

Team PEI – 2015 Canada Winter Games Short Track Athletes:



Miriam Burnett

Hometown: Charlottetown

School: Queen Charlotte Intermediate School

Age: 15

Personal Bests (pre-Canada Games):

500m – 51.948

1000m – 1:46.245

1500m – 2:44.609

Like many of her Prince Edward Island teammates, Miriam Burnett grew up in a house with speed skaters. She first laced up the long blades at age 4 to keep up with older sister Ellen and brother Niall. Getting the opportunity to skate as fast as she could didn't hurt either. Success followed all three; both Ellen and Niall went on to compete nationally. Miriam began breaking records of her own while finding other ways to go fast – cross country running, track, and downhill skiing, with soccer thrown in for variety.

With a sports resume as varied as hers, it's no wonder she wants to continue with sports once she reaches university. She's got some time – still in middle school, she will again be eligible to compete in the 2019 Canada Winter Games.

On home ice in Charlottetown at the Atlantic Cup championships this November, Miriam set a new provincial mark for 14-year-old girls in the 1,500 metres.

“When he used to win big competitions like Nationals,” she said, speaking about her brother Niall, “he showed me that just because we come from a small place doesn't mean that we can't do big things.”



Carly Connell

Hometown: Charlottetown

School: Charlottetown Rural High School

Age: 16

Personal Bests (pre-Canada Games):

500m – 47.439

1000m – 1:38.762

1500m – 2:32.852

When she's not playing soccer and hockey, Carly Connell has found time to set numerous Prince Edward Island short-track records. She holds numerous age-group records and took home the overall gold medal in her age class at the Canadian Age Class Short-Track Championships in 2010. She was named to Team PEI's female soccer team for the 2013 Canada Games but couldn't compete due to a soccer-related ACL injury.

After a grueling rehab, she got back on the ice and into form in the latter half of the 2013-14 season. Her prior form was good indeed – in 2013 she notched PEI's top finish to date in the Canada East Short Track Championships, with a 5th place showing in the 200 metre pursuit.

This past November, Carly smashed seven-year-old provincial records in the 500 and 1,000 metres – and a 12-year-old record in the 1,500 metres – at the Atlantic Cup Speed Skating Championships in Charlottetown.

A speed skater since age 5, Carly has speed-skating older and younger brothers – former skater Jack and current skater Kyle.

Carly plans to attend university and continue to play as many sports as she can. Her mom inspires her, on the pitch and on the ice. “She works so hard to get me to all of my practices and games and I just want to do the best that I can for her.”



Korrina LeClair

Hometown: Charlottetown

School: Charlottetown Rural High School

Age: 16

Personal Bests (pre-Canada Games):

500m – 51.626

1000m – 1:47.922

1500m – 2:48.393

When twin sisters Korrina and Kassandra LeClair both started speed skating at age 6, it's safe to assume that – disguised in similar helmets and goggles – some people got them confused out on the ice.

With her sister no longer skating, there's no mistaking Korrina now. This is especially true after she has consistently ranked as one of PEI's top female skaters in recent seasons. LeClair also distinguished herself as one of the first two PEI athletes to compete in the Canada East Short Track Championships in Sherbrooke in 2012.

Although she's still in grade 10, she knows speed skating will be part of her future after graduation.

It's also a sure bet that her dad – who was the one who introduced her and her sister into speed skating as a way to learn to skate – couldn't be prouder. "He's the entire reason I started skating," Korrina said. "My dad always encouraged me through my tough times and helped make me into the speed skater I am today."



Andrew McQuaid

Hometown: Charlottetown

School: Colonel Gray High School

Age: 17

Personal Bests (pre-Canada Games):

500m – 47.846

1000m – 1:40.921

1500m – 2:38.102

Andrew McQuaid saw his younger brothers Peter and Thomas take up speed skating and wanted in.

The former hockey player was 11 when he decided to form the third leg of the McQuaid PEI speed-skating trifecta. Less than four years later he was singled out by Speed Skate PEI as its breakthrough skater of the year.

Andrew plays soccer for Colonel Gray High School and continues playing in the summer. He plans to attend UPEI and study medicine or health-related sciences.

He also wants to continue speed skating and eventually coach it. He says his brother Peter pushes him to be the best he can be. “He always gives 110 per cent in everything he does, he’s never intimidated, and he is always positive,” Andrew says. “Every practice, I try to work as hard as he does.”



