

Aurora's Aaron Khaykin selected to participate in Sports Illustrated Youth Athlete of the Year contest



MMA and Medical School aspirant Aaron Khaykin has made it through the selection process of the Sports Illustrated Youth Athlete of the Year contest and is seeking the support of Aurora's residents for the next phase.

The Grade 11 Aurora High School Honor Roll student explained the criteria for the venerable magazine's youth athlete and charity promotion.

?We submitted an application including my accomplishments, with videos, photos and social media references. Sports Illustrated reached out and told me I was selected to participate in the competition, which involves reaching out to the community to get votes. The votes can be made one of two ways: the public can vote for free every 24 hours through my profile page by verifying through Facebook. People can make multi-votes by making a donation through my profile page, with the donated funds going to the V Foundation for Cancer Research and the Why Not You Foundation.?

The link to Khaykin's profile page, in order to support the local athlete's candidacy for Sports Illustrated Youth Athlete of the Year, is <https://athleteoftheyear.org/2025/aaron-0ab4>.

The 15-year-old's accomplishments in the MMA ring and high school wrestling mat are numerous.

In our conversation at Tim Hortons at John West Way and Wellington, Aaron's father, Eugene Khaykin, offered a backgrounder to his son's athletic specialties and recent successes.

?Aaron's primary sports are Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and Freestyle Wrestling. He competes at regional, provincial, and national level ADCC events and won golds in Vancouver, Toronto, and Montreal as well as a Bronze in Niagara in Jiu Jitsu tournaments. In

wrestling, he competes for Aurora High School. This was his first year wrestling at the high school level-- winning gold at the YRAA's and earning a spot to compete at OFSAA.?

After his golden success on the high school wrestling mat, Aaron Khaykin described the satisfaction of rebounding from a serious shoulder injury and making an impressive debut at the Canadian Fight League's MMA championships this Summer.

?I was coming off a strained rotator cuff and partial tear of my deltoid and had to take a complete month off training. It was a slow process to rebuild and restore my power. I made a smooth transition back and felt confident that I was strong enough to fight in the opening event against Emran Hashmi. We were both making our first appearances. It was a great win. I dominated him fully on the floor and got a submission in under a minute.?

Khaykin's swift triumph in the Amateur Youth MMA fight in Stoney Creek has spurred him to pursue his goal to ?become a professional MMA fighter. The problem is that it's hard to make it big and earn money in MMA so my backup plan is to go to Medical School. I'd like to attend McMaster University and specialize in orthopedic medicine to treat sports injuries.?

To achieve his lofty post-secondary aspirations, Khaykin's goals as a student-athlete complement his regimen at multiple facilities where he works out six days a week, three-to-four hours a day.

?My parents insist that my marks have to be above 80, that I stay on the Honor Roll, and that I do well in my high school sports. I'm going to try Volleyball and Soccer in the Fall when I get back to school and wrestle for Aurora High School in the Winter.?

Khaykin transferred from Richmond Hill High School, which did not have a wrestling program, to attend Aurora High School in September 2024 to avail himself of the quality wrestling coaching and program.

He gives credit to two coaches who have made a difference for him: ?Adrian Wooley is a community coach and helped get the wrestling team going with two of our sponsor teachers. The team is now in its third year thanks to them. My United Grappling Club Coach Ergys Sigeta is also a community coach for our high school team. He's a former professional MMA fighter.?

Eugene Khaykin credits an array of coaches and training facilities for contributing to his son's athletic success.

?Aaron trains at multiple gyms six days a week. He has Sundays off?his only break in the week. For Brazilian Jiu Jitsu and wrestling, he trains at the United Grappling Club under Domenic Passero, who is a multi-degree black belt, and Ergys Sigeta who was a professional MMA fighter. For his boxing and Muay Thai, he trains at Grant's Boxing and MMA. For his sparring practice, he goes to Aegis MMA in Oakville, a well-established professional MMA training facility.?

Aaron Khaykin's dedication to his craft is just one of many reasons why residents of Aurora should support this Honor Roll student-athlete.

The articulate, engaging teenager suggested a few others as our chat wound down at Tim's.

?I'm a local athlete and getting support from your hometown is part of this selection process. I hope to win more medals for my High School this season and I'd especially like to get us more medals for the Varsity wrestling team after winning gold at the YRAA's at Stephen Lewis High School. Everyone can vote for free through Facebook, but there are also opportunities to donate to charities such as the V Foundation for Cancer Research and the Why Not You Foundation.?

By Jim Stewart