

Speed Skaters Finish Busy Season with Strong Results

April 18, 2014, Charlottetown – P.E.I. short-track speed skaters closed out their competitive season at a pair of meets in Quebec and Ontario recently. A contingent of six Islanders were among over 120 of the top 11 to 15 year-old skaters from Ontario, Quebec, Nunavut and the Atlantic provinces competing at the Canada East Short Track Championships in Riviere-du-Loup, QC.

Zach Moran of Charlottetown posted the top finishes for the P.E.I. squad, placing ninth in his 200m sprint. Moran also used his strong starts to earn tenth in the 400m distance, enroute to an 11th overall placement in the 15 year boys group. Jared Vriends of Pleasant Grove has close behind Moran in the overall standings, placing 12th overall in his group, including a tenth place finish in his 3000m points race. Vriends placed 12th in the 1500m after a costly fall in the B final. He also finished 11th and 13th in his 200m and 400m events, respectively.

Also competing for PEI in the 15 year boys category was Andrew McQuaid. McQuaid finished 14th overall, with his top finish an 11th place in the 1500m distance. Moran, Vriends and McQuaid all posted personal bests in the 200m distance, while Moran and Vriends also posted PBs in the 400m. McQuaid posted a second PB in the 1500m event. The trio teamed together for a 7th place finish in their relay.

Peter McQuaid was the Island's sole representative in the 13 year boys group, placing 12th overall, ahead of skaters from Ontario, Nova Scotia and Nunavut. McQuaid finished tenth in his 3000m points race and notched PBs in both his 200m and 400m distances, going below 43 seconds in each of his three 400m races. The Charlottetown skater joined a pair of Nova Scotia skaters to finish 7th in his relay event.

Miriam Burnett of Charlottetown overcame a fall in her 1500m heat to finish 13th overall among 13 year-old girls. Despite opening the competition with the fall in one of her strongest events, Burnett bounced back with in her 400m distance, clocking below 44 seconds in each of her three races for a new PB. Burnett teamed with skaters from Ontario, Nunavut and New Brunswick in the team relays, finishing 7th.

Kristen Binns of Stratford had her best finish of the meet in the relay event, where she and a pair of New Brunswick skaters won the B final to finish fifth, after narrowly missing the A final. The Maritime team had a pair of consistent races, finishing faster than a pair of all Ontario teams and an Ontario / Nunavut team. In the individual events, Binns finished 14th in each of her 1500m and 3000m points races and 15th in her shorter distances, ending up tied for 14th overall in her 12 year-old age group.

P.E.I. coach Sarah Taylor said she was pleased with the performances. "Most of these skaters will be trying for a spot on our Canada Games Team next season. So, this was a great chance for them to see the level of competition that is typical for Canada Games. I thought they responded very well and I know they'll use this as additional motivation for their training in the months ahead."

Rob Binns closed out his season at the Masters International Short Track Games in Ottawa. Binns was competing in the 40 – 44 years age category at the event which attracted 80 masters skaters from Canada, the U.S., Great Britain, Australia and Serbia. The Island skater finished 6th overall in his age group after four individual events, including a trip to the A final in the 1500m. Binns also found success in the relay event, where he teamed with a British skater and two Montreal area skaters to win the B final in the men's relay.