Peter McQuaid

Hometown: Charlottetown

School: Colonel Gray High School

Age: 15

Personal Bests (pre-Canada Games):

500m – 48.115

1000m – 1:38.671

1500m – 2:29.437

McQuaid is a name that will be connected to PEI speed skating for years to come.

Already a provincial short-track record holder, Peter McQuaid will again be eligible for the 2019 Canada Winter Games. The 10th grader doesn't save his speed just for the ice; he's also a standout distance runner in track and cross-country at Colonel Gray High School and also plays soccer.

It was an eight-year-old Peter who first decided to try speed skating while watching a competition on TV with his younger brother Thomas, who's an emerging competitor in his own right. Older brother Andrew is also on the 2015 Canada Winter Games team.

Peter plans to continue playing soccer and running once he starts university to become a physiotherapist. Former PEI skater Scott Beamish inspires him because he "shows that someone from PEI can do great things in speed skating."



Zach Moran

Hometown: Charlottetown

School: Colonel Gray High School

Age: 17

Personal Bests (pre-Canada Games):

500m – 48.223

1000m – 1:38.183

1500m – 2:29.278

There are few times when Zach Moran isn't moving at high speeds.

In the spring at Colonel Gray High School he's running track, in the fall comes cross country. In the winter there's speed skating and also downhill skiing, in which Zach also used to compete as part of the PEI alpine team. He's not too bad in the water either, earning two medals in team events at the Canadian Surf Lifesaving Championships last summer. Throw in competitive Triathlon and Crossfit and a picture quickly emerges of the Perfect Athletic Storm.

From the first time he competed at age 4, Zach knew speed skating was a keeper. Having an older brother in the sport provided a bit of motivation.

In the past two years he attended Speed Skating Canada talent camps by invitation and turned in the top PEI finish at Canada East 2014. He holds a provincial age-class record in the 1,500 metre distance.

Zach says he looks to Olympian Charles Hamelin as his inspiration in the sport. "He's not just an amazing skater but he's also a great role model."

He plans to continue running competitively when he heads to university next fall to study kinesiology and related sciences.



Michael Rogers

Hometown: Charlottetown

School: Colonel Gray High School

Age: 17

Personal Bests (pre-Canada Games):

500m – 46.884

1000m – 1:36.982

1500m – 2:27.609

If speed on land equates to speed on ice, Michael Rogers is living proof.

A track and cross-country MVP at Colonel Gray High School, Michael owns Prince Edward Island short-track speed skating records at various distances. This season he won three of the four distances he entered on home ice at the Atlantic Cup in Charlottetown.

On the recommendation of a family friend, he started speed skating at age 5 and never looked back. Younger brother Alex also skates competitively for the club.

Michael was one of the first Islanders to attend the Canada East meet, during its second year in 2012 in Sherbrooke, QC.

His track and cross-country coach Michael Peterson inspires him on and off the ice. “I am grateful to him, both for getting me into long-distance running and for serving as a great role model who has helped me strive for success in whatever I do,” he said.

After graduation Michael hopes to study sciences or business in university while continuing to compete in cross country.



Jared Vriends

Hometown: Pleasant Grove

School: Charlottetown Rural High School

Age: 17

Personal Bests (pre-Canada Games):

500m – 47.189

1000m – 1:37.237

1500m – 2:26.073

Starting speed skating at the relatively late age of 11 definitely hasn't proven a disadvantage for Jared Vriends, who holds Prince Edward Island records in both short-track and long-track events. Already a hockey player, he decided to switch to speed skating because it allowed him to keep doing the part of hockey that he enjoyed the most, while still competing at a high level.

This past March, Jared qualified for and competed in a Canada Cup series long-track competition in Calgary. He's also a consistently high finisher in provincial and out-of province short-track competitions.

Jared is a busy musician who plays trumpet in four different bands at Charlottetown Rural High School. In his "spare" spare time, he also does volunteer work at his church and at Charlottetown's Queen Elizabeth Hospital and has a leadership role as the athlete representative on Speed Skate PEI's Board of Directors.

He says Team PEI Coach Sarah Taylor has proved to be the difference in his skating career, "pushing me to train my hardest and be the best I can be."

Jared plans to move on to university to study either electrical or software engineering.