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SMUS
ATHLETICS

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Year In Review 2022-23

MESSAGE FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

On the SMUS sporting front, 2022-23 has been a wonderfully successful year. Pride of place goes to the athletes and coaches involved in winning both the AA BC Field Hockey and AA BC Girls' Soccer titles. Also reaching the provincial podium were Senior Girls Rugby 7s (2nd), Senior Girls Basketball (2nd), and Tennis (3rd).

In addition, of thirteen possible BC School Sports provincial championships, SMUS qualified for nine, with six teams winning Island titles. Moreover, squash players and rowers left their mark on the provincial and national stage.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to Mark Turner, the Head of School, for his exceptional support. Participation, enjoyment, performance, and sportsmanship remain of vital importance, as reflected in the mottos of St. Michaels ("Nothing is great unless it is good") and University School ("A healthy mind in a healthy body").

To these, I would add a few final words:

To play is good, to win is better, but to love the game is the best.

Vivat!

Lindsay Brooke

DESCRIPTION OF MAJOR AWARDS

PARENTS' AUXILIARY OUTSTANDING MALE ATHLETE

Based on outstanding performance, work ethic, attitude, teamwork, and leadership.

Winner - Matthew Bennett

Runner-up - Leupold Wang

PEYTON CUP - OUTSTANDING FEMALE ATHLETE

Based on outstanding performance, work ethic, attitude, teamwork, and leadership. The trophy was first presented in 1979 by Mr. Jim Peyton, a past parent, in recognition of the first class of girls at SMUS.

Winners - Makena Anderson and Amanda Adams

PARENTS' AUXILIARY SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

Presented to individuals who best reflect outstanding effort, humility in victory and grace in defeat.

Winner - Hugo Accad

OUTSTANDING JUNIOR ATHLETE

Based on outstanding performance, work ethic, attitude, teamwork, and leadership.

Winners - Avery Geddes and Wil Woods

BILLY GREENWELL CUP

Presented to the most outstanding male basketball player.

Winner - Oscar Lau

DALZIEL CUP

Presented to the most outstanding 1st XV rugby player.

Winner - Matthew Bennett

NANCY MOLLENHAUER CUP

Presented to the most outstanding 1st XI field hockey player.

Winners - Eva Cuddihy and Talia Pike

LEGACY CUP

Presented to the highest performing senior-level rower based on athletic improvement, dedication to the process and commitment to the craft.

Winner - Samantha Yee

JUDY TOBACCO CUP

Presented to the most outstanding track and field athlete.

Winner - Leupold Wang

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S MERIT AWARD

Presented on certain occasions to recognize an individual's extraordinary effort and achievement in a single sport.

Amanda Adams, Field Hockey

Matthew Bennett, Rugby

Wynn Brown, Field Hockey

Skye Farish, Rugby

Carter Haddow, Rugby

Rebecca Stone, Field Hockey

TEAM AWARD

Presented to an individual on each Varsity team who best exemplifies work ethic, positive attitude, leadership and sportsmanship. It is voted on by all team members and is not necessarily for the best player.

Boys Basketball - Oscar Lau

Girls Basketball - Makena Anderson

Badminton - Grace Yin

Cross Country - Eu-Rway Chew

Field Hockey - Allegra Nelson

Golf - Cameron Bono

Rowing - Ryan So

Boys Rugby - Carter Haddow

Girls Rugby - Skye Farish

Sailing - Ringo Hwa

Boys Soccer - Matthew Bennett

Girls Soccer - Sophie Olcen

Squash - Alex Hann

Tennis - Krishh Hora

Boys Track and Field - Leupold Wang

Girls Track and Field - Abby McLeish-Shaw

Boys Volleyball - Nathan Ciao

Girls Volleyball - Sophie Olcen

NATIONAL TEAM ATHLETES

Thirty-six former students of SMUS have gone on to represent Canada at the senior level. A thirty sixth, Gary Tongue, represented Great Britain.

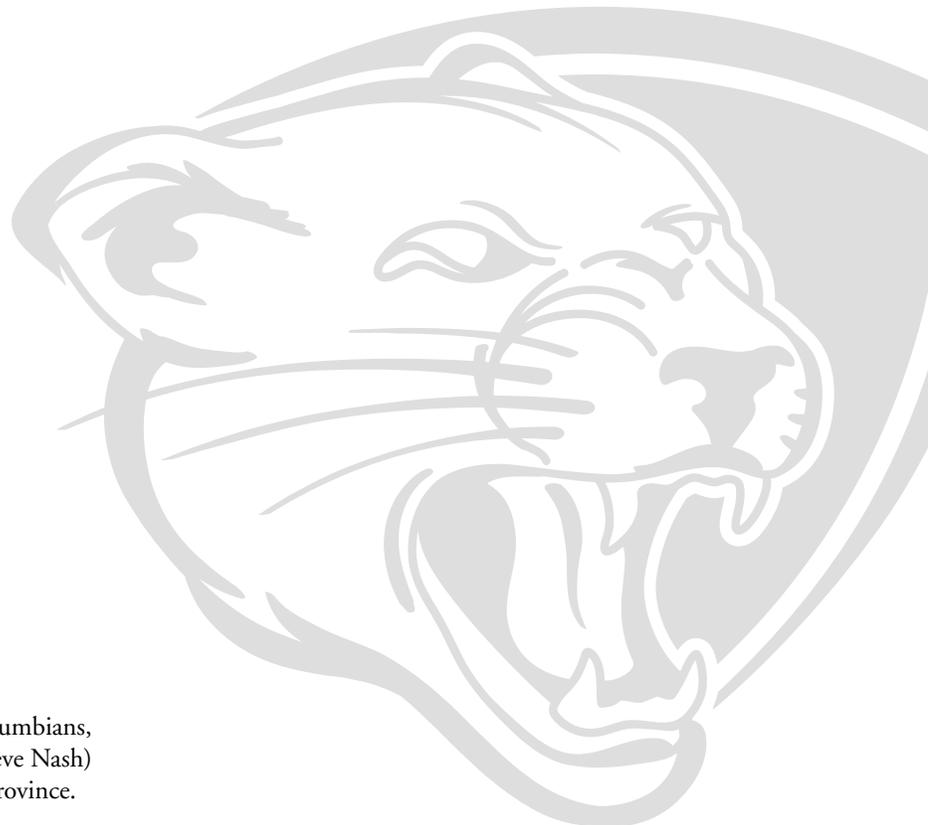
Reg Wenman '21	Cricket
Percy Williams '22	Track and Field
Jim Weaver '31	Cricket
Doug Peden '34	Basketball
Reider Getz '58	Tennis
Lynn Eves '58	Track and Field
Ken Wilke '66	Rugby
Jim Wenman '66	Cricket
Rob Frame '79	Rugby
Gareth Rees '85	Rugby
Andrew Heaman '85	Rugby
John Graf '87	Rugby
Bob Ross '87	Rugby
Jeremy Cordle '91	Rugby
Jason Penaluna '91	Rugby
Claire Ostick '91	Cricket
Steve Nash '92	Basketball
Martin Nash '93	Soccer
Rob Card '93	Rugby
Meggan Hunt '96	Field Hockey
Ed Fairhurst '97	Rugby
Jamie Pollock '97	Ice Hockey
Gary Tongue '97	Baseball
Mike Danskin '98	Rugby
Matt Pettinger '98	Ice Hockey
Danny Boticki '99	Basketball
Jelena Mrdjenovich '00	Boxing
Mike Pyke '02	Rugby
Meara Crawford '02	Cricket
David Spicer '03	Rugby
Liz Fenje '09	Rowing
Mike Fuailefau '10	Rugby 7s
Luke McCloskey '11	Rugby 7s
Mickey Aylard '11	Rowing
Quinn Ngawati '17	Rugby
Kiri Ngawati '19	Rugby 7s

