

Barbarians? Chloe Daniels named Vice-Captain of Canadian Senior Women's Rugby 7s Olympic Team



Chloe Daniels has had a year of stratospheric achievements with Canada's Rugby Sevens team.

Last August, Daniels' squad qualified for the Paris Olympics by going undefeated in the 2023 Americas North Sevens Regional Qualification event in Langford, British Columbia. Team Canada crushed Mexico 53-0 in the final.

Earlier in 2023, Daniels helped lead the National 7s team to a silver medal at the Pan American Games in Santiago, Chile. This year, she led the team in points during the 2024 HSBC SVNS Series with 131. To cap off 12 months of meteoric team and personal accomplishments, Daniels was named officially to the Senior Women's Rugby 7s Olympic team and designated as its Vice-Captain on Wednesday—quite a feat for a 21-year old.

After a Team Canada recognition dinner on Wednesday evening in Toronto, amid an Aurora Barbarians' celebration on Thursday afternoon in Markham, and just prior to her imminent departure for Pearson Airport for her flight to France, Chloe Daniels maintained her steely on-field focus and discussed the prospect for national team success this month at the 2024 Olympics.

"We have Fiji, New Zealand, and China in our pool. I like our chances. It was exciting to beat New Zealand recently. It was a historic win and gives us confidence going into pool play in Paris."

With the venerable Fletcher's Field clubhouse as backdrop, the graduate of Sutton District High School described the best part of playing for the national team that will compete at the 33rd Summer Olympiad.

"I love the people in the program—my teammates are close and we fight for one another. I've been in the national program for four years and with the Senior 7s team for three of those years. It's a special group—like a family. It's also a sisterhood—we build so much confidence and trust on the field because of our off-field connection."

The Senior Women's 7s leading scorer also feels a deep connection to both the Aurora Barbarians with whom she started playing rugby at the age of eleven and to Fletcher's Field—the much-loved rugby facility that is being decommissioned this Fall.

"I grew up playing here with the Barbs, with my high school team in Sutton. I've played in over 100 matches on these fields, but I look forward to having a new field and facilities for the Barbs. It's a successful organization and has been producing so many great players for years."

Sharing his daughter's connection to Fletcher's Field is long-time Barbarians' Coach Nick Daniels. He described the 21-acre facility at Gamble and Leslie with reverence.

?It's iconic. I coached Chloe here for eight years and I've been going to this field as a player and coach since 1983.?

The father-daughter connection through rugby was evident, especially in Coach Daniels's sentimental insights regarding Team Canada's recognition of Chloe on Wednesday night in Toronto: ?Last night was pretty emotional. To see your kid's dream come true kinda chokes you up a bit. Chloe also played AA hockey for the Central York Panthers and the Panthers were at the reception at the Globe and Mail building in Toronto to show their support.?

Equally-moved was Chloe's mother, Sue Daniels, who noted the significance of the recognition dinner: ?Last night was special with family and friends surrounding us. The Canadian team has given Chloe so much support. It makes me feel great to be a Canadian and it's exciting for us to see her compete in the Olympics.?

The patriotic spirit of her mother is not lost on Team Canada's young Vice-Captain who played OUA Rugby with the Queen's University Golden Gaels after years of starring for the Barbarians.

?I'm looking forward to going to my first Olympics. I feel proud to represent the Barbarians and my country in Paris.?

By Jim Stewart