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Year In Review 2023-24

MESSAGE FROM THE ATHLETIC DIRECTOR

On the SMUS sporting front, 2023-24 has been a rollercoaster year. Pride of place goes to the athletes and coaches from the SMUS Crew who returned from the CSSRA Nationals with five medals (one gold, one silver and three bronze). Also reaching the provincial podium were Senior Girls Basketball (2nd), Senior Boys Cross Country (3rd) and the individual efforts of Leupold Wang earned him two medals at the Track & Field BC Championships (2nd - triple jump; 3rd - high jump).

In addition, of eighteen possible BC School Sports provincial championships, SMUS qualified for thirteen, with three teams winning Island titles. Moreover, two silver medals were earned at the BC Junior Closed Championships for squash thanks to the efforts of Lucas Quon and Anderson Brown.

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 - Wil Woods

Runner-up - Zaki Pelyhe

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.

Winner - Madeleine Albert

Runner-up - Avery Geddes

PARENTS' AUXILIARY SPORTSMANSHIP AWARD

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

Winners - Damon Bains and Ava Gillespie

OUTSTANDING JUNIOR ATHLETE

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

Winners - Quinn McMeekin and Indigo Edgington

BILLY GREENWELL CUP

Presented to the most outstanding male basketball player.

Winner - Kian Colgate

DALZIEL CUP

Presented to the most outstanding 1st XV rugby player.

Winner - Rohan Lee

NANCY MOLLENHAUER CUP

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

Winner - Wynn Brown

LEGACY CUP

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

Winner - Pippa Hlannon

JUDY TOBACCO CUP

Presented to the most outstanding track and field athlete.

Winner - Amèlie Fleck

ATHLETIC DIRECTOR'S MERIT AWARD

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

Wynn Brown, Field Hockey

Mackenna Brown, Field Hockey

Caitlyn Mullen, Field Hockey

Lucas Quon, Squash

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 - Damon Bains

Girls Basketball - Madeleine Albert

Badminton - Ian Chan

Cross Country - Eu-Rway Chew

Field Hockey - Wynn Brown

Golf - Hayden Keens

Boys Rowing - Tiger Zhang

Girls Rowing - Pippa Hlannon

Boys Rugby - Nick Gordon

Girls Rugby - Harper May

Sailing - Beatrice Sharpe

Boys Soccer - Cole Michel

Girls Soccer - Sophia Eiley

Squash - Alexander Hann

Tennis - Robert Huttegger

Boys Track and Field - Leupold Wang

Girls Track and Field - Abby McLeish-Shaw

Boys Volleyball - Connor Kipling

Girls Volleyball - Ava Gillespie

NATIONAL TEAM ATHLETES

Thirty-six former students of SMUS have gone on to represent Canada at the senior level. A thirty seventh, 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
Jeremy Bagshaw '10	Swimming
Mike Fuailefau '10	Rugby 7s
Luke McCloskey '11	Rugby 7s
Mickey Aylard '11	Rowing
Max Gallant '14	Laser Sailing
Anna Mollenhauer '17	Field Hockey
Quinn Ngawati '17	Rugby
Kiri Ngawati '19	Rugby 7s
Matt Klimchuk '20	Rugby
Lucas Scheck '21	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

LOWER ISLAND – 1st | ISLAND – 2nd | BC – 5th

The Senior Girls competitive team was hard-pressed to follow up from the banner year of 2022 when SMUS won every game but one and emerged as BC champions. But the 2023 version featured a good blend of experience and youth, and enjoyed a fine season. It was also notable that there were no standout teams in the AA field hockey bracket with top teams regularly beating each other.

In the Lower Island league, SMUS once again proved its mettle with a first-place finish, while there were also respectable finishes at the Bridgman Cup, where the Blue Jags finished seventh after a couple of tight losses to Crofton House and Little Flower Academy, and fifth-place in the Independent Schools Athletic Association (ISAA) tournament. The Blue Jags also recorded a convincing 3-1 win over Oak Bay to retain the May Tully Shield as top overall team in the city.

The Island tournament included a strong 4-1 SMUS win over Shawnigan, which had beaten the Blue Jags at the ISAAs. However, SMUS then dropped a tight 2-1 decision to Brentwood College in the Island final, a game it could have won.

At the BC tournament in West Vancouver in early November, the Blue Jags lost their opener 2-1 to a surprise upstart team from Sutherland, before defeating Southridge 5-0 and then crushing York House, the tournament's No. 2 seed

3-1. The quarter-final resulted in a tight scoreless game against Little Flower Academy, and the eventual shootout loss was a frustrating way to not reach the Final Four.

Regrouping for the 5/8 bracket, SMUS recorded a nice win over Shawnigan Lake in a shootout and then gained some revenge against Sutherland with a 1-0 win on a Caitlyn Mullen penalty corner to end the BC championship in a respectable fifth-place.

Throughout the season, the captaincy and stalwart defence of Wynn Brown was outstanding, and she was ably supported by Mia Muller, Rio Usugaya, Isabel Thomson and Katharina Heinemann in defence, while Mullen, Avery Geddes and Annabel Howard anchored a strong midfield that probed opposition defences and proved to be tireless runners. Anika Delichte, Kendyll Adams, and newcomers Beatrice Sharpe, Anna Beaudry, Manon Denux and Kate McQueen rounded out the forward line, gaining considerable confidence as the season went on. Behind the out players, Amélie Fleck in goal improved enormously each game and had a stellar season.