Furthermore, in a 2005 Almanac of Greatest British Columbians, three SMUS alumni (Percy Williams, Gareth Rees, and Steve Nash) were listed in the Top 10 all-time sports figures from the province.

SMUS PROVINCIAL CHAMPIONSHIP TEAMS

The SMUS teams listed below won BC Senior High School Provincial Championships (in eight different sports).

Boys Cross Country	1988-89
Badminton	1995-96
Girls Field Hockey	1988-89, 1992-93, 1995-96 1996-97, 2022-23
Boys Basketball (Junior)	1996-97
Boys Basketball	1991-92, 2014-15
Boys Soccer	2005-06, 2014-15, 2016-17
Girls Soccer	2018, 2022-23
Boys Rugby	1990-91, 1991-92, 1996-97, 2006-07, 2014-15, 2015-16, 2016-17
Tennis	2019





Senior Girls Field Hockey

CITY – 1st | ISLAND – 1st | BC – 1st

Fueled by a determination to reach the top of the provincial podium, featuring a deep and talented roster, and using an August tour to Germany as ideal preparation, SMUS turned in one of the finest seasons in school history. Showcasing some outstanding field hockey and a high level of sportsmanship, the team won five of six available trophies, losing only to Crofton House in a Bridgman Cup tournament shootout.

Otherwise, the Blue Jags captured the Friendship Cup, the ISAs, the May Tully City championship and the Vancouver Island AA title.

Still, the team entered its final event, the BC AA Championship, knowing that only a gold medal would suffice. Playing at a chilly and wind-swept UVic in early November, SMUS opened with relatively straightforward pool wins vs Keremeos, Southridge and York House. This set the stage for a 2-0 quarterfinal victory vs a scrappy Windsor outfit before exacting revenge, via a decisive 3-0 semifinal triumph, over defending champions York House.

The title game vs Little Flower Academy was a tense affair. SMUS dominated the first half but failed to capitalize on waves of pressure and grade-A scoring chances. Against the run of play, LFA then went up 1-0 late in the third period with a well-taken penalty corner.

However, undeterred and with a sense of calm, star forward Eva Cuddihy equalized with a mere 90 seconds remaining. Amazingly, she was right back on the attack from the restart, coming within inches of stealing a regulation-time win.

And so it was on to a shootout. To SMUS's delight, Amanda Adams, Rebecca Stone, and Allegra Nelson displayed remarkable composure with their ice-cool finishes, while goalkeeper Talia Pike's acrobatic saves confirmed a well-deserved 4-3 victory.

Congratulations to the ten seniors who concluded their journey in style and have been a vital component of numerous SMUS successes over the past four years. Stone and Adams deserve special commendation, as they, along with Grade 11 player Wynn Brown, utilized their exceptional performances at school as a launching pad to the Canadian U18 team.

Other absolute standouts included Pike, Nelson and Cuddihy, while Maya Djurickovic, Ella Delichte, Fay Hoefler, Lauren Fracy and Ava O'Connor each contributed strongly.

Their presence will be missed when 2023 season begins in the fall.



Senior Girls Soccer

CITY – 1st | ISLAND – 1st | BC – 1st

With the disappointment of a 7th-place finish in the 2022 BC AA tournament receding in the memory banks, this year’s players set out to make a real mark at City, Island and BC level. To say they succeeded would be an understatement!

In this breathtaking season, SMUS posted a remarkable 27-1 overall record, the sole blemish a loss in the UVic Invitational tournament to Edmonton powerhouse Archbishop MacDonald.

If a mid-April victory in the ISA Tournament suggested that goals might be at a premium, a rock-solid defence, in front of star goalkeeper Eva Cuddihy, made life equally difficult for opponents. On a path to achieving nineteen clean sheets across various competitions, the team emerged victorious against a skilled Collingwood team in a penalty shootout.

Then, after seven consecutive league wins, the Blue Jags captured the coveted Ryan Cup, emblematic of City supremacy. In the final match held at Starlite Stadium in Langford, Stelly’s proved to be a stubborn opponent. However, a goal by Talia Pike made all the difference, securing a 1-0 victory.

