



# LOUISE BARTON

Louise Barton has been considered one of the best if not the best administrator in this region and an excellent role model. Her volunteering in sports journey began in 1996 when her son, Shawn, joined the COBRA Swim Club at the age of 6 as a competitive swimmer. Within the first year at COBRA, she was elected to the Board of Directors, responsible for membership and membership drives then a facility opportunity arose and one of her responsibilities included starting up programming negotiations with stakeholders when the club took the long-term lease of the McMurchy facility with the City of Brampton.

In 2000, Louise was elected as President which she held for 20 years. As Past President, she remains an active board member. Through the years, she was instrumental in moving COBRA to a governance-based organization, believing that a Board should be a well-rounded representation of its membership. The athletes are a team and the Board of Directors also works as a team to support them.

Louise believes that sport provides all young people with an opportunity to experience personal excellence. That being part of a sports community provides the opportunity for personal growth, life skills, and long-term friendships. We provide a space for young people to discover their potential and for their families to support their sport of choice.

During her time with the club, COBRA athletes have excelled at the local, provincial, and the international scene. COBRA swimmers competed and won medals at the 1992, 1996, 2000, and 2020 Olympics as well as at the World Championships, World Para Swimming Championships, Commonwealth Games, Pan Pacific Games, and the Canada Games. One of the press releases mentioned the club has continued “its tradition of excellence due to Louise’s leadership, knowledge, and commitment to our mission”.

Louise sat on Swim Ontario’s Central Region Board from 2005 – 2013 and currently has held the position of Regional Director since 2014.

Louise has also played major roles in several other associations including the Brampton Sports Hall of Fame, Brampton Sport Alliance, and Brampton Citizens Awards Committee. Swim Ontario’s Regional Committee, Strategic Planning Focus Group, Finance Committee, and several other committees.

In 2002, COBRA Swim Club presented her with the John Fenton Award which goes to an individual “who performs above and beyond the call of duty”. Louise won the award again in 2005 and 2011 before she took her name off the list to give others a chance.

A prized accomplishment came in 2013 when she received the Gord Noddle Memorial Award for Swim Ontario Administrator of the Year. This award is handed to a person “who displays a high level of dedication and commitment to the sport of swimming.”

Her work did not go unnoticed as in 2014, Swim Ontario, the Provincial Sport Organization nominated her for an Ontario Sports Award. She garnered the Syl Apps Volunteer Achievement Award which recognized her outstanding contribution to the establishment and/or ongoing development of groups, club facilities, and/or special programs in the Province of Ontario. The Ontario Sport Award recipients are a prestigious group of role models for the Ontario sport system who contribute to and grow a strong sport system.

Louise Has also earned the City of Brampton Citizen’s Awards for Long Term Services Award in 2005 and 2015 for 10 & 20 years of volunteerism.

Her son, Shawn is now an accomplished, wonderful man who attributes his work ethic and life attitude to the life skills that he learned during his swimming career. When asked about her role with the club and why she continues to dedicate her time, Louise says that she simply feels that she has a lot to offer and enjoys giving back through volunteerism.

Inducted May 7, 2024 to the





# STEVE NIJJAR

When growing up in Phagwara, India, prior to moving to Canada in 1974, Steve Nijjar set himself two goals in life. He wanted to play soccer professionally and become a film producer and actor. In Steve's case, he achieved both.

When playing for West Humber High School, Nijjar caught the eye of Dick Howard, a former international goalkeeper for Canada and a renowned soccer commentator. This was a blessing in disguise as Howard used his influence to land trials for Nijjar with English clubs Chelsea, Queens Park Rangers, and Wolverhampton Wanderers. After a year overseas, Nijjar returned home and signed with Toronto Blizzard.

