

Winning athletes stress importance of teamwork



By Brock Weir

Local athletes are stressing the importance of teamwork and leadership in sport, having brought home the hardware at this month's Athletics Awards at Pickering College.

Emma Kerswell and Adam Murphy are two of five Aurora students honoured by the school for their prowess on the court and on the field.

Kerswell's role as co-captain of the school's Senior Girls' Basketball Team secured her the Coach's Award.

"I have been going to Pickering for 11 years and been playing sports since Grade 4," explains Emma. "I grew up playing basketball and it comes very naturally to me. I know for some people it can be very difficult to understand some of the plays and some of the skills, so I figured I could help where I tried. As a captain, that is definitely a role you fill in different ways and I think that helped me out in just being a positive person on the team. Also, helping from a 'friend' perspective is very important to me in making the players who are new to the sport feel comfortable."

You can't win any game, let alone basketball, without teamwork and helping each other, she says. That can be as simple as passing a ball or cheering from the sidelines.

"When you go into a sport, you do so with the understanding that you should put your best foot forward and, of course, once in a while you do go above and beyond. Whether you recognize it or not, you are going into that role and really helping whoever you are working with."

The same sentiments hold true for Grade 11 student Adam Murphy, who shared MVP honours on the Senior Boys Soccer Team with his co-captain Samuel Correa this year.

"Our coach said I won MVP for my ability to score goals," says the modest Murphy, who did not mention that he was personally responsible for five of the six goals his team scored in their championship game at the start of November.

"I play soccer outside of school as well and I have never won an MVP award," he says. "It meant a lot to me to be a Grade 11 on the Senior Boys team with a lot of Grade 12s to win MVP. It made me feel good. My parents put me in soccer when I was about five years old and when I became older and able to make my own decisions, I kept enjoying it and playing."

"My brother and sister played soccer and I think that was an influence with me too. The major thing I like about soccer is you need all the players on the field to be able to work together. It is not just about watching goals happen. I like every good little play that happens during the game. Nice passes, long passes, I enjoy watching and playing everything."

Although he still has another full year to go at Pickering College, Murphy is actively looking for scholarship opportunities for his post-secondary career, eyeing chances as varied as the University of Kentucky, the University of North Carolina, and various paths in Portugal.

"Pickering College is very inclusive in its approach to athletics," says Pickering College's Naomi Cote. "There is a real emphasis on teambuilding and being good sports and working together. We're still very competitive on our competitive teams, but I think there is also a real spirit of being team players and encouraging one another to do well. The Athletic Awards really honour that: it goes

beyond skills, recognizing the students' capabilities as good teammates.?