Senior Boys Soccer

LOWER ISLAND – 3rd | ISLAND – 3rd | BC – 10th

SMUS Senior Boys Soccer boasted a 23-player roster, the school's largest in the past decade, which offered a lot of playing and practice opportunity for all members. Momentum carried over from the previous year's squad with many Grade 11 players bolstering the lineup. Grade 12 Captains Samuel Bruninx and Rayane Hmidi demonstrated leadership right from the beginning of the season and were a positive presence on and off the field.

The Blue Jags had a preseason goal of making it back to the provincial tournament after a ninth-place finish the previous year. The season began with a strong silver-medal showing in the Independent Schools Athletic Association (ISAA) tournament, in which the host Blue Jags' lone loss came against eventual BC AA champion Mulgrave.

With Lower Island league play limited to fellow 2A squads only this season, that meant fewer games and ensured that every contest mattered in terms of qualifying for the Island tournament. The Blue Jags finished third in the Lower Island to punch their ticket to the Island Championships in Courtenay.

The Island tournament provided to be a season highlight for SMUS. The Blue Jags advanced to the bronze-medal game for the second year in a row, this time matched up against rival Brentwood College. After a tie through regulation time, SMUS emerged victorious on penalty kicks to earn the final Island

berth in the BC AA Championship tournament in Burnaby.

The Blue Jags were perhaps unlucky to be placed in the same preliminary pool at provincials as eventual runner-up Windsor. They finished third in their pool and then proceeded to reach the 9th/10th matchup, where they fell to Langley Christian in their final match. SMUS finished ninth in BC, just one spot under where it placed the previous year. Hmidi was named to the Super Sixteen for the BC tournament, while Kian Colgate was the Golden Boot winner.

Some of the other highlights of the year included: Sebastien Bixby going from a substitute at the beginning of the season to an important defender in the starting lineup by season's end; Fynn Brueck emerging as an amazing goalkeeper with the team benefitting from his previous experience as a goalkeeper in Switzerland; Nick Gordon and Marcus Lam organizing the team from the centre back positions with fantastic encouragement; Saba Shariaty, Will Porter and Dash Nelson supporting them well from the outside back; Cole Michel proving to be one of the best left wingers in Victoria, dancing around opponents and scoring many impressive goals in the season; Colgate scoring many goals up front, a number of them assisted by Davis Hardy; and Michel winning the Team Award for soccer, which was well-deserved as he was invited to join the Senior Boys Soccer team at SMUS when he was only in Grade 10.



Senior Girls Soccer

LOWER ISLAND – 1st | ISLAND – 2nd | BC – 4th

It was another highly successful season for the SMUS Senior Girls Soccer team, which captured gold at the Independent Schools Athletic Association (ISAA) tournament, won silver at the Island 2A Championship tournament and missed bringing home a medal from the BC Championship at Burnaby Lake by the narrowest of margins.

The Blue Jags entered the season as defending BC champions and got excellent leadership all spring from Maddy Albert, Wynn Brown, Sophia Eiley and Hollyn Withers.

Albert and Grade 11 Joss Olcen combined for 30 goals on the season to lead the way offensively, while the confidence and composure of Withers, Brown and Isabelle LeRoy on the back line provided strength and stability and thwarted many potent attacks. The Blue Jags also witnessed excellent learning and growth from first-year goalkeeper Monika Jurkovicova.

After finishing first among Lower Island teams and making the semifinals of the Ryan Cup, the Blue Jags advanced to the Island Championship game before falling to Mark Isfeld of Courtenay.

In the BC tournament, SMUS recorded two wins and a tie, blanking both Kamloops Westsyde and Duchess Park of Prince George and playing to a scoreless draw with Archbishop Carney of Port Coquitlam. That moved the Blue Jags into a semifinal where they would lose in heartbreaking fashion to Crofton House.

After playing to a 1-1 stalemate in regulation, the teams went straight to penalty kicks as directed by officials. SMUS won the penalty kicks and, it appeared to all, was headed to the BC Championship game. But the outcome was protested by Crofton House because officials had erred by not having the teams first play two overtime halves. After a lengthy delay, tournament officials sent the teams back onto the field to play that overtime, which was scoreless. And this time, Crofton House won the ensuing penalty kicks.

The Blue Jags had to get over that emotional roller-coaster quickly for the following day's third-place game. They battled hard against York House in that game, before falling 2-1 in extra time to place fourth in the province.



Senior Boys Basketball

LOWER ISLAND – 2nd | ISLAND – 4th | BC – DNQ

With an injection of talent from a Junior Boys team that captured the Island championship the previous season, the SMUS Senior Boys hoped to make a run into the BC AA Basketball Championship tournament this year in Langley.

The Blue Jags came very close, but a provincial berth wasn't to be, as they dropped a heartbreaking 79-73 decision to rival Lambrick Park in the Vancouver Island AA Championship tournament third-place game at Brentwood College. The Blue Jags led by four points with less than four minutes remaining before a Lambrick surge decided the contest.

Ranked No. 6 among BC AA teams heading into the Island tournament, SMUS opened with a 72-62 win over Gulf Islands before falling 77-48 to Brentwood, which would go on to make the BC final in March at the LEC. That loss sent the Blue Jags to the backside of the draw, needing to win twice to land a BC berth. In its first game, SMUS beat Highland of Comox 78-56 to set up the showdown with Lambrick.

Grade 12 Kian Colgate, a standout swingman for the Blue Jags' Junior and Senior teams for four seasons, was named a first-team Island tournament all-star for SMUS while Davis Hardy, a Grade 11 guard whom SMUS will count on heavily next season, was a second-team selection.

The SMUS season featured some highlights, including an impressive win over 3A power St. Thomas More in the Gary Taylor Classic at Oak Bay. The Blue Jags finished seventh in that tournament, 15th in the Howard Tsumura Basketball Invitational in Langley, eighth in the Vikes Alumni Tournament at UVic, ninth in the St. Thomas More Chancellor tournament and third as host of the Victoria City Police Tournament.

