

Family, charity the focus in Aurora Sports Hall of Fame induction



By Jake Courtepatte

Add four more names to the growing list of Aurora sporting icons.

Paolina Allan, David Morland IV, Loring Doolittle, and Robert Bain were welcomed into the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame on Thursday as this year's inductees, a pair of athletes and a coach and a builder who reached the pinnacle of their sports.

St. Andrew's College was the host venue for the fourth year in a row, where close to 300 guests packed into Cole Hall to see the class don the traditional green sweater now worn by a total of 29 members.

"Nights like this prove how rich the sports heritage is of this community," said founding Chair of Sport Aurora Ron Weese. "And how much it's valued. There are so many people that helped put this together over the past year."

Calling himself "James Duthie's replacement," it was TSN personality Rod Black that got the crowd roaring in a similar style to the usual host Duthie, after his daughter Sienna opened the festivities with the national anthem.

"James is doing hockey tonight, and if I was doing basketball, (fellow TSN personality) Jennifer Hedger would have been your host?so you guys really missed out."

Guests were also treated to a live fantasy auction after dinner, where bidders competed for once-in-a-lifetime opportunities like a round of golf in Muskoka with Mr. Black: a top prize garnering over a thousand dollars more after Mr. Morland IV decided to join the round.

"I probably should have told you I'll be flying the plane myself," joked Mr. Black when the pro golfer joined in the fun.

Mr. Morland, whose fantasy donations did not end there in also auctioning out a local round with himself, is well-versed in the courses of the area. He recounted his days between 1987 and 1994 spending his summers back home in Aurora between college semesters, working the grounds of the local courses.

Now, a quarter century later, he's working to earn his card to the PGA's Champions Tour.

"Qualifying school is literally in five days," said Mr. Morland in his speech. "So we've got an early flight out back to Florida tomorrow morning to prepare for that, but right now I'm very happy to be standing where I am here."

The ex-PGA pro said it was his "big heart", despite his size, that got him to that podium.

"At five-six, you never know how big someone's heart is," he said. "When you set goals, set them high, and then break them down.

It comes down to how much you want it?it's a mental game, as I'm sure my fellow inductee Ms. Allan can attest to."

With a nod of approval, Ms. Allan brought up the mental aspect in her acceptance, something she said is made much simpler with the help of her husband and coach, Stephen.

"Triathlon is an individual sport, but along the way, I've had the most incredible help," said Ms. Allan, who pointed to her table, who she refers to as her "tribe." "My mom came over from Scotland to share this with me, and it was Stephen who helped me to be the athlete I was, he saw potential in me.

Yet despite her dozens of accolades in the sport of triathlon, she was still humbled by the honour.

"I kind of laughed when I got off the phone," said Ms. Allan. "I thought, 'I don't really know if that was real. But here I am today, and it is very real.'"

This year's inductees will see their photos and bios brandished on the walls of the Aurora Sports Hall of Fame at the SARC for a full calendar year, where the public is also free to see their collections of equipment, medals, and other memorabilia.

Also inducted into the Hall were a pair of rising stars in Holly Biasi and Andrew Nembhard, part of Sport Aurora's Future Hall of Famers initiative. Biasi's commitment to the volleyball court has earned her numerous provincial and national titles over the last year, while also owning nine provincial medals in the swimming pool.

Nembhard, a University of Florida basketball player, has been tagged as a prominent up-and-comer in the Canadian national basketball team as a point guard. While unable to make the long trip himself, his parents were on hand to accept the honour.

Next week, The Auroran will focus on the induction of Mr. Bain and Mr. Doolittle.