

Courtice Olympian stirs it up on the soccer pitch

Allysha Chapman part of Canadian team that will meet France in quarter-finals Friday

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COURTICE — International play of any kind, let alone the Olympics, can be full of tense moments.

Qualifying and preparing for games on the biggest stage, as the Canadian women's soccer team has been doing for over a year in advance of the 2016 Rio Olympics, will inevitably see moments of conflict between team members as they strive to be at their best at the right time.

But it's the moments of shared laughter that brings a team back together and working towards a common goal: in this case defending or bettering the bronze medal won in London four years ago.

For this particular team, one such moment came during what appeared to be a conflict of the worst kind, a fight in practice between striker Melissa Tancredi and defender Allysha Chapman on July 19.

When coach John Herdman worriedly approached to break it up, he was pried in the face, a celebratory prank in honour of his 41st birthday.

It appears Chapman, a 27-year-old Courtice resident, may have a future career in acting, as she mused on Twitter the next day.

But in a telephone interview from Brazil just before the Olympic tournament kicked off, she said the bonding experience was invaluable for the team.

"We spend so much time together, I think it's really important that you have moments like that to kind of ease the tension a little bit and just have a little fun while you're in camp," she said. "I think it was definitely funny and defi-



Photo by Jeff Vinnick / Soccer Canada

COURTICE -- Courtice's Allysha Chapman is part of Canada's women's soccer team at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

nately needed.

"I think we pulled it off quite nicely, and scared a lot of our staff members in the process," she laughed.

Ranked 10th in the world heading in, Canada has reached the quarter-finals after winning all three games in group play, including a 2-1 victory over No. 2 Germany on Tuesday, Aug. 9, the first-ever win over Germany in 13 matches. The team had already wrapped up a quarter-final berth with wins of 2-0 over No. 5-ranked Australia and 3-1 over No. 93 Zimbabwe.

Canada will now face No. 3-ranked France on Friday, Aug. 12 at 6 p.m. for a berth in the semifinals.

Chapman, who broke on to the team just last year, played in all three games, including all 90 minutes of the Germany match.

"Whether my role is starting or coming off the bench, I'm confident I'll be able to make an impact at these Olym-

pics and help the team out however I can," Chapman said a few days before the tournament started.

Chapman made her debut in the Canadian youth program as a 15-year-old in 2004 and represented the country for the first time four years later at the CONCACAF Women's U-20 Championship, helping Canada win gold and qualify for the 2008 FIFA U-20 Women's World Cup.

In 2015, she was part of Canada's second-place finish at the Cyprus Cup, where she scored her first international goal, and she made her FIFA Women's World Cup debut, helping Canada reach the quarter-finals on home soil.

A graduate of Louisiana State University, Chapman was on the squad that finished second at the 2016 CONCACAF Olympic qualifier, earning Canada a spot in Rio. She followed that up by helping Canada win gold at the 2016 Algarve Cup.

victory.

Zupancic, a 26-year-old former member of the Formokan Judo Club in Oshawa, made her Olympic debut in London four years ago, but was eliminated by eventual winner Lucie Decosse of France in her first match.

She has since won several medals on the World Cup circuit, rose to No. 1 in the world briefly in 2013, and won Pan Am Games gold last year in Toronto.

Whitby's Kelita Zupancic comes up short of Olympic medal in judo

RIO -- Whitby's Kelita Zupancic won her first career Olympic match in judo on Wednesday, Aug. 10, but could advance no further and will come home from the 2016 Rio Games without a medal.

Zupancic was one of eight who earned a bye through the first round of competition in the -70kg weight class and then defeated Georgia's Esther Stam to reach the quarter-finals, where she lost in golden score to Japan's Haruka

Tachimoto after four minutes of regulation time where no points were scored. Tachimoto earned 10 points for a wazari 26 seconds into the sudden-death extra time.

Zupancic was eliminated from gold and silver medal contention at that point, but still had a shot at a bronze medal, entering the repechage against Austria's Bernadette Graf. Graf, however, ended Zupancic's day with a 10-1



Dr. Douglas Smith
Guest columnist

Trauma healing vital for athletes

Most athletes will at some point in their career have to deal with personal traumas.

These traumatic personal experiences have a tendency to cause major decrements in one's performance, training, motivation, concentration, confidence, emotional, social and physical control.

Trust, faith and belief in oneself, others and the world may evaporate overnight.

These personal tragedies may consist of a wide variety of major losses and catastrophic experiences. They have the power to change the complete life of the athlete.

The following is just a sample of experiences that can have a devastating effect on the most prolific champions.

Depression, anxiety, fear, panic attacks, heartbreak, concussion, serious physical injury, death of a parent, sibling, grandparent, uncle, aunt, cousin, coach, teacher, mentor, best friend, team member. Being cut from the team, being benched or constantly criticized by coaches, parents, or team members can take a huge toll over an extended period of time.

If these personal invisible wounds are not addressed and healed soon, they have the power to destroy the athlete's chances of recovery and success in the future, whether that be in sports or life.

The psychological impact of concussions, serious physical injuries and catastrophic personal losses are considerably underestimated.

Depression, anxiety, and panic attacks often follow concussions, major physical injuries and personal traumas as above for months and years. This psychological damage cannot be found easily. Often, the athlete is not even aware of what is affecting his or her performance.

The following suggestions may help begin to put the athlete back on the right track.

Monitor the performance, thinking, emotions, and performance of the athlete. Speak to the athlete about what is going on internally and try to be supportive, not critical. Speak to a professional who is experienced and knowledgeable in these areas. Let the athlete know that you are concerned and think he needs help to overcome these physical and emotional injuries.

Let the athlete know that emotional pain takes time, effort, patience, courage and expert help to heal and that leaving it to fester only makes the situation worse.

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