The team will count on a strong returning core next season, along with an influx of several players from the Junior Blue Jags, who finished third on the Island and 17th at the BC Championships in Langley.



Senior Girls Basketball

LOWER ISLAND – 1st | ISLAND – 1st | BC – 2nd

The Blue Jags had another highly successful year at the 3A level. With a demanding travel and exhibition schedule, the team positioned itself amongst the top programs in the province. A return trip to the BC final showcased some excellent skills and commitment to the Blue Jags' style of play. Unfortunately, yet again, the provincial Blue Banner proved to be an elusive target.

With several exhibition tournaments in December and early January, the Blue Jags notched wins over top teams, including Brookwood, South Kamloops, 4A contenders Yale, GW Graham and Okanagan Mission, as well as local rival Reynolds. The playoff road was a breeze, as the Blue Jags cruised through the Island tournament, where no game was within a 30-point margin. Charlie Anderson and Olivia Vincent were Island tournament all-stars, while Maddy Albert was the tournament's best defensive player and Avery Geddes was the tournament's MVP.

The 3A BCs, scheduled at the Langley Events Centre, would once again be the stage for some of SMUS' best basketball of the season. As the No. 2-seeded team, the Blue Jags opened play against the Little Flower Academy Angels. After a slow start, the Blue Jags began to fire with Geddes, Anderson and Alex Motherwell providing the offensive punch to win 67-33.

The quarter-final match-up against WL Seaton of Vernon was not much different. Full-court pressure and a well-oiled offensive attack resulted in a 63-32 victory.

The semifinal would be SMUS' first test in over a month. After jumping out to an early 15-point lead, the Blue Jags struggled to put away the South Kamloops Titans. Battling all the way back, the Titans went up by one point in the final minute of play. With the season on the line, SMUS executed a final end-out-of-bounds play to perfection, resulting in a hard rim attack for Anderson. Fouled on the shot, Anderson proceeded to net both free throws to give the Blue Jags a one-point lead. The Titans had a final possession and a good look at a shot to win but, fortunately for the Blue Jags, the shot didn't fall.

The final game would be one for the ages. Facing an upstart, young Brookwood Bobcats squad, the Blue Jags would have their hands full trying to contain a potent offence. Down 21-9 after the first quarter, the Blue Jags had to dig deep as they then settled into their blue collar defence – a characteristic the team has become known for. With Joss Olcen taking on the task of guarding the Bobcats' star player, SMUS would turn the tables in the second quarter to take a 35-23 halftime lead.

Unfortunately, a dry spell offensively in the second half allowed for too many unanswered Brookwood points, as the Bobcats chipped away at the lead. As luck would have it, in the dying seconds of regulation, Brookwood executed an end-out-of-bounds play to perfection, tying the game with 6.7 seconds left. Despite SMUS' best efforts, the team could not pull off a last-second win in regulation.

In the overtime period, the Bobcats, now with momentum, pulled away to defeat the Blue Jags 69-63.

Motherwell was named to the tournament's second all-star team, while the Grade 11 duo of Anderson and Geddes were recognized with first all-star team awards. The disappointment of yet another BC finals game continues to hover over this talented program. Will 2024-25 bring a different result? Several key players return for their final year of high school basketball, including the dynamic backcourt tandem of Anderson and Geddes. They will be glad to have the defensive wizardry of Olcen back for another year and will look to returning forwards Cate Pontefract and Olivia Pickering to provide the much-needed muscle in the paint.



Senior Boys Rugby

LOWER ISLAND – 2nd | ISLAND – 2nd | BC – 5th

With the departures of key national-calibre members from last year's squad, along with a sizable gap left in the coaching ranks by the retirement of Mr. Ian Hyde-Lay, the Senior Boys' Rugby team recognized the need to train early and often in order to prepare for what would prove to be a long and arduous – but ultimately rewarding – spring season of play.

The weeks leading up to spring break saw the boys in blue test themselves against Oak Bay and Claremont in a triangular tournament, with positive displays in each hit-out giving plenty of reason for optimism. A straightforward exhibition match-up at home versus Mt. Doug allowed for plenty of rotation and tactical adjustments, before the team faced off against Claremont in the season-opener. After struggling to get into the game initially, a kicking master class from Jack Driscoll, combined with the game sense and graft of Markus Djurickovic, allowed for SMUS to eventually secure a comfortable 26-5 victory.

Then came the tour. For the first time in SMUS history, the boys' and girls' rugby squads were able to tour together internationally – to France and Italy – where they were treated to five spectacular rugby matches, amazing cuisine, brilliant hosting from the local students and memories on and off the pitch that will last a lifetime. Energized by the experience, the Senior Boys team returned to BC to continue forging ahead with the remainder of its season.

Back-to-back victories against Brentwood and Rockridge, both by convincing scorelines, gave rise to an inkling

of hope that the Blue Jags just might be able to pull off the unthinkable against Oak Bay in the annual Boot Game. Alas, the experience and physicality of the Barbarians forced SMUS to play out the match entirely on the back foot, and the boot returned to the Oak Bay trophy cabinet for another year.

A midweek fixture at home to Port Alberni was routine by all accounts, providing the morale boost and personnel changes required as the team headed into a much-anticipated Alumni Saturday clash with Sir Charles Tupper of East Vancouver. Under clear skies and backed by a sizable alumni crowd cheering them on, the Jags roared out to an early lead and remained in high gear as they dispatched Tupper 53-5. Sam Bruninx played his best game of the season, kicking long-range penalties at will and orchestrating the attack with pace and creativity.

