralympic Swimming Trials in Montreal , Mortimer aimed

to lower her world record in the 50 @-@ metre freestyle from 28 @.@ 30 seconds to about 28 @.@ 27 ; she finished in 28 @.@ 17 seconds . Between the Trials and the Paralympics , she won the 100 @-@ metre backstroke in July at the Canada Cup ; this result surprised Mortimer , who had a " rough time " with her feet the previous month . That month , she also won the women 's 100 @-@ metre S10 at the Speedo Paraswimming CAN @-@ AM in Winnipeg .

= = = = London Paralympics = = = =

Mortimer qualified for six women 's SM10 events at the 2012 London Paralympics ? the 200 @-@ metre individual medley , 4 x 100 m freestyle relay 34pts , 4 x 100 m medley relay , 50- and 100 @-@ metre freestyle and 100 @-@ metre backstroke ? and expectations for her were high . On August 30 , the first day of the competition , Sophie Pascoe of New Zealand won the SM10 200 @-@ metre individual medley ; Mortimer took the silver medal . For a half @-@ hour before the competition , Mortimer was " bawling her eyes out " ; she told The Canadian Press , " [ Being ] here and meeting all these people made me realize I am so incredibly grateful for the experience I ? ve had as a result of my accident . I don ? t know if this was part of the journey I was supposed to walk in life but I wouldn ? t take it back for the world " . The next day , she won the S10 50 @-@ metre freestyle gold medal in a record time of 28 @.@ 10 seconds . Mortimer 's time was .07 second faster than her April Trials record , and .14 second faster than Pascoe 's time ; she went into the race " a bit annoyed " and " mad at anyone who was going to take it from me " .

In the preliminary round of the 100 @-@ metre backstroke Mortimer placed third , and hoped to be away from " the main people " in the finals to maintain her focus . She won the gold medal in the final on September 4 , setting a world record of 1 : 05 @.@ 90 after overcoming Pascoe 's half @-@ second lead at the turn . Mortimer noted that her time was faster than her best able @-@ bodied time .

In the 100 @-@ metre freestyle ( her final solo event ) Mortimer finished third , 0 @.@ 69 second behind Pascoe and France 's Elodie Lorandi ; Canadian Aurelie Rivard finished fourth . Mortimer 's bronze was Canada 's only medal on day nine of the competition .

As part of the Canadian women 's 34 @-@ point 4 x 100 m freestyle relay and 4 x 100 m medley relay teams , Mortimer did not medal . Although her freestyle @-@ relay team clocked 4 : 38 @.@ 23 ( missing the 2000 Canadian record by 0 @.@ 22 second ) , they placed seventh in the finals . With Katarina Roxon , Morgan Bird and Brianna Nelson in the medley relay , Mortimer 's team finished seventh and last . Her times of 32 @.@ 35 for the 50 @-@ metre and 1 : 06 @.@ 37 for the 100 @-@ metre were the fastest for her legs of the events . At the 2012 Olympics , Mortimer 's four medals were the most for any Canadian athlete or para @-@ athlete .

= = = = After London = = = =

Following Mortimer 's last individual event at London she said that although she intended to try for the 2013 World Aquatics Championships , the 2015 Parapan American Games , and the 2016 Paralympics , she takes life year @-@ by @-@ year . From October 2012 to April 2013 at least , she planned to take time off to focus on her health .

Mortimer appeared at the Olympic Heroes Parade in Toronto . For the event , Paralympic athletes were given rooms at a hotel on the outskirts of Toronto while Olympic athletes were housed downtown and received gifts ; at a dinner , the Paralympians were relegated to a different dining room . A Canadian Paralympic Committee spokesperson told The Spectator that the committee scrambled during the Paralympics to have their athletes included , and with their limited funding they could not afford the perks received by the Olympic athletes .

The athlete is a 2015 Pan and Parapan American Games ambassador , and has given presentations at schools . Mortimer receives honorariums for these appearances , and hoped to earn \$ 3 @,@ 000 in speaking fees in 2012 . She appeared on CBC 's Play On ! Street Hockey Championship in Niagara Falls , assisted with the post @-@ position draw at the Pattison Canadian International Championship Stakes , and has appeared in publicity photo shoots .