The Island championships, in Courtenay, saw SMUS win all five games, scoring 18 goals without reply. Host Mark Isfeld did provide a stern test in the final before the Blue Jags secured a top seed to the BC Championships with a 2-0 victory.

Focus then shifted to preparation for the BC AA Tournament, held June 1-3 at the University of Victoria. Two straightforward victories, vs Smithers and South Kamloops, preceded an unexpectedly tense final pool game vs Crofton House. With a comfortable 2-0 lead in the latter stages of the

second half, SMUS seemed to be in control. However, for the first time in ten games, the team committed a series of defensive mistakes. The visiting Falcons notched two quick goals and threatened a third. Still, in the end, the 2-2 draw saw the Blue Jags safely through to the final four.

Semifinal opponent Collingwood again proved a worthy foe, though SMUS led early through a Maddy Albert strike before Makena Anderson doubled the lead. However, a late Cavaliers goal reduced the margin to a single goal, with the final whistle something of a relief.

So, it was on to the final, against defending champions Notre Dame of Vancouver. The Jugglers opened the scoring at the ten-minute mark and stayed in front until deep into the second half. Then, only just returning from a long-term injury, Brianne McLeish finally registered the equalizer after waves of SMUS pressure. In extra time, with the tension mounting, it was McLeish again to the fore, soaring high to head home the winner after a superb cross by Maya Brinham.

Congratulations are due to the entire team on a simply superlative season. Pike and Anderson provided much of the offense, while defenders Amanda Adams, Sophie Olcen, and Wynn Brown performed exceptionally well. Rebecca Stone was a workhorse in midfield, ably supported by Hollyn Withers. Albert was named to the tournament Commissioner’s XI while Cuddihy took home MVP honours.



Senior Girls Basketball

SOUTH ISLANDS – 1st | ISLAND – 1st | BC – 2nd

With a change to the tiering structure in the province, SMUS moved up to the AAA division for the first time. Nonetheless, even without injured forward Brianne McLeish available, it quickly became apparent that the Blue Jags were among the very best teams in BC. A demanding travel and exhibition game schedule challenged the group and ensured it was well-prepared for playoff success. Unfortunately, provincial glory again slipped away by the narrowest of margins.

After several pre-Christmas and January exhibitions against Mainland powers such as Riverside and Walnut Grove, the team moved smoothly past all local opposition en route to the Islands in Courtenay. Now ranked #1 in BC, SMUS, with MVP Makena Anderson and All-Stars Avery Geddes and Chioma Duru prominent, won this competition comfortably.

The BC AAA Tournament, the long-awaited and final event of the season, took place in Langley. With a potential finals matchup vs #2 Abbotsford always on the cards, SMUS did its part in moving smoothly past WL Seaton, Little Flower Academy and then, at the semifinal level, South Kamloops.

The much-hyped championship game certainly lived up to expectations. The two teams battled hammer and tong from the opening whistle, with the Panthers, led by star guard Malia Lenz, opening up a 30-20 lead near the half.

Undeterred, the Blue Jags fought back to within six points at intermission, then used the momentum to sweep into a five-point advantage (53-48) with seven minutes remaining.

Unfortunately a crucial surge by Abbotsford followed, as a twelve point run created a gap between the two teams. Huge hoops from Alex Motherwell kept SMUS in touch, but, in the end, it was not to be, with the Panthers claiming the title with a 67-64 victory.

Motherwell was named to the All-Star team, and received the Best Defensive Player award. Anderson concluded an outstanding high school career by earning a well-deserved All-Star recognition. Likewise, point guard Geddes, post Duru and wing Maddy Albert contributed significantly to a well-played and exciting contest.

While the disappointment of another finals defeat stings, expect to see the Blue Jags back in the provincial mix in 2023-24. Several core players are set to return as experienced Grade 12s. Meanwhile, the Junior Girls improved dramatically throughout their season. High-scoring guard Charlie Anderson and several others should also contribute at the senior level next year.



Senior Girls Rugby

CITY – 2nd | ISLAND – 2nd | BC – 2nd

This rapidly growing sport continued to secure a foothold in the SMUS athletic landscape.

Coaches Morgan Warner and Ian Farish, led by the vastly experienced Chris May, again provided excellent instruction, giving the players a basic framework in sessions before spring break.

Weekly 7s matches began in early April and continued unabated until the middle of May. SMUS fell just short of winning the City title, losing to a well-drilled Claremont side. However, the team did retain the Robinson Cup by defeating Oak Bay.

At the Island tournament in Nanaimo, the team played well on Day 1, dominating Highland, Belmont, and Oak Bay, thanks to sound work on kickoffs and impressive ball retention.

The following afternoon, led by Alex Motherwell, the Blue Jags dropped Esquimalt 28-14 to reach the championship match vs top seed Claremont. Under scorching hot conditions, SMUS took a commanding 17-5 lead at halftime. The Spartans responded well, with two converted tallies. As the final minute approached, the game hung in the balance, with the outcome uncertain. Following a scrum, Harper May executed a run towards the blindside, attracting the attention of a defender, before delivering a pass to the supporting Skye Farish. Alas, a heavy tackle on the goal line jarred the ball loose, leaving the final score 19-17 to Claremont.

Nonetheless, the silver medal finish ensured qualification for the BC 7s tournament June 1-2 in Abbotsford, with SMUS guaranteed a high seed and favourable draw.

It soon became apparent that this event would again be a

two-horse race between SMUS and Claremont. Both squads mowed through their respective pool games, scoring early and often while not conceding a single try in return. This dominance continued in the playoff rounds, with the Blue Jags disposing of Heritage Woods and NorKam without undue difficulty.