The season concluded with the Island finals and the Provincial championships in Abbotsford. In the former, the Blue Jags were not able to deal with the blistering wind and ceded the title to host Brentwood. However, without much time to sulk, attention was quickly turned to the provincial tournament, in which the team found itself in a grudge match of sorts against Earl Marriott Secondary in the first round.

SMUS flew out of the gates, holding on to possession for multiple phases at a time and utilizing the large field dimensions to back the Mariners into their corners off the boot. As is so often the case in rugby union however, SMUS was punished for failing to rack up points from its visits to the opposition 22, and the score remained

deadlocked 7-7 at halftime. The second stanza saw the physical advantage of Earl Marriott begin to pay off and, although SMUS offered up a valiant defensive effort, the game finished 17-7 in favour of the Surrey squad.

While the result was disappointing, the boys regathered and turned their attention to performing well on the consolation side of the bracket. Mistakes that were made on the first day of play were certainly righted against Rockridge in a dominant 43-8 display, and the tournament came to a close on the final day with a hard-earned 40-15 victory against Tupper, along with a respectable fifth-place finish in the province.

The cohesion and solidarity shown by the team throughout the week was impressive, and it was clear to the coaches that the squad had left everything it had on the pitch. Savo Mrdjenovich was presented with the Commissioner's XV award, a well-deserved recognition of his willingness to put his body on the line for the benefit of the team on both sides of the ball.

Throughout the season, there were a number of impressive performances that deserve mention. Captain Nick Gordon led from the front with composure and commitment, while co-captain Ewan Webber-Smith provided impetus in attack and organization in defence. Aidan MacKay and Braxton Lechner helped to prop up the front row, while newcomer and lock Finley Rolfe quickly established himself as one of the first names on the team sheet. Djurickovic and Rohan Lee were a menacing combination in the back row, while Wil Woods showed off his versatility and athleticism on more than one occasion. A newly established halfback pairing of Marcus Lam and Jack Driscoll gelled quickly and took control of games with astute decision-making and intelligent kicking. Bruninx and Sam Gramada capped off their high school careers in fine style, while wingers Zaki Pelyhe and Sebastien Bixby provided a multitude of attacking sparks.

Overall, the team won eight of its 11 matches. Considering the lack of experience with which the group began its season, the quality on display was impressive.

While a sizable portion of the squad will return in 2025 to be joined by an exciting group of soon-to-be Grade 11 athletes, it will be important for all involved to be diligent in the weight room and on the field in the offseason to prepare for what is to come.



Senior Girls Rugby

ISLAND – 1st | BC – 5th

It was a season of firsts for SMUS Girls Rugby – first international tour to France and Italy over spring break; first season playing 15s; first-place in the Island Championship; and being ranked first in BC for most of the year.

Twelve graduating SMUS players took part at the provincials. Between the Junior and Senior teams, 40 players participated in the program this year. With 25 of them returning, the future is secure to continue to grow the program in the coming years.

The SMUS Coaching staff included four alumnus – Head Coach Chris May, SMUS '92; Morgan Warner, SMUS '19; Chloe Hill-Huse SMUS '20; Coach/Manager Ian Farish, SMUS '89; and Manager Lynique Schalkwijk.

Preparations began in September with weekly practices led by Coach May, Warner and Hill-Huse. Fifteens training continued through the winter with evening practices through the wet months, and 6:30 a.m. practices on the Oak Bay turf in the new year.

The hard work paid off. The girls performed admirably on tour as a 15s team, and had a fine showing after spring break playing sevens in the school league.

With the exception of a quarter-final loss at provincials, the Senior Girls Rugby team was undefeated in the second half of its season including the Island Championships, where it placed first.

The girls were undefeated over three games on Day 1 of the BC Championship tournament in Abbotsford, cruising through pool play with shutout performances in two of the matches. On Day 2, nerves were a factor as the girls faced Reynolds in a quarter-final. SMUS flyhalf Taylor MacDonald scored early off a high kickoff from Reynolds and the Blue Jags were tied 10-10 at the half. Reynolds scored next to take the lead mid-way through the second half and, with no time left, Chioma Duru crossed the line to tie the game.

Though MacDonald and Alex Motherwell were doing very well with kick-offs, SMUS was missing injured Captain Harper May, who had fared well with conversions throughout the season. In extra time, both teams had chances and SMUS looked close to scoring, with possession in the opposing 22. However, a turnover and end-to-end run ended the match on a winning try for Reynolds in sudden-death play.

It was a heartbreaking moment after a valiant effort by the SMUS girls. The loss meant the Blue Jags were playing for fifth-place in the final two games of the tournament, and they put in solid performances with two wins to secure the best result possible.

The entire roster played throughout Days 1 and 2 of the BC Championship tournament, with Captain Sam Robinson named SMUS tournament all-star/Commissioner's 15 recipient.



Senior Boys Volleyball

LOWER ISLAND – 4th | ISLAND – 8th | BC – DNQ

The Senior Boys Volleyball team's season had plenty of highlights, including a three-set victory in the Lower Island championship tournament that earned the Blue Jags fourth-place and sent them to the Island 2A tournament, and a five-set win over Island No. 2 Esquimalt during the Oak Bay tournament.

Head Coach Brady Doland also pointed to a three-set win over Ballenas during the Island Championship as a high-water mark, along with having members of the Junior Boys come up and play for the Seniors on the second day of the Camosun tournament, and “the energy that the bench brought to every single game.”

The Blue Jags finished in a three-way tie for second in their preliminary pool at the Island tournament in Courtenay. SMUS tied with Lambrick Park and Ballenas, each with one win and two losses in Pool A behind Mark Isfeld.

