
sports & recreation

First time for everything

Yk junior squash player wins first career tournament in British Columbia

by James McCarthy
Northern News Services

Paulina Brooks is officially on the map in Canadian junior squash.

The 13-year-old Yellowknife resident captured her first career title on Feb. 15 at the Pacific Northwest Jesters Junior Squash Championships at the Cedar Hill Squash Club in Victoria, B.C.

Brooks won the U-15 novice girls' division. She said the win was made more meaningful because it was her first time at the tournament.

"It was really fun to play because I hadn't been there before," she said.

"It was unexpected because before this, I hadn't won more than two games in a row and now I've won a whole division so I'm pretty proud of myself."

Brooks said her game was a little off as she began. She said her first two matches against opponents from B.C. were slow-going, but she still managed to win both matches by 3-0 scores. She said things picked up when she faced her third-round opponent.

"My third game against (Victoria's) Lizzie Yates was really good," she said. "I think that was one

of my best games ever."

Brooks will go back to practising on the court, but said she is definitely looking forward to defending her newly-won crown in 2010.

A total of four awards were won by Yellowknife squash players. Head coach Al Cook said it was one of the best performances by the team at the tournament.

"It really bodes well for our club and for squash in the NWT to have so many players do well," he said.

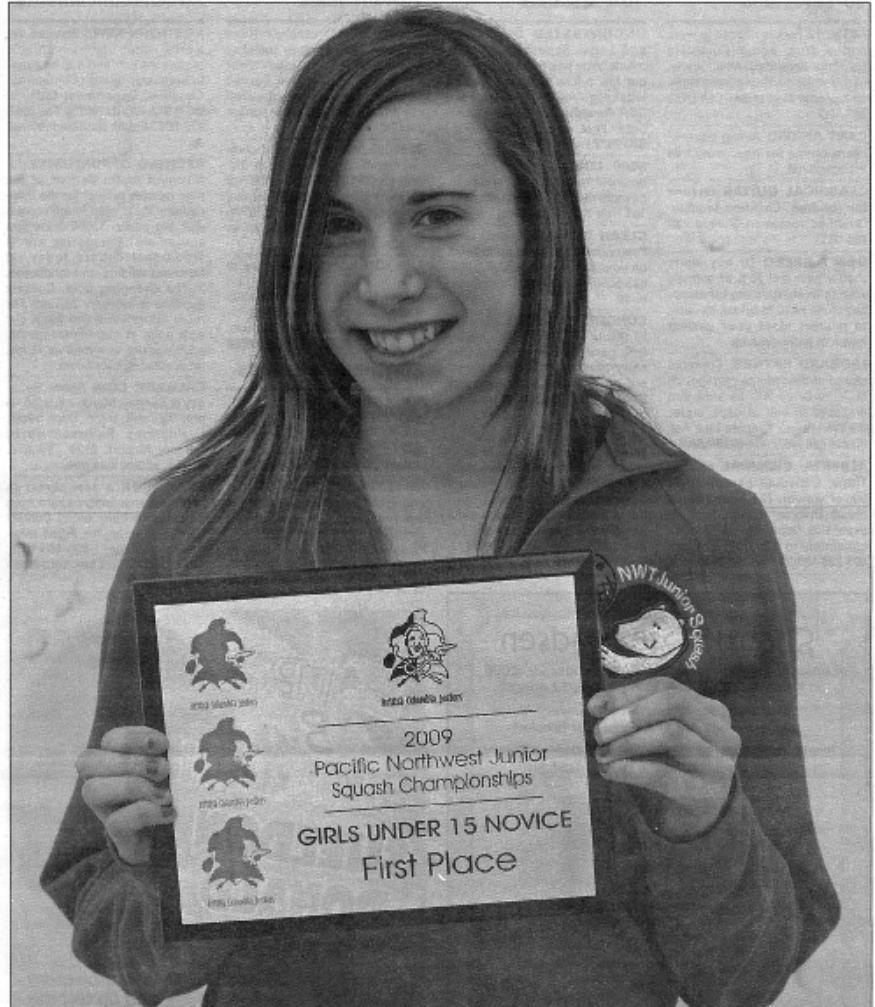
"Not only that, a lot of the other kids played really well. They didn't come back with any hardware, but they progressed further in their play. We had kids playing in games right up to Sunday, some of them were in their own finals of some sort. One kid lost in five games, another kid lost in four. We had a chance to come home with a lot more hardware."

Cook said the results in Victoria are a sign to the rest of the country his team is right in the thick of things.

"It's not the nationals, but this tournament brings out a lot of high-calibre players," he said.

"It gives our kids a chance to compete with top-level kids."

"I'm pretty proud of myself."



Paulina Brooks shows off her championship plaque she won in the girls 15 and under novice division at the PNW Junior Squash Championships in Victoria, B.C., on Feb. 15.