After his time with the Blizzard, with pride, he bought the first franchise team for the city of Brampton and brought this professional soccer team to compete in The Canadian Professional Soccer League (CPSL). Before doing so, for two seasons in a row, even the top coaches could not bring this team past second last place. When Mr. Nijjar decided to take on the team as head coach, in just one season, he was able to bring the team from second last place to first, bringing home the championship for Brampton. The City of Brampton is now on the map for soccer and this can be largely accredited to the hard work and dedication of Mr. Nijjar. Based on his experience, ability, and reputation as a master tactician, he was chosen to coach The Canadian Professional Soccer League (CPSL) All-Star, which played against TSV 1860 Munich. Mr. Nijjar has developed many kids, he continues to work with and train aspiring stars in Brampton and has found success in forming players to qualify and play provincially.

After achieving his goals on the soccer field, Nijjar turned his focus to acting and producing films. He starred as an extra, using Spike Lee's "Gotta Have It: Inside Guerrilla Filmmaking" and then branched out into action movies like "The Final Goal" with Erik Estrada in 1995, "Safety Zone" in 1996 and "The Protector" in 1998. In 2016 he produced and starred in "The Last King Film", and in 2023 released "Anatomy of a Warrior," a documentary of Nijjar's life story.

In 2021, Mr. Nijjar became the newest partner and president of Racing Murcia FC – a third division professional futbol club in Spain. Mr. Nijjar diligently managed a large staff to market this team in the City of Murcia and ensured multiple revenue streams could grow the team's value by the end of the 2022 season. In 2022, Mr. Nijjar revived Racing Madrid FC, the third oldest professional futbol club in Madrid (established in 1914 and disbanded in 1932). Over the last few years, Mr. Nijjar has worked closely with Racing Madrid FC moving them towards La Liga.

Mr. Nijjar is also a vested owner of Titan Sportsplex Niagara, an indoor soccer facility located in Ontario, Canada, and is focused on enhancing the skills of young athletes toward a professional career.

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# FARAZ SALEEM

Faraz Saleem, a distinguished figure in the cricketing community, has rightfully earned his place in the Class of 2024 Hall of Fame, as honored by the City of Brampton. With over 23 years of dedicated service to the sport, Faraz's impactful journey began in 2001 when he was actively involved with the Ontario Indoor Cricket Association.

Chapter two unfolds with Faraz Saleem's visionary insight in 2009, recognizing the burgeoning need for cricket's expansion in Brampton. Fueled by this foresight, Faraz took the initiative to establish the Brampton Cricket League, laying the foundation for a cricketing community that would flourish and resonate across the region. From its humble beginnings with just four clubs, the league, under Faraz's leadership, evolved into a cricketing phenomenon that captivated the City and its residents.

Faraz, not only a skilled cricketer but also a dynamic administrator, led the league's expansion, fostering a thriving cricket community. His contributions extend beyond the field of play. In a groundbreaking move, he automated live game scoring in the City of Brampton, showcasing his commitment to integrating technology into the sport. His did not stop there as also spearheaded the implementation of permanent lights, enhancing the cricketing experience in the city.

Under Faraz's visionary leadership, the demand for cricket teams soared, leading to a waitlist for spots in the City. His influence extends to the international stage, where he successfully led Team Brampton against regional teams and introduced cricket matches between Brampton and the United Arab Emirates.

Off the field, Faraz's commitment to community service is commendable. He rallied players to support the City of Brampton's backyard garden program, showcasing his dedication to social causes. His involvement with the Prayer Stone Peoples Church, as secretary, and his tenure as treasurer of the Boys and Girls Club of Peel reflects his broader commitment to community well-being.

In 2019, Faraz actively addressed issues surrounding anti-black racism in the Peel District School Board, highlighting his advocacy for social justice. Continuously serving as the President of the Brampton Cricket League, Faraz Saleem remains a driving force behind the growth and success of cricket in Brampton, leaving an indelible mark on the sport and the community he serves.

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# SHELDON KEEFE

Sheldon Keefe has had a successful career in hockey as a player and coach.