SMUS opened with a 16-25, 16-25 loss to host Isfeld and also fell 16-25, 23-25 to Lambrick. In their third match, the Blue Jags rallied from a 12-25 first-set loss to beat Ballenas 12-25, 25-17, 17-15.

Unfortunately, the tiebreaker relegated SMUS to fourth spot in the pool despite beating Ballenas, which placed third, with Lambrick second.

The results put the Blue Jags in the Island seventh/eighth match. In that contest, SMUS fell 12-25, 21-25 to Highland of Comox. All 15 players saw action in the team's final games.



Senior Girls Volleyball

LOWER ISLAND – 3rd | ISLAND – 5th | BC – DNQ

The Senior Girls Volleyball team enjoyed a season with plenty of highlights, finishing third among 3A teams on the Lower Island, earning a third-place finish at the Belmont tournament and taking fifth-place at the Island 3A tournament.

In tournament play, SMUS took part in a 16-team preseason event at Dover Bay and the team reached the quarter-finals of the top tier in the 40-team Douglas College tournament. Consistent leadership, hustle, and aggressive offensive attack from newly named team captains Ava Gillespie and Charlie Anderson set the team off on an optimistic start to the season.

The Blue Jags finished seventh at the Independent Schools Athletic Association (ISAA) tournament hosted by Brentwood. A few unfortunate ankle injuries shook up the SMUS lineup for that event and Grade 11 setter Yanyu Zhang stepped in, connecting well with the quick attack in the middle. Solid backcourt defence from libero Emily Wu helped keep SMUS competitive with the top teams.

The Belmont tournament was a bright spot for the Blue Jags, who took bronze. They were led by the incredible improvement of middle blocker Monika Jurkovicova in both her front row attack and serving game, which helped produce a number of key points that ignited the team's spirit. The third-place finish was a testament to the tremendous effort and teamwork of every single Blue Jag.

SMUS started the 3A Island Championship tournament at Vic High against Mark Isfeld, the second-seeded North Island team. The Blue Jags won an exciting three-set match by 29-27, 23-25, 15-10 scores against a powerful Isfeld offence. The SMUS defence was in full gear, with smart tactics attacking from the front and back row. Serving was key, with notable service runs and a well-balanced offence.

In their second pool play match, SMUS could not contain the offensive variation and experienced serving of South top-seed Stelly's, losing 2-0. The Blue Jags' final pool play match was against Carihi (South 4). It was very close, with the teams within three points of each other the whole way. SMUS was unable to find a way to pull ahead, however, losing 23-25 and 24-26.

The loss created a three-way tie in the pool with SMUS unfortunately finishing third in the tiebreaker which eliminated the team from BC tournament berth contention.

The final game of the Island tournament was a rematch against Carihi. This time, the Blue Jags pulled off a three-set victory by 25-18, 8-25 and 15-9 scores. Senior players Katie Maybie and Tomoe Hayashi made outstanding offensive contributions in the front row, while Maddy Albert played a solid backcourt game as libero and Ava Gillespie left a stamp on her SMUS career, delivering impressive sets to all of her hitters while becoming an offensive threat herself.



Cross Country

ISLAND – 2nd (Boys), 5th (Girls) | BC – 3rd (Boys), 6th (Girls)

It was an exciting fall cross-country season for SMUS runners. In all, more than 30 athletes competed in the five local league races, with a handful thereafter competing in the BC Championships.

The Junior Boys had a superb season and were led by Michael Carpiano. Not to be outdone, the Junior Girls had their own rising superstars in Sophie De Launier and Yashita Kaku. The Senior Boys put up consistent results, thanks to the trio of Owen Sandquist-Sherman, Luc Denux and Charles Gosselin. In the Senior Girls division, Nella Meinecke regularly cracked the top five in the overall league results.

The first big event for SMUS was the Island Championships, held at Beaver Lake. Under excellent conditions, SMUS performed admirably in all of the races.

In the Senior Boys race, Sandquist-Sherman was in the main chase pack and finished in a sizzling fourth-place overall and Denux was not far behind in sixth. As a team, the Senior Boys finished in second place, qualifying them for the BC Championships. In the Senior Girls race, the team had a superb day and finished in fifth-place overall. Meinecke topped SMUS runners with a third-place finish, while Beatrice Sharpe also had a stellar race, coming in 31st.

At the BC Championships in South Surrey, both the Senior teams enjoyed an excellent day. In the Senior Boys race, all SMUS competitors ran with passion and determination, and a third-place finish in BC was a sensational result to cap the year. Once again, it was Sandquist-Sherman and Denux finishing in the top 10 overall for SMUS.

In the Senior Girls race, determination and guts would prevail as the youthful SMUS team took ninth-place overall in BC. Alongside Meinecke's incredible sixth-place overall finish, Grade 9 runners Yashita Kaku and Mia Wong contributed immensely to this fine girls' team result.



Track and Field

The SMUS Track and Field team enjoyed a strong season, highlighted by a pair of medals from Grade 12 jumper Leupold Wang at the BC High School Championship meet held in Nanaimo in early June. A number of other Blue Jag athletes also turned in solid performances at the provincials, posting season- and personal-best finishes.

Wang, who will join Clemson University's track and field team this fall, won silver in the Senior Boys triple jump at the BC Championships with a 13.29m performance and also claimed bronze in the high jump with a 1.95m leap.

The SMUS Track and Field season began in April and early May at UVic's Centennial Stadium, allowing athletes to get up to speed and try various new events. Qualification for championships began in earnest in May with the Lower Island competition at UVic and full Islands at Port Alberni.