And so the stage was set, with the third consecutive tournament final vs Claremont to determine provincial bragging rights and gain a coveted BCSS blue banner. Credit to the Spartans, who scored directly from the opening kickoff to take an early 5-0 lead. Unfortunately, waves of SMUS pressure did not produce an equalizer. A long-distance Claremont counterattack then stretched the margin to twelve points, with a final tally, deep into the second half, confirming a 17-0 victory.

Farish consistently utilized her experience, speed and cleverness throughout the season to either score herself or create opportunities for her teammates. Canada U18 7s selection to the 2023 Youth Commonwealth Games in Trinidad and Tobago was a just reward for a special player.

Others who performed strongly included Chioma Duru, Ava Gillespie and speedster Ruki Madzimure. Likewise, a core of rapidly developing Grade 9s and 10s should ensure SMUS features prominently on the local, Island and BC circuits in 2024.



Tennis

CITY – 1st | ISLAND – 2nd | BC – 3rd

It proved to be another enjoyable, successful season. The SMUS team narrowly missed out on another BC Championship blue banner by the slimmest of margins.

After easing through City league play in April and early May, the Blue Jags moved on to the Island tournament. With Waturu Yamano and Robert Huttegger in top form, the team defeated Shawnigan in a competitive semifinal. Despite dominating singles play behind Felina Yang and Cooper Mills, SMUS fell 6-5 to Brentwood in a thrilling final.

Nonetheless, SMUS moved on to the BC AA tournament in Vancouver. After a 6-5 loss to traditional provincial power Collingwood, the team bounced back with a resounding 11-0 victory over Archbishop Carney. Josephine Mason-Woodcock, Madeline Wilson, John Zabaneh and Maria Lopez performed strongly.

A playoff quarter-final secured, SMUS, led by Harry Cai, Amya Naimi, and Bianca Toaxen, dropped West Point Grey Academy 7-4 to move into the final four.

Alas, despite the best efforts of Aaron Gil, Kotobuki Okada, Mills, Yamano and Yang, eventual champion Sentinel proved to be a bit too strong, handing SMUS a 7-4 defeat.

The loss produced a bronze medal match up vs Brentwood. Not surprisingly, tensions were high, the crowd energetic, and the score tight throughout. Happily, Mason-Woodcock and Wilson swept their games, while Huttegger and Yamano gained a crucial crossover doubles point. Yang, solidifying her status as the top female player in the competition, maintained an undefeated record. In the end, senior Krisssh Hora, and Grade 9 Julian Bezeau combined neatly to confirm a 7-4 victory.

With another podium finish in the books, the tired and sun burnt team returned home. First comes a well-earned rest, before a return to the courts. Already, SMUS looks forward to 2024. With a strong nucleus of players available for next season, the Blue Jags should once again be in provincial contention.



Senior Boys Soccer

CITY – 6th | ISLAND – 3rd | BC – 9th

Despite failing to reach the provincial tournament in 2021 for the first time in more than a decade, several strong returning seniors and the momentum of a solid junior campaign gave cause for optimism in the 2022 season.

Captains Matthew Bennett and Campbell Wilson provided strong leadership from the outset. While the team did not secure a steady stream of victories, the demanding league schedule aided in preparation come playoff time.

The Island AA tournament, with the top three teams set to qualify for the BC championship, promised to be the most evenly balanced ever. All eight schools taking part had a very legitimate chance to finish in the medals.

For SMUS, the event began with a gutsy 1-1 draw vs Brentwood. However, despite a controlling play while peppering the net with shots, the Blue Jags fell 2-0 to GNS.

As a result, the team needed to defeat North champion Carihi, led by its outstanding goalkeeper, by at least two goals in order to get through the group stages. Happily, on a windswept UVic turf, a brace from striker Sam Bruninx confirmed the necessary 2-0 victory. On a high, SMUS then swept by the Gulf Islands 4-0 to qualify for the provincial tournament.

In the BCs, the team won three of five games en route to a 9th place finish. Perhaps somewhat unlucky to be placed in a pool with highly regarded Notre Dame, the Jags battled hard before falling 2-0 to the eventual champions. This game was the toughest the talented Jugglers faced over the competition, as they subsequently romped to the title.

Throughout the term, Bruninx and Cole Pontefract provided the bulk of the scoring, with Kian Colgate also a presence in the penalty area when moving up from his centre-back position.

Sebastian Salomon Wong, Anton von Oldershausen and Nick Gordon were also rock solid on defence. Emergency netminder Taka Ohara moved from the left wing to a new position, showcasing his ability when making numerous highlight reel worthy saves.

Otherwise, Cole Michel, in addition to Grade 9 call ups Rayan Shariaty and Joe Mackenzie-Eldrick, played with verve and confidence, while Wilson and Bennett effectively patrolled the midfield. A big kudos goes to Bennett, who was chosen for BC's Tournament All-Star team.



Senior Boys Volleyball

SOUTH ISLANDS – 4th | ISLAND – 6th | BC – DNQ

SMUS, even with an inexperienced squad, looked forward to the 2022 season with considerable anticipation. Early season Invitational events produced a whole variety of results, as well as confirmation that the AA tier on the Island would be hotly contested. Captain Nathan Chiao provided solid leadership and strong performances, while athletic power hitter Leupold Wang paced the attack.

Hours of practice and a demanding game schedule led to significant improvement. Ryan Killoran moved from power hitter to setter, making a positive impact in a new position. Likewise, Oliver Ealing and Ethan Woods showed promise as middle blockers. However, the depth and level of local competition ensured that any consistent run of victories would be hard to come by.

Before the Island Tournament, the Blue Jags gave their best performances of the term in hard-fought matches vs Vic High, Lambrick Park, Oak Bay, Claremont and visiting St. George's. Right side Hugo Accad and libero Geoff Lei added to the team's depth with some consistently strong efforts.

Come the playoffs, SMUS played with great resolve, defeating Parkland in style in front of an appreciative home crowd. Then, after dropping a heartbreaker to Vic High, the team came ever so close to upsetting top-seeded PCS in a three-set thriller.

