

Glass keen to make squash squad

By Martin Zeilig
Special to Canstar

Leanne Glass is fairly confident that she'll make "the final cut" for the team that will represent Manitoba in squash at the 2007 Canada Winter Games in Whitehorse, but she isn't taking anything for granted.

"It will be a good match between me and the other alternates," said the 5-foot-9, 145-pound Grade 10 student at Balmoral Hall School.

Glass and her brother, David Glass, 18, are one of three sets of siblings currently on the short list for the provincial CWG team. Four other athletes are also in the running. Lynn Colliou, executive director of Squash Manitoba, noted that the final team will be pared down to eight players – four of each gender.

"The other two will remain as alternates and will train with the team. They'll be available if someone else is unable to attend," she said, adding that the last set of trials for the final selection was made Nov. 11 and 12.

The process of choosing a squash squad began back in the summer of 2005 with trials and "getting the team organized," said head coach Trevor Borland, who teaches squash out of the Winter Club.

He added that an initial team was named last September.

"We had some practice sessions in the spring and more trials. Then, we narrowed it down to our 10-person Canada Games training squad," said Borland.

"We had an actual tryout date which was open to anyone who fit into the age criteria – under-19 and under-17 – for the Games."

He commented that the girls' team is particularly young, but strong. For example, Borland points to 14-year-old Alix Younger, who won the under-15 National Squash Championships in Niagara-on-the-Lake earlier this year. He also said Glass, 15, has height and power on her side.

"She's also a top ranked junior player nationally," said Borland.

He noted that David Glass is the provincial junior champion and is ranked third nationally. "Right now, we get together every second week as a Canada Games group," said Borland.

But "almost everybody" in this group of 10 is in his Winter Club program, where they have additional practice sessions twice a week.

"The practices aren't that much different from normal practices. We stress mostly the technical and tactical part of the game – various shots, strokes and strategies. We play conditional games, as well as do some fitness training," explained Borland.

"Once you start getting into a high level in the sport, it does take up a lot of time. It's still an individual sport, so those who miss a group practice are hurting themselves more




Dave Glass is a member of Manitoba's provincial squash team that will be going to the Canada Winter Games.

than the team. But, we don't have much problem with that (players missing practices)."

The competition at the CWG will be tough because Manitoba will be sending such a young team, he stressed.

"Our goal is to try and win a bronze for both teams," said Borland, adding that he'll be taking the team to pre-Games competitions in Calgary, Vancouver and Seattle.



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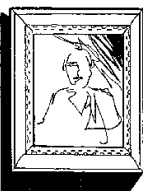
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