

Short track relay team

1990 National Champions, Provincial Champions - Cambridge Team of the Year



The 1990 Cambridge Speed Skating Club's Canada Winter Games short track relay team included coaches Tom Overend, left, and Lisa Gannett, far right, and consisted of teenaged skaters Derrick Campbell, second from left, Kevin Overland (Crockett), Shawn Holman, Tony Main (not pictured) and Mike Ireland (not pictured). The team is pictured outside the then new Hespeler Arena. Inset left: Mike Ireland. Inset right: Tony Main.

Cambridge's 1990 boys short track relay speedskating team was in a league of its own in the early part of the 1990s.

The club comprised some of the most promising young speed skaters in the nation at that time, and two world-class coaches in Tom Overend and Lisa Gannett.

The London pair commuted several times a week from their home in London to coach the Cambridge skaters, with training sessions split between Galt Arena and the new Hespeler Memorial Arena.

Early on the coaches realized they had some talented young skaters in the club, and as the skaters developed and began to excel in competitions, the coaches were required to give an ever-increasing commitment of their time and effort.

At the time Overend and Gannett started coaching Derrick Campbell, Shawn Holman, Tony Main, Kevin Overland and Mike Ireland, they were unknown. Eventually they would be the vanguard of a new Canadian crop of world-class stars. Soon all were rising to the top of the provincial ranks, and making notable entries onto the national stage.

The provincial championships were held at the new Olympic-sized ice surface at Hespeler Memorial Arena that year, and the Cambridge squad was competing against some stiff competition.

The local team comprised Campbell, Overland, Holman, Main and



Cambridge Speed Skating Club coaches Lisa Gannett, left, and Tom Overend. At right, Tony Main in action.



alternate, Ireland. It was a lineup that, when seen from the vantage point of several years later, would seem incredible.

After winning relay gold at the Provincials, they advanced to the National Championships in Sherbrooke, Quebec, where they again won gold, setting a Canadian 3,000-metre relay record in the process.

It was the first time a relay team from outside of Quebec had won the national relay title since the inception of relay racing at the na-

tionals in 1979.

All five skaters were destined to make the national team and leave Cambridge and the Cambridge Speed Skating Club to train at Calgary's Olympic Oval.

The following year Campbell, Main, Holman and another Cambridge-trained skater, Mike Murray, were members of Canada's national short track team, while Overland and Ireland would make the national long track team in subsequent years.

Two of the five, Campbell and Overland, would win Olympic medals at Nagano in 1998. Ireland was the 2001 World Sprint Champion and became the second most decorated Canadian sprinter, behind only Jeremy Wotherspoon.

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