In the Islands, an opening victory vs North Zone #1 Mark Isfeld proved an exciting start. Following a narrow defeat to Vic High, a victory vs Wellington guaranteed a place in the knockout stages.

Regrettably, Lambrick Park emerged as a formidable opponent, securing crucial points that ended the SMUS campaign. Chiao performed splendidly in an emergency libero role, while junior call-up Connor Kipling extended the match as long as possible with a series of impressive serves and hits.

While falling short of reaching the BCs was disappointing, SMUS made definite progress. Each player worked hard to hone their skills and, in the process, combined to produce some exciting volleyball.



Senior Girls Volleyball

CITY – 1st | ISLAND – 3rd | BC – DNQ

SMUS opened the exhibition season in early September, hopeful that a combination of returning players and some talented newcomers would mesh quickly. High caliber competition, in the form of the UBC Invitational and Dover Bay tournament, was excellent preparation for what promised to be a demanding and intense regular season and playoff run.

Confidence grew, and combinations began to form. It soon became clear that Makena Anderson's powerful hitting would pace the attack, with Skye Farish, Ava Gillespie, and Sophie Olcen all contributing at key junctures.

A mid-season highlight was the post-COVID return of the Western Canadian Independent Schools Volleyball Championships (WCISVC), hosted by York House in Vancouver. The squad excelled with impressive performances against top-ranked Little Flower Academy, rival Crofton House, Rundle College and STS both from Calgary, and fan favourite SJR from Winnipeg. The squad returned buoyed by the experience and ready for postseason action.

In the best performance of the term, the Blue Jags edged main City rival Stelly's. This outstanding victory secured the South #1 seed entering the Island AAA Championships in Campbell River.

This provincial qualifier was on a knife edge, as changes to the tiering structure in BC meant only one berth for the Island. As a result, even after going unbeaten through pool play with victories vs Ballenas, Vic High and Mark Isfeld, SMUS would need to win both its semifinal and the tournament final to advance.

In the end, despite solid performances from Alienor de Nanteuil and Maya Brinham, the team fell to Stelly's. The Stingers, winning in straight sets, gained a measure of revenge for the previous weekend's defeat.

Nonetheless, the Blue Jags bounced back from this disappointing loss to win their final match and claimed a bronze medal.

Congratulations to the six graduating seniors on their achievements and contributions to the Volleyball program over the past four years.



Senior Boys Basketball

SOUTH ISLANDS – 1st | ISLAND – 5th | BC – DNQ

With multiple returnees from the previous season, augmented by the nucleus of a successful Junior team, expectations were that SMUS would feature prominently on the BC AA basketball scene. Certainly, others around the province thought likewise, as an early #2 provincial ranking suggested.

However, various December injuries and a demanding early season schedule highlighted several areas requiring considerable attention.

Come to the New Year, the Blue Jags did manage several crucial league victories, the last of which, vs Lambrick Park, confirmed a AA City title. Team defence and defensive rebounding perked up somewhat, 3-point shooting percentages rose slightly, and SMUS landed on the preferred side of the Island draw.

Unfortunately, everything went sideways in the Island qualifier. In round 1, it took the team a long time to subdue Highland. Still, this set the stage for a semifinal vs Nanaimo's John Barsby, with the winner guaranteed a place in the BC AA tournament.

Playing at home, in front of a partisan crowd, the Blue Jags got off to a slow start, missing defensive assignments and failing to execute on offence vs the Bulldogs' 2-3 zone. Down 15 at halftime, the group did make a spirited recovery. However, while an Oscar Lau-driven layup with two seconds to play tied

the score at 63, overtime proved to be a challenge. Multiple turnovers allowed Barsby to pull away quickly and easily in the extra session, advancing 79-70.

In the crossover consolation game, the Blue Jags struggled to rise to the occasion against an inspired and determined St. Andrew's crew. The Sabers turned a two-point halftime deficit into a thoroughly deserved 63-55 upset victory.

Suddenly, it was all over for SMUS. What could and perhaps should have been a run to the provincial Final Four, in an AA tier that contained only one superior-level team, went abegging.

Lau enjoyed a strong campaign, the senior guard working hard on his game and turning in many solid, all-around efforts. Max Clayton also factored at times as a streaky wing scorer, while a quartet of Grade 11s, Kian Colgate, Damon Bains, Leupold Wang and Taiga Parmar, gained plenty of valuable experience.

With eight players eligible to return as seniors in 2023-24 and eleven potential students who might move up from an Island champion Junior squad, the competition next year will be fierce. As always, much will hinge on skills and fitness work done in preparation through the summer.



Cross Country

CITY – 3rd combined | ISLAND – 9th (Senior Girls), 7th (Senior Boys) | BC – DNQ

It was an interesting season to say the least. The Grade 11 boys made up the majority of the team, with thin numbers in the other race divisions.

Local league races began in mid-September, with the Lambrick Park, Henderson Park, Cedar Hill, and Beaver Lake courses each playing host. Led by Charles Gosselin and Eu-Wray Chew, the SMUS Senior Boys squad finished regularly in the top three. Unfortunately, on the Girls side, top runner Nella Meinecke missed the entire term due to injury.

In the Junior ranks, there were several fine individual efforts, with Owen Sandquist-Sherman and multi-sport star Avery Geddes performing extremely well. Indeed, both ran bravely on a dry, dusty course in Port Alberni, to qualify for the full provincial meet. Kudos also to Gosselin on a significant accomplishment in reaching the BCs.

Provincials, the final and most important race of the term, took place on the grounds of Royal Roads University. While some athletes took part in the four races on offer, the event will perhaps be remembered for the 90km gale force winds that tore apart the course in the wee hours of the morning. Various piles of debris, branches and small trees blocking paths, even portapotties turned upside down, gave an idea as to the difficulties faced by the competitors.

Geddes, Sandquist-Sherman and Gosselin all produced solid performances despite the challenging conditions.



