



VANCOUVER ISLAND REGION | Skater Development Committee

This year was a big one for the Vancouver Island Skater Development Committee as we secured a major star in the skating world for our annual Vancouver Island Skater Development Seminar. Kurt Browning came to Parksville to give the skaters and coaches of the Island an experience not soon to be forgotten. This past weekend, September 17th and 18th, skaters from almost every club on Vancouver Island, a total of 102 skaters all together, came to Parksville in order to meet and learn from 4-time World Champion, Kurt Browning. What they probably hoped for, but didn't necessarily expect, was how down to earth, funny, inspiring and informative he would be. Ok, maybe they did expect that too.

Anyone that has seen Kurt skate over the years could probably sense that he doesn't take himself too seriously yet, at the same time, just serious enough. He was extremely generous with his time, giving unlimited 'selfies' to skaters, coaches, parents, grandparents and signing everything from the Stars On Ice passes (outdated, used only for autographs/memorabilia) every skater received, to some peoples' skates. When it came to teaching, he started at the basics with every group, emphasizing the importance of understanding and being curious of one's turns, gliding and acceleration. He demonstrated everything from his signature 'Arabians' and quick footwork to beautiful triple toe loops envied by skaters a third his age.

The seminar also had Island coaches teaching fun, yet technically challenging classes. Deena Beacom presented her Theatre On Ice class (Ravi Walia had her present this at his club seminar in Edmonton this year), incorporating acting, edge and turn technique and dance lines to carefully chosen music. Tyler Bidnyk taught his wonderfully original and innovative 'Jump Tech' classes, both on and off ice. Shannon Light had skaters heating up in her off ice fitness class. Judy Burwash presented her popular 'Skater Math' class to the skaters one day and taught the very important Program Components and Skating Skills classes the next day. Rounding out the staff, local dance teacher, Sarah DeVito, taught an off ice dance movement class. Sarah is held in high regards on the Island and was a great addition to the seminar this year.

I'd like to thank Judy Burwash a million times for the work she did. Judy handled arena bookings (three times!), all the registration and subsequent email interactions, the budget, and countless other duties that were integral to this seminar. Judy has a selfless drive to give the best possible experiences to the skaters of Vancouver Island and this seminar is a shining demonstration of that.


Our seminar always has the healthiest and most delicious food out of any seminar anywhere, bar none. I know, a bold claim, but one I'd gladly stand behind and it's all because of Launie Elves. Launie somehow prepares, delivers and presents all of the food for the skaters and coaches while dressed to the nines and without a hint of chaos. Thank you, Launie!

Kim Cameron did volunteer coordination again this year, and again it was handled without incident and stacked with incredibly friendly and helpful volunteers. This is a portion that can get hairy if not properly organized and monitored, something Kim doesn't need to be asked twice to do.

Last but certainly not least, a big thank you to the Vancouver Island Skater Development Committee, made up of Susan Morriss, Judy Burwash, Jamie McGrigor, Lynne Henderson-Drake and Kelly Cruikshank. This incredibly experienced and wise group of people are extremely encouraging, resourceful, great at problem solving and full of genius ideas that have helped steered and shaped many events for many years on our Island.

Our next project is the Active Start Seminar for our STAR 1 and 2 skaters. This event happens on November 20th following the 2016 Vancouver Island Interclub Competition in Chemainus. The very talented Jeannie Leshures has been recruited once again to lead this seminar. As with anything Jeannie does, it will be educational and fun in equal parts.

Respectfully Submitted,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Matt Willis". The signature is written in dark ink and is positioned above the printed name.

Matt Willis
Chair
Skate Canada- Vancouver Island
Skater Development Committee