

SPORT



photos motioninsports.com (above) and submitted (below)

ABOVE: Cyrus Baker (left) captains North Shore Lacrosse's Midget C team en route to a bronze medal showing at the minor box lacrosse provincial championships. Brian Gillis, below, suited up for Ireland's national team for the World Lacrosse Championships played last month in Manchester, England.

Smith races to U23 title

TWO North Shore track stars scored medals for Canada at the North American, Central American and Caribbean Athletic Association under-23 championships held last month in Miramar, Fla.

North Vancouver's Jessica Smith claimed gold in the women's 800-metre race, edging a pair of runners from the United States at the line to claim the title. Smith finished in a time of 2:04.96 with Christina Rodgers right behind at 2:05.00 and Anna Layman coming in at 2:05.39.



Jessica Smith

Smith then teamed up with Amonn Nelson of Calgary, Miana Griffiths of Oakville, Ont., and Sarah Wells of Unionville, Ont., to win bronze in the women's 4x400-m relay, clocking a time of 3:40.09.

Smith, an Argyle grad, has won multiple NAIA national championships racing middle distances for Simon Fraser University.

The other North Shore medalist was West Vancouver's Reid Gustavson who finished third in decathlon. The former University of British Columbia Thunderbird, also an NAIA champion this season, racked up a total of 6,866 points to claim the bronze in Florida. Gustavson also won bronze two years ago at the NACAC under-23 championships.

Smith and West Vancouver's Helen Crofts, teammates at Simon Fraser University, both made the final in the women's 800-m race at the Canadian Track and Field Championships held in Toronto July 28-31.

Canadian record holder Diane Cummins won the national title with a time of 2:02.06 while Smith finished sixth in 2:04.72 with Crofts right behind her in seventh in 2:05.05.

— Andy Prest

Lacrosse makes its mark

Teen plays for Ireland at Worlds; juniors take bronze

Kerry Blackadar

kblackadar@nsnews.com

THIS summer, 18-year-old North Shore lacrosse player Brian Gillis experienced the luck of the Irish first-hand, earning an opportunity to play with Ireland's national team at the World Lacrosse Championships in Manchester, England.

"It was just a lot of fun, everyone was super friendly, all the teams were awesome, and something about the country . . . I don't know, it was just awesome," said Gillis, still beaming over his experience at the games, which took place from July 15 to 24.

Thanks to his Irish roots (a Dublin-born grandmother), Gillis has dual Canadian and Irish citizenship. Nonetheless, earning a spot on Ireland's 23-member team represented a significant feat.

Gillis, who attends school at New England College in New Hampshire, drove five hours to New York for tryouts. He also faced competition from overseas, with a separate tryout in Dublin. But Gillis's natural talents shone through in New York, where he was selected from more than 80 candidates, becoming the youngest member of the Irish National Team, and joined only one other Canadian-born player.

This year's Championships marked the biggest in the sport's history, with 30 nations — from Scotland and Slovakia to South Korea and Sweden — competing for the world title.

"We played really well, Ireland finished the tournament ninth," said Gillis, who remained modest about his own accomplishments.

However, according to Brent Hoskins, the executive director of Burnaby Mountain Lacrosse, this young 'attack' finished third in scoring for Ireland, with 16 goals and three



assists in seven games. Overall, Gillis earned 44th in scoring, an impressive achievement, especially considering that most players at this international event were more than five years his senior.

"I learned a lot from the coaching staff," said Gillis, who picked up a few more skills prior to the event at a weeklong

See Gillis page 29