Squash

In its fifteenth year of operation in the Brian Graves Squash Centre, squash continues as a vibrant part of the athletic program. This season was another success, based on the large number of student-athletes in the program who participated at regional, provincial, and national level.

Things got underway early in the fall, with Lucas Quon winning the Shawnigan Lake Junior Open. Then, in a series of high-profile events featuring top players across Western Canada, SMUS performed extremely well in the BC Junior Open, the Alberta Jesters Invitational and the UVic Open. Stuart Kerr, Anderson Brown, and Natasza Grzechowiak all performed with distinction.

In mid-December, the Canadian Junior Open, the last tournament before Christmas, took place in St. Catharines, Ontario. Brown, Kerr and Quon each faced extremely high-level competition against players from all around the world. Each finished in the top 10 in their respective age groups.

In the new year, the team was soon back in action, with Roshan Pathak and Max Yuen beating highly ranked opponents in the Jesters Pacific Northwest event. Quon also shone, placing 5th at the U19 level.

Then, in Vancouver at Jericho Juniors, Brown claimed a silver medal in the U17s, losing a five-set heartbreaker in the final. Of note also were the efforts of Amya Naimi, as she won gold in the U17 Girls division.

Many of the players named above went on to further success at the BC Junior Championships in Vancouver. In this April tournament, Brown and Pathak both enjoyed stellar weekends, while relative newcomers Charlize Keens and Alex Hann both played well in the U19 silver draws.

Finally, Quon, Pathak, and Brown travelled to Montreal May 5-9 for the Canadian National tournament. All three gave superb displays and showed they could compete well against the absolute best players in the country. This was certainly evident three weeks later when, joined by 2022 grads Christian Yuen and Sofia Quon, SMUS placed first in the BC U19 Team Championships at the Evergreen Club in Vancouver.

Congratulations to every member of the team for their dedication and effort. Many will continue to train over the summer in preparation for a successful 2023-24 season.



Senior Boys Rugby

CITY – 3rd | ISLAND – 1st | BC – 5th

It is fair to say the season began with some trepidation, given the considerable inexperience of the squad. While featuring a talented top end, led by Canada U18 Team's Matthew Bennett, Carter Haddow, and the impressive Alex Liu, the team had over a dozen players trying rugby for the first time.

Nonetheless, two competitive pre-season games vs local rivals Oak Bay and Claremont gave rise to optimism. The learning curve remained steep, but strong leadership and a growing camaraderie covered up any glaring deficiencies.

Indeed, home matches vs Cowichan, Brentwood, and touring St. Maximilian Kolbe from Ontario produced three clear-cut victories and a much-needed confidence boost as the team contemplated a demanding post-spring break schedule.

While the extended holiday break impacted skill and fitness levels to a degree, the team did manage a successful restart of play, remaining unbeaten through to the end of April. Narrow victories vs Brentwood, Nanaimo and Claremont saw the emergence of new talent, even though a decisive Alumni Day defeat to BC AA #1 ranked Collingwood indicated the improvement still required.

However, a 34-17 success against Fraser Valley's Robert Bateman proved to be a tonic as the Boot Game clash vs Oak Bay loomed on the horizon.

The "Boot," played May 9 at SMUS, was one of the most exciting games ever played in the annual series. In a David vs Goliath tussle, the Blue Jags very nearly overcame a significant size and power disparity, with three counterpunch tries providing a 25-17 lead with nine minutes remaining.

Alas, a huge upset was not in the cards, as the visiting Barbarians powered over for two late scores en route to a 29-25 triumph.

The season concluded with the Island finals and the Provincial Championships in Abbotsford. In the first of these events, the Blue Jags turned in their best effort of the term,

blitzing Brentwood 53-7 and scoring several wonderful team tries in the process.

In the end, the Provincials proved disappointing, as the team tripped up in a round 1 loss to Earl Marriott. The final frantic minutes of this game were cruel in the extreme. The Blue Jags, trailing 20-18, crossed the try line on several occasions, only to not ground the ball successfully. While subsequent victories vs Rockridge and McMath, and the fifth-place overall finish provided a modicum of consolation, the opening defeat stung. Another crack at top seed and eventual winner Collingwood was the main goal, and, on another day, very realistic.

Nonetheless, there were always a number of committed performances. Bennett, given a roving brief, confirmed his reputation as arguably the best player in BC. Fast, elusive, intelligent, and experienced, he registered countless tries and kicked many goals. Liu was a tower of strength in midfield, carrying courageously and tackling bravely. Up front, Haddow anchored the scrum and was an outstanding lineout thrower.

Of the newcomers and Grade 11s, hooker Savo Mrdjenovich and prop Martin Bures helped cement a solid front row, while Oliver Ealing, Hugo Accad and Madison Li handled locking duties. In the back row, Ethan Woods, when fit, showed a fine turn of speed, while Grade 10 call up Ewan Webber-Smith made the transition to senior ranks look easy.

Behind the scrum, Sam Gramada, well supported by Nokia Higurashi, played at scrum half, with Nick Gordon, Sam Bruninx and Sebastian Salomon Wong as the other main pieces in the backline.

Overall, the team won eleven of its fifteen matches. Given the circumstances facing the group before and early in the season, this was a pleasing return.

While a reasonable number of the squad will return in 2024, all involved must do a great deal of work in preparation, both in the weight room and on the field.



Senior Badminton

CITY – 2nd | ISLAND – 2nd | BC – 14th

Following spring break, the team quickly got up to speed for competition. Sparked by Sunny Fan, Nicole Li, and a whole series of other strong performances in the Junior City championships, SMUS set up nicely for the annual ISA tournament. In this event, the Boys again claimed the silver medal and the Girls finished with a bronze.

