

# Aurora athlete looking for hometown support at 2015 Pan Am Games

**By Jake Courtepatte**

Parents can take pride in their children's athletic accomplishments, and trampolinist Sam Sendel's are no different.

They will be in the crowd next July when Sendel competes for Canada in the 2015 Pan Am Games in Toronto.

"The first thing my parents did was grab those trampoline tickets," says Sam. "They got those the day it opened and marked it on the calendar."

Hailing from Aurora, Sendel has been on the National Trampoline Team for the last five years and is looking forward to the home field advantage.

"My family and friends are all super excited. They keep pushing me and giving me so much support."

Sendel is also feeling the love as part of CIBC's "Team Next" program, as CIBC is a lead partner of the 2015 Games.

"Financially, CIBC Team Next has given me a bunch of support. Training fees and travel are always an issue when you're an amateur athlete. You can take that focus and put it towards training harder."

In preparation for one of the biggest stages of her career, Sendel's training regimen has her on the trampoline five or six days a week, as well as a weight training program.

She's working on her "off-trampoline" training at the new CIBC Aquatics Centre and Field House in Scarborough, the largest investment ever in Canadian amateur sports.

"It's exciting in itself. Seeing one of the buildings where the competition's going to be held, it's unlike any workout facility I've ever been to across Canada. That's definitely extra motivating, gives me that extra push."

A \$2 million program and the first of its kind in Canada, the Team Next Program aids athletes more than just financially. The 67 athletes involved have access to a team of mentors, prominent Canadian athletes like triathlete Simon Whitfield, gymnast Kyle Shewfelt, and swimmer Stephanie Dixon, the second most decorated Canadian in Paralympics history.

"Having the mentors has been such a great help too, knowing I can go to my mentors with any questions or if I'm feeling any pressure," said Sendel. "Not only them, but also working with the other 67 athletes has really made me feel like there's a second family supporting me the whole way through."

With the Games still nine months away, Sendel still has to focus on her upcoming schedule. She will be heading down to Daytona Beach, Florida next month for the World Trampoline and Tumbling Championships.

Although she says she's looking forward to the warm weather, the focus is definitely on the competition.

"It's all a big push toward the Games."

And with the Games landing in her own backyard, Sendel hopes to see as much local support as possible next July.

"You can't beat it. It just gives you such an extra drive when an athlete hears the cheers for them. Knowing my friends and family are there will be such an extra push, I'm sure the crowd in Toronto will be unreal. Looking forward to it."

The 2015 Pan Am Games will be held at locations across the GTA. For tickets and more information, visit [www.toronto2015.org](http://www.toronto2015.org).