From the age of four, until minor peewee he played with the Chinguacousy Minor Hockey Association. At major peewee he joined the Toronto Young Nationals, winning an Ontario championship at the major bantam level.

During his rookie season (1998-1999) in the Ontario Hockey League with the Toronto St. Michael's Majors and the Barrie Colts he scored 61 goals and 65 assists for 116 points. The next season he set a Colts record for the most points in a season leading the league with 121, including 48 goals and 73 assists in 66 games. As captain of the Colts, he led his team to its first Ontario Hockey League (OHL) championship in 2000.

Awards in the OHL included, first team All-Rookie, Rookie of the Year, the OHL Top Scorer, the top scoring right winger, the Canadian Hockey League Rookie of the Year, Canadian Major Junior First All Star team and Memorial Cup Tournament All-star team. He was also a nominee for the OHL Red Tilson Award as the league's most outstanding player.

Sheldon was drafted in the second round of the 1999 NHL draft by the Tampa Bay Lightning, 47th overall. He made his NHL debut on October 18, 2000 with his first goal on November 5 2000, against the Washington Capitals. In total, he played 125 games in the NHL, with 12 goals and 12 assists.

In 2006 he began his coaching career as the owner, coach, and GM of the Pembroke Lumber Kings. Over six years he had a record of 265 wins, 76 losses and 20 ties. The team won five consecutive Central Canadian Hockey League championships beginning in 2007. In his first season, he guided Pembroke to the Eastern Canadian championship. His team also won the Fred Page Cup for that Eastern Canadian championship in 2011 and added the Royal Bank Cup Canadian championship in 2011. In 2013 he was awarded Pembroke's key to the city and had a banner raised to recognize his era with the team.

In December of 2012 Sheldon became head coach of the OHL Sault Ste. Marie Greyhounds, where he coached for three seasons. In his first full season, he guided the team to the best record in the West Division. In the 2014-2015 season, the Greyhounds had the greatest season in franchise history, 54-12-0, with 342 goals scored. He was named both OHL and CHL coach of the year.

In June of 2015, he was named head coach of the American Hockey League Toronto Marlies, capturing the team's first Calder Cup in 2018-2019.

In November of 2019, he was named head coach of the Toronto Maple Leafs. In his first 20 games, the team went 15-4-1, the best start of any coach in franchise history, and after his first 300 games coached ranked number one with the top points percentage in NHL history.

In 1999-2000 Sheldon established the Sheldon Keefe Fund to help underprivileged children play in the Brampton Youth Hockey Association.

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# LEXIE WARD

During her career in trampoline gymnastics, Lexie Ward was an elite competitor, provincially, nationally, and internationally.

Lexie began gymnastics at an early age, as a three-year-old she was a recreational athlete at the Bramalea Gymnastics Club beginning in 1996 up to 2003.

In 2004, she began training in trampoline gymnastics at Airborne Trampoline in Woodbridge and competing at the interclub level. She rose quickly in that sport, competing provincially from 2006 to 2009. From 2006 to 2009 she represented Ontario at the Eastern Canadian Championships. In 2007 she moved her training to the Jump Trampoline Club in Newmarket.

She had a string of impressive results; she was third in the 2013 provincial championships in the National Women's division. In 2014 she finished first at the First Ontario Cup (National Women), first in the Ontario Provincial Championships, (National Women), and first in the Third Ontario Cup (National Women's Level 5,17 and over). Each year from 2010 to 2016, she represented Ontario at the Canada Cup, Elite Canada, and the Canadian Championships.

Her results included second at the 2013 Canada Cup (National Women), in Airdrie, Alberta, second at the 2014 Canada Cup (National Women) in Newmarket; fourth at the 2015 Canadian National Championships in Calgary; first at the 2016 Canada Cup (National Women's Level 5 17 and over) in Kamloops, British Columbia, and first at the 2016 Canadian National Championships (National Women's Level 5 17 and over) in Edmonton, Alberta.