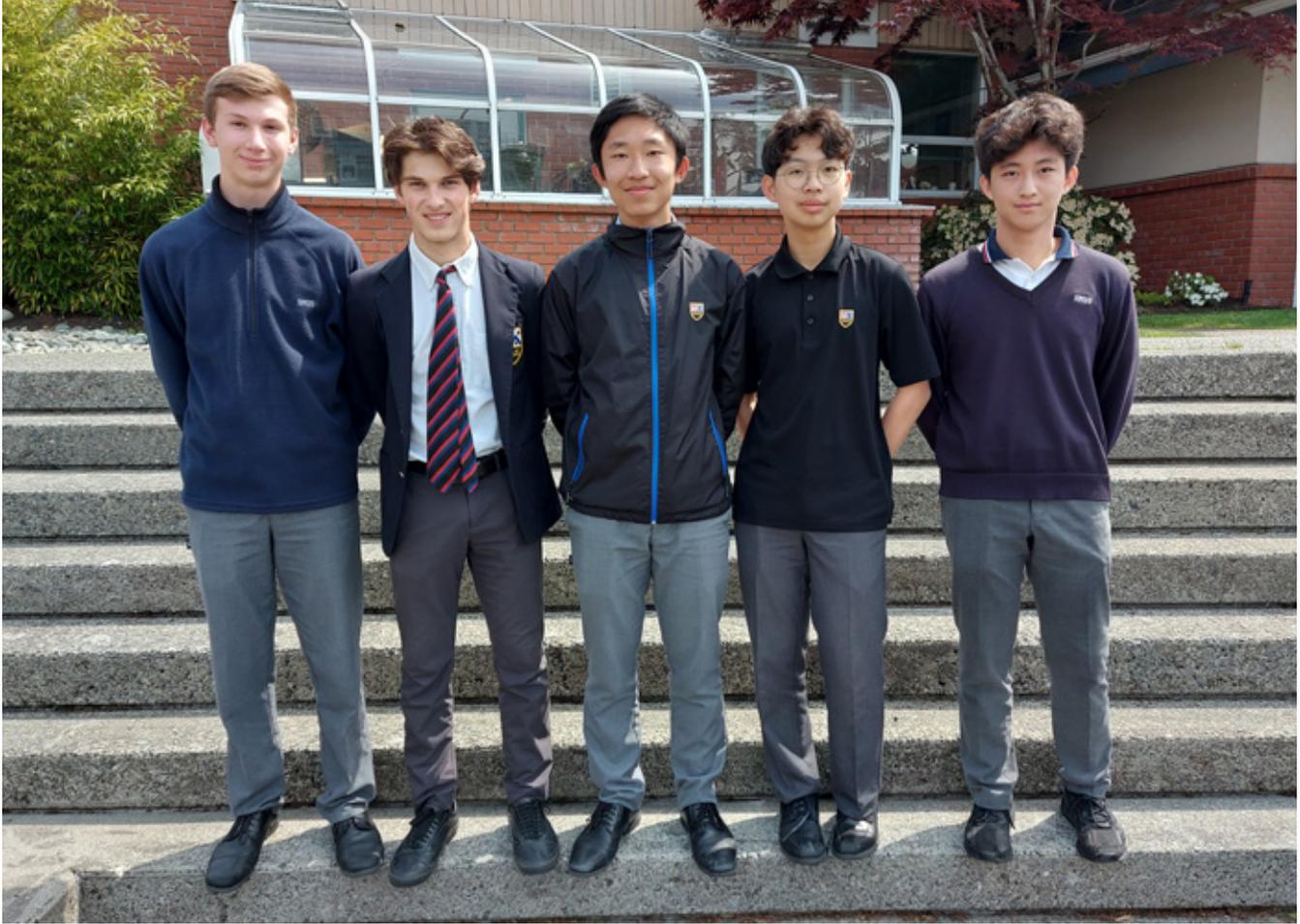
At the City Championship final, the Blue Jags fell 8-3 to a powerful, well-balanced Mt. Douglas team, despite the efforts of Alan Wang.

In Nanaimo, Island pool matches vs host Dover Bay and QMS featured exciting comebacks, with Chelsea Wong and Chicha Cheepcheawcharnchai celebrating wins in singles. A subsequent 6-5 semi-final victory over Shawnigan was not without its anxious moments and did secure qualification to the BCs. However, Mt. Douglas proved too powerful in the championship final.

This year provincials were held in Richmond. SMUS went 1-2 in pool play, losing a close contest to Pinetree and Fleetwood Park before edging RE Mountain.

Then, in the crossover playoff rounds, defeats vs Semiahmoo and Moscrop followed a successful effort vs Prince George. On the final day, the team fell to Grandview Heights.

The superb levels demonstrated by the top squads and players were an excellent experience. Despite SMUS's 2-5 overall record, kudos are due to Bella Lu and Grace Yin for their consistently solid efforts. Congratulations also to Wang on receiving the team's Most Valuable Player award. In addition, the group won many friends for its cheerful outlook and grace, winning the Sportsmanship trophy.



Golf

SOUTH ISLANDS – 7th | ISLAND – 7th | BC – DNQ

In terms of pure results, it was always going to be a somewhat difficult season. After a handful of training sessions, a new and very inexperienced team readied for an all too brief campaign.

First up was the Victoria Police Invitational, held at Olympic View. Given the arctic temperatures and strong winds, scores across the board were high. Nonetheless, all competitors gained valuable tournament experience, with Sting Zhang the pick of the SMUS players.

The squad, with the addition of some new members, then took part in the ISA Championships in Squamish. Cameron Bono turned in a pair of solid rounds, while Zhang fired a solid 79 in windy conditions on day 2.

Next came the Lower Island tournament at Gorge Vale. Both Angus Lee and Zhang performed well, with the Blue Jags finishing mid-table, in seventh place of the thirteen teams entered.

Then, at Islands, played in treacherous conditions at Arbutus Ridge Golf Club, SMUS just missed BC qualification. Zhang enjoyed a sterling front nine and led the individual competition by a single stroke with just three holes remaining. Unfortunately, a few errant shots down the stretch derailed his medallist ambitions, and with them, the team's final opportunity to reach provincials.

The season wrapped up with the annual match vs the faculty, an event enjoyed thoroughly by all.