Wang was a standout in Lower Island competition, earning league MVP honours in Senior Field, and capturing the prestigious Aggregate Award for all-around excellence for Senior Boys at Lower Islands.

At Islands, Wang again performed strongly, qualifying for the BCs in the long jump, triple jump, and high jump, including a gold-medal finish in the triple jump.

Owen Sandquist-Sherman ran an outstanding 3,000-metre race and 1,500-metre event at Islands to qualify for provincials in both.

Abby McLeish-Shaw qualified for provincials in Senior Girls high jump while the Senior Girls 4x100 relay team –

consisting of Annabel Howard, Maya Achuthan, Roberta Lee and McLeish-Shaw – also qualified.

In Junior Boys, Martin Winnett qualified for provincials in pole vault with a personal-best to finish first at Islands. Parker Sheehan had a great Island meet, qualifying in both the 200m and the 400m. Harry Lynch also qualified in the triple jump with a personal-best showing at Islands. Tommy Hong, who worked hard all season perfecting his high jump, qualified for provincials as did the Junior Boys 4x100 team of Hong, Lynch, Winnett and Sheehan.

In the provincial meet at Nanaimo, Wang added a seventh-place finish in long jump (6.14m) to his two medal jumps.

In other Senior Boys events, Will Cuddihy placed 11th in the 1,500m racewalk while Sandquist-Sherman and Luc Denux raced in a very competitive 3,000m group.

In Junior Boys competition, Hong cleared a personal-best 1.75m to finish fifth in the high jump. Parker Sheehan's 400m time of 52.29 was an improvement of 1.87 seconds over his previous personal-best and placed him sixth in BC. Winnett improved his personal-best by 20cm to finish seventh in the pole vault at 2.7m. Lynch finished in the top 15 in triple jump. And the SMUS Junior Boys 4x100m relay team of Sheehan, Wong, Lynch and Winnett also turned in a strong race.

In Senior Girls action, McLeish-Shaw recorded a season-best of 1.4m in high jump. The SMUS 4x100m relay team managed a season-best time of 52.95.



Senior Badminton

LOWER ISLAND – 2nd | ISLAND – 2nd | BC – 14th

After beginning pre-season training in January, the SMUS Badminton team enjoyed a strong competitive season following spring break. This was the final year of the sport being co-ed and the boys and girls worked together, encouraging and improving each other.

Highlights for the year included the team's 5-1 record in Lower Island league play against Claremont, Oak Bay and Mount Douglas. The team's only league loss came against Mount Douglas. The SMUS Boys also earned a silver medal, finishing behind only St. George's in the Independent Schools Athletic Association (ISAA) tournament while the SMUS Girls won the bronze, narrowly beating York House in the third-place match.

In the Island Championships at Mount Douglas, SMUS opened with a 10-1 win over Queen Margaret's of Duncan, followed by a 9-2 decision over Shawnigan Lake. In a semifinal, the Blue Jags beat Oak Bay 8-3. SMUS took second on the Island after an 8-3 loss to the host team in the final.

At the BC Championships in Richmond, the Blue Jags opened pool play with losses to Moscrop (9-2) and Richmond Christian (10-1) before beating Walnut Grove 8-3. In crossover matches, SMUS fell to Richmond and Johnson Heights (both by 8-3 scores) before beating Lake City 10-1. The Blue Jags lost 9-2 to host RE Mountain in the 13th-place match to finish 14th, the same placing as they achieved in 2023.

Catelyn Lee of SMUS earned the Super 16 MVP for her leadership and dedication.

Special recognition goes to co-captains Lee, Ian Chan, and Chelsea Wong for running extra practices during the season.



Tennis

LOWER ISLAND – 1st | ISLAND – 2nd | BC – 8th

The SMUS Tennis team's season was highlighted by a first-place finish on the Lower Island and reaching the Island final.

In the Independent Schools Athletic Association (ISAA) tournament, the Blue Jag boys defeated Brentwood, with Michael Liu winning a singles set against a strong St. George's opponent. This was not enough for SMUS to win its pool and advance to the finals, however. The SMUS Girls beat Shawnigan Lake School 3-0, but lost close 2-1 matches against both York House and Collingwood and did not advance to the finals.

SMUS placed first on the South Island by defeating Glenlyon-Norfolk School 6-5. This made the Blue Jags the top seed heading into the Island Championship tournament.

At Islands, the Blue Jags defeated Shawnigan and Queen Margaret's to advance to the final. Under difficult windy conditions, SMUS lost 7-4 to Brentwood College.

Due to rain, teams had to play a shortened format at the BC Championships that was reduced from best-of-11 to best-of-seven competition. SMUS finished fourth in its pool.

Several tournament matches were cancelled due to rain, which prevented the Blue Jags from completing play as scheduled. In their final crossover playoff game, SMUS came up just short losing against Shawnigan for an eight-place finish in provincials.

The Blue Jags' matches at provincials included losses to Shawnigan Lake (5-2), Collingwood (5-2) and GNS (4-3) as well as a win over St. John Paul II (4-3).



Squash

BC JUNIOR CLOSED - 2 silver

The SMUS Squash Team enjoyed another highly successful season with Blue Jag representation at 13 provincial junior events, six national junior competitions, and three international junior events.

The team featured 53 members – 12 at the A level, 11 at B and 30 at C. The A and B teams practised five times a week from September to May while the C team players practised three times a week.

Grade 11 Anderson Brown turned in an impressive season, finishing the year ranked first in BC and No. 3 in Canada in U17 Boys. Among Brown's highlights were second-place finishes in the Canadian Junior Closed (nationals), the BC Junior Closed (provincials) and the Ontario Junior Open in April, and third-place finishes in both the Ontario Junior Gold event in September and the Jester's Pacific North West Junior Championship in February.

