

Speed Skaters Earn Podium Spots, New Records

March 28, 2014, Charlottetown – P.E.I. speed skaters captured podium finishes and new records at a trio of recent meets on both the long and short tracks.

Jared Vriends of Pleasant Grove set three new provincial records for Junior Men during a recent Canada Cup long track meet in Calgary, Alberta. Vriends, competing in his first national level event in long track, set the new provincial standards in three of his four distances, shattering records from 2006 in two cases. Skating with a strong international field, the P.E.I. skater posted a 41.37 second time in his 500 metre race, bettering the previous provincial mark by more than a second. Vriends also posted new record times of 1:24.28 in the 1000m and 2:09.93 in the 1500m distance.

Michael Rogers was the Island's sole competitor at the Canadian Age Class Short Track Championships, held recently in Prince George, B.C. at the venue for next year's Canada Winter Games short-track competition. The Island skater earned his spot in the 62 skater field by meeting national qualification standard times and by posting the season's fastest times among Island skaters. Rogers achieved a new personal best time in the 1000m distance, enroute to finishing 21st overall among Junior B aged male competitors after four individual events. The Charlottetown skater also teamed with a pair of New Brunswick skaters for a 7th place finish in the 5000m relay.

Just days later, Rogers was back on the ice to lead a team of eighteen P.E.I. skaters into the final Atlantic short-track meet of the season in Fredericton, N.B., where the Island contingent grabbed a dozen medals, including four gold. Rogers and Carly Connell earned gold medals in Division 1 for males and females, respectively. Rob Binns took top spot in the Master's division, while Keanna Ryan grabbed the gold in Division 10. Connell posted a new provincial record for Junior Women in her 500m distance, improving on her own mark with a time of 49.408 seconds, while Binns set a new P.E.I. Masters record in the 777m distance. Ryan's gold medal was her second in as many meets.

Winning silver medals for P.E.I. were Andrew Binns in Division 5, Carter Bruce of Stratford in Division 8, Liam Chatfield in Division 10 and Anderson Arseneau in his off-Island competitive debut in Division 12. Kristen Binns (Division 5), William Lyons of Rock Barra (Division 6), Addison Bruce (Division 9) and Jane Bruce (Division 12) completed the Island club's medal haul, each taking bronze.

Other skaters competing for P.E.I. in Fredericton were Samuel Ryan, Kyle Connell, Eliana Monthony, Dakota Jager, Alex Rogers and Zachary Chatfield. Over 140 skaters from eleven clubs competed in the event, which attracted skaters from all four Atlantic Provinces.

Seven of P.E.I.'s top 11 to 15 year-old skaters will close out their season at the Canada East Short Track Championships in Riviere-du-Loup, Quebec this weekend. The Island squad will face the top skaters in their respective age classes from Ontario, Quebec, the Atlantic Provinces and Nunavut. Masters competitor Rob Binns will be the last Island speed skater to close his competitive season, at the Masters International Short Track Games being hosted in Ottawa in early April.