Sailing

ISLAND – 1st

During the spring term, 24 sailors across Grades 9-12 learned the basics of the sport and how to race. Thanks to the initial sessions at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, all involved got out on the water and practiced steering and sail trimming.

On May 13, on a glorious Saturday afternoon at Cadboro Bay, SMUS performed very well in the Discovery Cup. This first regatta of the season featured ideal conditions, with hot sunny weather and a 15-20 knot breeze coming off the beach. Though the team had never before sailed in such brisk and windy conditions, Anna Eales, Sierra Jacob, Beatrice Sharpe, and Janet Andrews raced especially well.

Regrettably, the weather during the final competition, the Island championship, proved awkward: a steady downpour, chilly temperatures, and inconsistent wind, this time from the southwest, replaced the dry and warm conditions of the previous month. Despite the necessity to abandon racing after the lunch break, both SMUS teams managed to secure medals. The A team claimed bronze while the B team secured gold after a close battle with Parkland. Sharpe, Andrews, Alex Toaxen, Alyssa Hayashi, Naashkii Soler and Koharu Yamakawa performed admirably on the day to help ensure SMUS retained the championship trophy.



Track and Field

CITY – 3rd | ISLAND – 3rd | BC – N/A

Weekly meets in April and early May at UVic’s Centennial Stadium allowed athletes to get up to speed, quite literally, in addition to trying various new events.

Then, qualification began in earnest, with the Lower Island competition followed by the full Islands. In the first of these two competitions, SMUS combined for a third-place overall finish and provided numerous highlights. Of particular note, jumper Leupold Wang won the prestigious Aggregate Award for all round excellence.

At the Island meet, held the following week, Wang again performed strongly, qualifying for the Senior Boys BCs in long jump, triple jump, and high jump. Likewise, at the Senior Girls level, Charlotte Lee advanced in high jump and pole vault, with Brianne McLeish (shot put), Annabel Howard (200m) and the 4 x 100m relay team of Lee, Roberta Lee, Abby McLeish-Shaw, and Annabel Fleck doing the same. Kudos were also due to Jonah Johnston (triple jump), James Kotze (pole vault), Charles Gosselin (800m) and the 4 x 400m relay for reaching provincials. Overall, the SMUS team finished in third position.

In the Junior Boys division, Owen Sandquist-Sherman continued his fine season, claiming silver medals in both the 1500m and 3000m races. Finally, Tommy Hong recorded a personal best and fifth place finish in high jump.

To close the season, the BC Championships took place June 8-10 in Langley. Despite the wildly fluctuating weather, from bright sunshine to steady rain, the quality and depth in the various events were simply breathtaking. With some 2400 athletes representing 330 schools, several long-standing zone and provincial records were challenged or shattered.

The effort of all SMUS qualifiers could not be faulted in any way, such was the level of competition. Congratulations to Sandquist-Sherman on placing fifth in the 3000m, while also running extremely well in the 1500m. Others in the top 10 of their respective events were Wang (triple jump) and Lee (pole vault), while the Girls relay squad missed reaching its final by the narrowest of margins.



Rowing

Tryouts began in September with dry land, ergometer, and swimming tests. The school's Rowing Centre hummed with activity, with over 60 athletes selected to crews. The fall revolved primarily around three local competitions: the Crabfest, Sprints Regatta and City Championships. Despite a mixture of sun, rain, wind, and rapidly changing temperatures, SMUS performed with distinction, lending excitement as the New Year approached.

With the onset of winter, the rowers upped their practice schedules in preparation for the spring racing season. While inclement weather occasionally hampered water training from January to March, enough quality practice saw the team well-placed for the annual Maple Bay, Brentwood, and Shawnigan regattas.

Happily, in the first of these three competitions, we had good weather, luckily the rain held off. Four podium finishes reflected a solid overall performance.

SMUS travelled to Mill Bay two weeks later to compete in the 51st Brentwood International Regatta. Over 1,200 crew members from all over Vancouver Island and as far away as Oregon, took part in 160 events. Unfortunately, fierce winds impacted the race program and necessitated an early finish to proceedings.

However, the Shawnigan Regatta enjoyed sunshine and warm temperatures. Over three days, 17 of the 20 SMUS boats reached finals, with three gold, a silver and two bronze medals.

Of course, all eyes were on the season-ending national Secondary Schools Rowing Association Championship (CSSRA), held in St. Catharines, Ontario, June 2-4. Over 1,000 athletes from schools across Canada and the USA took part.

Unfortunately, despite the best efforts of race organizers, brutal heat, high humidity, and gale-force winds wreaked absolute havoc on the race schedule. Considering the unfavourable conditions, SMUS performed well, securing two bronze medals.

Congratulations to the U17 Women's 8+, coxed by Bianca Batoni, and including Rowan Denis, Braelyn Rowan, Clara Curry, Juliet Crowe, Molly Pollock, Annabel Taubenschlag, Mira Wirk and Avli Bell. They battled the elements on their way to a third place finish.

Likewise, the Mixed 4X-, comprised of Tiger Zhang, Ava Tan, Finley Rolfe, and Rowan Williams, performed strongly on their way to the podium.

Congratulations to the entire team on a successful season, and special thanks to a talented and dedicated staff. On the final day of competition, CSSRA recognized SMUS's own Susanne Walker Curry for her lifetime of service and commitment to secondary school rowing.

Junior and Development Team Photos



FALL ROWING TEAM



GRADE 9 BOYS RUGBY TEAM



JUNIOR BOYS RUGBY TEAM



GRADE 9 BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM



JUNIOR BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM



JUNIOR BOYS SOCCER TEAM



JUNIOR GIRLS SOCCER TEAM



JUNIOR BOYS VOLLEYBALL TEAM



JUNIOR GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM



JUNIOR GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM



DEVELOPMENT JUNIOR GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM



DEVELOPMENT GIRLS RUGBY



DEVELOPMENT FIELD HOCKEY TEAM