

Shaolin earns 7 gold medals while hosting Martial Arts Provincial Championships at SARC's Desjardins Gym



Jessie Ke Xin Yuan, Aggam Bawa, Tyrus Liu, Casey Bynoe, Gwyn Skjonsby, Ron Piklas, and Daniel Wakefield of Aurora's Shaolin Martial Arts club used their 'home court advantage' to capture gold medals at the 2025 Ontario Championships held at SARC's Desjardins Gym on Saturday and Sunday.

250 competitors from across the province displayed their combative prowess in Sanda and technical precision in Tao Lu in the Wushu Canada-sanctioned, two-day qualifier for the Junior Youth Olympics as well as the World University Games in 2026.

Master Tim Wakefield, Director of Shaolin Martial Arts in Aurora, outlined two of the Martial Arts featured at SARC on the weekend: 'Sanda is a fusion of Kung Fu from China and North American kickboxing. We have athletes from eleven Sanda clubs across Ontario here for the championships. We also have four of the forms of Tao Lu being performed for the judges'all with compulsory components similar to figure skating: 'Dao' or Broad Sword, 'Jian' or Double-Edged Straight Sword, 'Guen' or Staff, and 'Qiang' or Spear.'

The 9th degree Black Belt and 34th Generation Disciple of the Shaolin Temple in China expressed his satisfaction about the event: 'This is the first time we've hosted the Ontario championships which is an honour, but it's really about watching young athletes develop and progress. Kids come in with a skills set and to watch them grow in the sport is most satisfying.'

The development of Wakefield's young athletes'ranging from 9 to 18 years old'was evident over two days of competition as Shaolin visited the podium seventeen times at SARC.

In addition to Master Wakefield's seven gold medal winners, his Aurora-based Martial Arts club earned seven second-place finishes on the weekend with Chelsea Masucci, Christian Mann, Ricky Masucci, Nathaniel Mann, Albert Wu, Adam Piklas, and Kian Moosavi winning silver medals.

Agrin Mousavian, Tom Shiskin, and Arvin Dadfar earned bronze at SARC to close out Shaolin's medal performances.

Opening ceremonies in the new \$14M gymnasium in east Aurora on Saturday morning included a ribbon-cutting ceremony presided over by Head Judge Jennifer Gu of Wushu Canada, Executive President Sunny Tang from Wushu Canada, Deputy Consul Cheng Hongbo from the People's Republic of China Consulate, Mayor Tom Mrakas, Ward 1 Councillor and Sport Aurora President Ron Weese, and Wakefield.

It was a special weekend for Shaolin Martial Arts. Not only was Wakefield's venerable sports organization celebrating its thirtieth

year of operation in Aurora, but it also had the distinction of hosting the first major event hosted at Desjardins Gym, which opened on April 5.

Hundreds of athletes seated on the three blue training and competition mats arranged across the new gym listened attentively during the Opening Ceremonies to Deputy Consul Hongbo who noted that "This competition is a platform for connection. Our athletes share our passion for the Martial Arts."

Hongbo invited all participants to "enjoy the spirit and harmony of Wushu."

Mayor Mrakas, a significant advocate of youth sports in Town, thanked Shaolin Martial Arts for hosting the event and praised its Director.

"Thanks to Tim Wakefield for his leadership over the last thirty years, shaping a generation of athletes in Aurora."

Mayor Mrakas praised "the time invested, as well as the determination and persistence demonstrated by the athletes gathered here today. It's a privilege to host this event."

In his dual capacity as Ward 1 Councillor and President of Sport Aurora, Ron Weese noted the importance of the occasion and the significance of Wushu.

"We're excited to celebrate the first sport tournament in this new facility. Welcome to Wushu Canada, the National Sports Organization responsible for selecting Canada's National Team for international competitions and providing essential resources and opportunities for clubs, coaches, and athletes."

The President of Aurora's most influential sporting body expressed his "sincere appreciation to Club Director Tim Wakefield for his leadership and determination in bringing this historical event to our town."

Councillor Weese wished the coaches and competitors "all great fortune and success this weekend as you pursue your worthy dreams." He also addressed the hundreds of spectators by noting "I am confident you will be inspired by the exceptional skills demonstrated throughout this competition."

By Jim Stewart