Brown was also selected to represent Canada at the 2023 US Junior Open Championships in Philadelphia.

Grade 12 Lucas Quon, who has committed to attend Western University where he will play varsity squash, finished the year as BC's fourth-ranked U19 player. His tournament highlights included second-place at the BC Junior Closed (provincials) in April, fifth in the BU19 BC Junior Open in

October, seventh in the Pacific North West Junior in February and fifth in the Canadian Junior Closed in April.

Quon was also selected to represent Canada at the 2024 British Junior Open in Birmingham England this past January.

Roshan Pathak finished the season ranked fifth in BC in the U17 Boys category. His accomplishments included placing second in the VSA Junior Open, seventh in the BC Junior Closed and ninth in the Canadian Junior Closed.

Max Arndt ended the season as the seventh-ranked BC player in U15 Boys. He finished fifth in the BC Junior Closed, sixth in the BC Junior Open, 11th in the Pacific North West Junior and 13th in the Canadian Junior Closed.

Kieran MacKay was the 10th-ranked player in the BC U15 Boys category. He finished sixth at the BC Junior Closed.



Sailing

ISLAND – 1st

During the spring term, 24 SMUS sailors across Grades 9 to 12 learned the basics of the sport and how to race.

Notable this year was the large group of highly talented Grade 9s. Many of them skippered the boats and there is a bright future for sailing at the school in their capable hands.

Thanks to the initial sessions at the Royal Victoria Yacht Club, everyone involved was able to go out on the water and practise steering and sail trimming.

On May 11, 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 warm sunny weather and a 15- to 20-knot breeze coming off the beach.

Both SMUS teams made the most of the conditions to rack up first- and second-place finishes. Notable performances came from Grade 9 Sofia Mainprize and Grade 10 Angel Guan, who won both their races; Grade 9 Siena Gill and Grade 11 Tina Wang, who came first and third; and Grade 9s Mathilda Fletcher and Bronwyn Ellis, who also finished first and third. Each of these sailors displayed exceptional distinction as they raced, contributing to the overall group effort.

On June 8, in their final event of the season, SMUS Sailing teams again swept the two top spots on the podium and successfully defended their School League Championship.

“It was a stunning and sunny day with variable winds which required three course changes,” said Coach Gregor Klenz. “Mostly speedy sailing with a few lulls. Everybody sailed well and showed improvement over the course of the season.”

The most successful boat of the day was the graduating boat of Anna Eales and Rome Zebrowski, with two first-place finishes and one second-place. Standout performances were turned in by the SMUS Grade 9-skipped boats of Mainprize, with crew member Guan, and Sienna Gill, with crew member Wang. Solid, consistent performances came from SMUS teammates Beatrice Sharpe and Cynthia Qiu.



Rowing

CSSRA - 1 gold, 1 silver, 3 bronze

When athletes returned to the SMUS Rowing team's Derby training facility this fall, the Erg Room looked slightly different than it had the past spring. Thanks to a generous donation received over the summer, the Erg Room and classroom got a much-needed upgrade. The carpet was replaced with new flooring, yellow walls were updated to a neutral white. The athletes continue to be grateful for their upgraded facility; it truly impacted the energy in the space.

The Fall Developmental Rowing Team ran from early September to November, with 56 committed athletes training five days a week – a combination of land and water sessions – as well as competing in the October Sprints Regatta and the City Championships Regatta, both on Elk Lake.

Based on performances and potential shown during the fall season, select athletes were invited to join the Winter Competitive Rowing Team from November to February. These athletes continued to train four days a week in the Erg Room with one water session on Sundays, weather permitting.

SMUS rowers fared extremely well in a number of regattas throughout the school year, culminating with an impressive five-medal performance at the Canadian Secondary Schools Rowing Association (CSSRA) national regatta in St. Catharines, Ont. in late May and early June.

Twenty-three SMUS rowers, across 10 events, competed in St. Catharines, with the school coming home with one gold, one silver and three bronze national medals. SMUS rowers also earned two fourth-place showings and one fifth-place finish. SMUS athletes showed remarkable skill, teamwork, and determination across all events.

Capturing national gold was the Novice Men's 72.5-kg, 4X+ crew, with Sam Kriegler, Tristan Salter, Leo Denis, and William Zeng, expertly guided by coxswain Elise Gomori.