In July of 2016, she was the top Canadian, placing sixth overall (Canadian International Open Women for International Competition) at the Scalibus Cup in Santarem, Portugal.

In 2015 Lexie received her NCP Level 1 Trampoline Gymnastics coaching certification and has lent her experience to coach younger up-and-coming athletes.

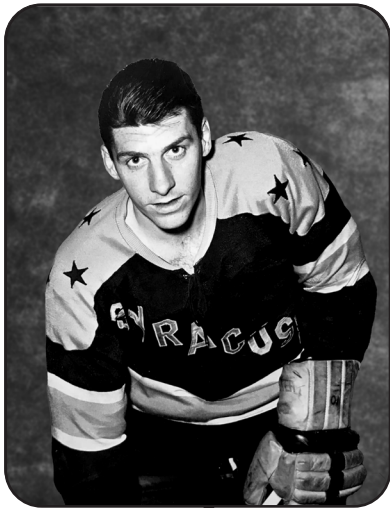
While she retired from competing in trampoline gymnastics in 2016, she turned to another form of sports training and competition in bodybuilding and physique competitions. She became a Fitness Muscle Glamour professional in 2019 and won her first professional competition in 2020.

She runs her own fitness coaching business helping women to build strength and confidence, overcome challenges, and adopt a sustainable healthy diet. In 2023 she was the fastest woman to make the CN Tower Climb, raising money for the World Wildlife Fund.

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# RICK HAY

Rick Hay left his mark on hockey at the local level and beyond.

Besides his involvement with the Bramalea Blues junior team, he worked with equipment suppliers CCM and Victoriaville, where he was an innovator in the evolution of the hockey stick. As a player, Rick was the leading scorer for the Toronto Marlboroughs from 1959 to 1961. He then joined Father David Bauer's Canadian national team facing opponents in Europe including the Soviet Union.

As a professional, he played in the American Hockey League (AHL), Eastern Hockey League (EHL) and Eastern Professional Hockey League (EPHL) in an era where there were only six teams in the NHL. With the Bramalea Blues, Rick was a coach and owner and played a significant role in developing players from the early 1970s to the late 1980s. The Blues reached the All-Ontario finals in 1974, 1975, 1985, and 1988, and won the Sutherland Cup in 1974-75 as the Ontario Junior B champions, when the Blues had a record of 30 wins, just five losses, and three ties. Rick was named the OHA Junior B coach of the year. In 1979 the Blues won the Ontario Winter Games in Kingston and earned the right to play in the 1979 Canada Winter Games in Brandon, Manitoba, where they won the bronze medal.

Hay stepped back from the Blues, selling to new ownership but the team was struggling to survive so he bought it back to keep it in the community. Many former Blues players went on to earn scholarships and some to play professionally in North America and Europe. Among those who made it to the NHL were Tom Laidlaw and Andrew Cassels. Laidlaw played for the Blues and earned a scholarship to Northern Michigan University and then played 11 years in the NHL with the New York Rangers and LA Kings. He has said that he never would have made it without Rick Hay believing in him and pushing him to be better. Cassels spent 16 years in the NHL.

During the 1970s and 80s Rick ran a hockey school out of the Mayfield Sports Complex, where hundreds of players, mostly from the local area were able to improve their hockey skills. As a sales rep with Victoriaville, he marketed and developed one of the first composite (fiberglass) hockey sticks.

Rick also continued to play senior hockey with the Galt Terriers and represented Canada in senior hockey playing in numerous tournaments at home and abroad. Hockey was not his only sport, he was a five-handicap in golf, playing at the Caledon Golf Club from 1970 to 2000. He played tennis and was a provincially ranked player in the 1950s and 1960s.

His hockey skills have also been passed down to a new generation. His grandson Sean Monahan has gone on to stardom in the NHL, having been selected sixth overall in the 2013 NHL Entry Draft by the Calgary Flames.

On a final note Rick participated in the Enquiry of Violence in Hockey from 1974-75 which changed the face of the game.

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