Competitive @-@ swimwear manufacturer Arena sponsors Mortimer . In November 2012 , she went public about her and her uncle 's difficulty in finding sponsorship since the 2010 Worlds . Mortimer said that Paralympic athletes received no prize money , despite thousands of dollars given by the government to winning Olympians and their coaches . She told The Hamilton Spectator , " We get a pat on the back and a good job note from Stephen Harper . It 's upsetting . Trust me , coming from being an able @-@ bodied athlete to a Paralympian , it infuriates me " , and that she receives \$ 3 @, @ 000 a year in funding from the government . Mortimer 's return to the pool included the April 9 , 2014 Cam Am Para Swimming competition , where she won three gold medals .

= = = Paraswimming for the Netherlands = = =

In 2013 , Mortimer applied to switch to the Netherlands national team ; since her mother is from that country , she has dual citizenship . In June 2014 , the Hamilton Spectator reported the change . Although day @-@ to @-@ day funding in the Netherlands is similar to that in Canada , the former offers prize money ; in the 2012 Paralympics , Mortimer would have won \$ 60 @, @ 000 for her gold medals alone . She will train in Amersfoort .

She was successful at the August 2014 IPC Swimming European Championships in Eindhoven . Breaking the women 's 50 @-@ metre freestyle record in the morning 's heats , Mortimer lowered it again to 28 @. @ 12 in the finals . In the S10 100 @-@ metre backstroke , she broke the European record in the morning 's heats and again in the final . Although she won a gold medal , she told the IPC website : " I wanted a world record . I 'm not satisfied , I 'm not super happy . That wasn 't the perfect race . But this was a gauge to see where I am at . "

= = Awards = =

The Big Splash ( from Swimming Canada )

2011 : Female Para @-@ Swimmer of the Year ; her father was the Para @-@ Female Coach of the Year

2012 : TAS Para @-@ Swimming Female Swimmer of the Year

Ontario Sport Award ( from Sport Alliance Ontario )

2011 : Female Athlete with a Disability of the Year

2012 : Female Athlete with a Disability of the Year ; her coach , Reg Chappell , was Male Coach of the Year .

Queen Elizabeth II Diamond Jubilee Medal ( 2012 )

Mortimer , Melissa Tancredi and Cory Conacher were nominated for the 2013 Golden Horseshoe Athlete of the Year for residents of Hamilton or Burlington . Tancredi won . Columnist Dave Feschuk of the Toronto Star listed Mortimer as a contender for the 2012 Lou Marsh Trophy ( won by Christine Sinclair ) .

= = Personal life = =

In November 2008 , shortly after the Olympic trampoline trials , 15 @-@ year @-@ old Mortimer missed the sponge pit after bouncing on a mini @-@ trampoline and fell 15 feet ( 4 @. @ 6 m ) onto a concrete pad ; her parents , spectators at the competition , saw the accident . The bones in her feet were shattered , and doctors suggested that she would never stand again . Amputation was a possibility , although Mortimer was only informed of it in 2011 .

She spent six months in a wheelchair and another 18 months on crutches . Mortimer 's right foot has six screws and a plate , and her left foot has two screws ; her ankles are continuously sore , and occasionally lock up . During the Paralympics she told the Canadian Press that her feet were " killing " her , and her condition is degenerative . When Mortimer 's casts were removed her walking rehabilitation was in the water , and she thinks she would not be able to walk without the aquatic rehab . Before the injury , she had 10 sessions per week in the pool ( swimming 6 ? 7 kilometres ( 3

@. @ 7 ? 4 @. @ 3 mi ) each session ) in addition to weight training and running . After the accident her weekly threshold at the local YMCA pool was 30 to 40 kilometres ( 19 to 25 mi ) and four sessions in the weight room . Her disability is not usually evident to spectators , and according to the Canadian Press she walks with a " halfway normal gait . "

Sportsnet Magazine chose Mortimer for its 2013 " Beauty of Sport " issue , and she was photographed in Las Vegas wearing a bikini . She hoped to increase interest in paralympic sport and to celebrate the bodies of all athletes .

Mortimer illustrated The Night I Met the Boogie Man , written by her twin sister Julia , and created murals and other artwork for a fundraiser benefiting Olympic and Paralympic athletes . She is a graduate of Westmount Secondary School . She was named after Summer Sanders , an American Olympic swimmer who won four medals ( two gold , one silver and one bronze ) at the 1992 Summer Olympics in Barcelona , one year before she was born .