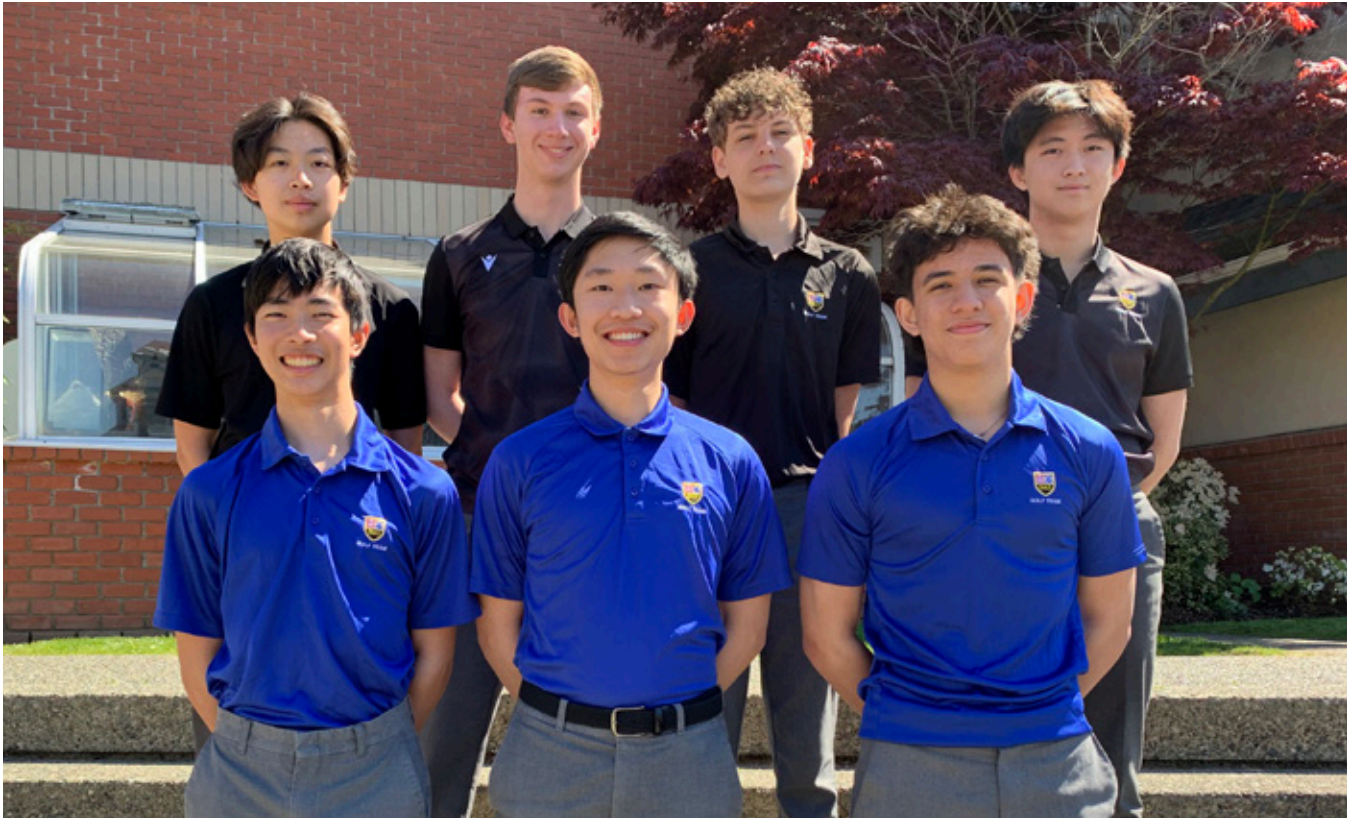
Earning silver was the Men's Junior 66-kg, 4X+ crew, featuring Jihan Lai, Salter, Denis, and Zeng, with Gomori again serving as coxswain.

Bringing home bronze medals were the Women's Junior 4+, including Clara

Curry, Juliet Crowe, Braelyn Rowan and Mira Wirk, with Emily McMillan as the coxswain; the Mixed 2X of Tiger Zhang and Marlene Dietrich; and the Senior Men's 72.5-kg, 4+ of Kriegler, Oliver Pressello, Danny Kotze, and Brady Hsu, with Jaime Aubertin as coxswain.

In earlier competition, SMUS rowers participated in February's Kraken Indoor Regatta at Brentwood College, highlighted by Zeng's first-place finish in U17 Novice Men. They also competed in March's Elk Lake Spring Regatta, highlighted by a first-place finish from the Junior Women's 4+, and in April's Brentwood Regatta, where SMUS athletes won eight medals including silver in the both the Novice Men's and Women's 4X+, the Women's U19 JV 4X, the Women's U19 63-kg 2X, and the Women's U19 63-kg 4+.

SMUS Rowing captured 13 medals at the Shownigan Lake Regatta in May, including gold in the U17 Women's 4+, the U19 Mixed 2X, the U17 Novice Women's 4X+, the U17 JV Men's 4+, and the U17 JV Women's 4+.



Golf

The SMUS Golf Team was comprised of a variety of grade levels with Hayden Keens, Sting Zhang, and Roy Park representing the Grade 10 cohort; Cameron Bono and Ben Dimaculangan in Grade 11; and Luis Jesus Cortina Anaya, Angus Lee and Jason Jiang the Grade 12s. With coaching and practice at Cordova Bay Golf Course, the team rapidly improved and each member bettered their tournament scores throughout the year.

One of the highlights for the team was participating in the Independent Schools Athletic Association (ISAA) championships in Squamish. In match-play format, the Blue Jags fell in the first round to host St. George's before winning their second match against Brentwood College. Keens sunk a five-foot putt on the final hole with a gallery of players watching to clinch his match and the SMUS team victory. The consolation final ended in a tie between SMUS and Collingwood.

SMUS also competed at the Island AA tournament. The team improved from its tournament scores earlier in the year but fell a total of five strokes short of making provincials.

The season wrapped up with the annual match between the team and the SMUS faculty – an event enjoyed thoroughly by all with the students taking this year's title 3-2 in matches.

Keens, a Grade 10, was honoured with the Golf team award this year for his commitment to improvement, sportsmanship and team mentality.

Junior and Development Team Photos



FALL ROWING TEAM



GRADE 9 BOYS RUGBY TEAM



JUNIOR BOYS RUGBY TEAM



DEVELOPMENT GIRLS RUGBY



DEVELOPMENT FIELD HOCKEY TEAM



GRADE 9 BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM



JUNIOR BOYS BASKETBALL TEAM



JUNIOR GIRLS BASKETBALL TEAM



DEVELOPMENT JUNIOR GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM



JUNIOR BOYS VOLLEYBALL TEAM



JUNIOR GIRLS VOLLEYBALL TEAM



JUNIOR BOYS SOCCER TEAM



JUNIOR GIRLS SOCCER TEAM



St. Michaels
University School