

## **SportsQuest Team Wins National Short Track Speed Skating Championship**

*Chesterfield skaters bring home 30 total medals; Set 5 new National Records in 3-day event*

In a remarkable show of dominance, *for the fourth year in a row*, the SportsQuest Speed Skating team won the most medals for any club at the US Speedskating National Short Track Championship. Last year US Speedskating, the National Governing Body for the Olympic sport of speed skating, created an official National Club Championship, which is now held each year in conjunction with the age-group National Championship. Modeled after the Olympic Games, the winner is the team with the highest overall medal count. Each skater must skate a series of qualifying heats, quarters, semis and finals in four distances.

About 250 skaters from throughout the country participated in the US National Short Track Championships (held this year in Wausau, WI), which is a 3-day event where every skater must compete in every distance. "It's a grueling test of athletic competition and overall we had a great weekend of racing. I'm proud of the team," said **SportsQuest Executive Director Scott Koons** (former US National Team Coach), adding, "11 skaters brought home 30 individual medals." The SportsQuest team trains at the Richmond Ice Zone rink on Johnston Willis Drive in Richmond, VA. "Our team has come so far from a small group of five skaters who qualified two skaters for the 2003 National Championships," said **SportsQuest CEO Steve Burton**, "in eight years as a club we have won the team medal count four times at the National Championship; individual skaters have been named National Champions 14 times and earned berths on Junior World Teams, World Teams and Olympic Teams."

"US Speedskating congratulates the SportsQuest team on their outstanding representation and the great skating performances their athletes showed in winning this new aspect of our National Championships," said **Mark Greenwald, US Speedskating Executive Director**, "we hope in the future, such a club award will promote a healthy competition and sportsmanship amongst all the clubs of USS. It is an award a club can be proud of winning with a spirit of teamwork and regional pride." Greenwald recognizes speed skating talent being a two-time Olympian of international fame himself.

Highlighting the list of accomplished skaters were **Sally Chea** (Age 14) in Juvenile women and **Thomas Hong** (Age 13) in Midget boys, both also individual National Champions who established new national speed records in the process. Chea was named National Champion in her age group for the second time in two years by taking home 3 gold medals and a silver in her four distances. She also crushed the previous 1,000m National Record.

Hong dominated his competitors in route to being named the age-group National Champion for the fourth year in a row by winning every heat, quarter-, semi- and final race in all four distances skated. Hong re-wrote all four of his National Records, which he established a year ago. Hong holds the National Record for every age-group category that he has skated. In October 2009 Hong was *Sports Illustrated Sports Kid of the Month* after winning his first National Championship. Hong is one of the many SportsQuest team skaters demonstrating excellent potential to make future World and Olympic teams.

**Alex Chea** (Age 17), the older brother of Sally, finished 2<sup>nd</sup> overall in the Junior Men's division, earning a medal of each color. He also established a new SportsQuest Team record in the 3,000m race. In the same division, teammate **Christian No** (Age 16) earned two silvers and a bronze medal while nursing a very sore hip flexor. No turned in a particularly gutsy performance to get to the 500m final. In the semi-final race, No executed an aggressive track change at maximum speed to split two skaters and defend his qualification. Before the race, No had dedicated his 500m race to his grandfather, Pop. Rounding out SportsQuest's entry in the Junior Men was **Patrick Lee** (Age 16), who earned a bronze in the 1000m event, but had to pull out of the competition on Sunday due to illness. Lee's technical skating form on the ice has been compared to the South Korean legendary skater Ahn Hyun Soo, who dominated the 2006 Olympic Games.

**Wesley Gandy** (Age 20), a world class inline racer, is a cross-over ice skater, who claimed bronze medals in the middle distances at 1000m and 1500m. Gandy, while competing on the ice in his first National Short Track Championships, is in excellent company. A majority of US Olympic speed skating medals have been inline racers who switched to ice racing.

**Andy Kim** (Age 12) brought home bronze medals at 777m and 1000m to go with the 500m silver. His sister, **Amy Kim** (Age 14), matched his 500m silver medal. **Jonathan Heo** (Age 14) placed 5th overall in the Juvenile Boys division after racing to bronze in the 1000m. **David Chae** (Age 15) fought illness all weekend and skated gallantly. Equally impressive was the performance of SportsQuest's youngest attendee, **Hannah No** (Age 9), who skated in the Pony Girls division, which includes skaters two years older, because her age group does not compete at Nationals. She placed 5<sup>th</sup> overall; 4<sup>th</sup> in the longest distance (777m). "Our young skater performances signal what's in store for the future," said **Assistant Coach, Sonia Milan**.

In the elite American Cup division, **Rachel Stewart** (Age 18) led the charge (5<sup>th</sup> overall). **James Rodowsky** (Age 18) placed 10<sup>th</sup>, **Alex Hopp** (Age 21) 11<sup>th</sup> and **Landon Hatfield** (Age 20) 16<sup>th</sup>. Stewart and Rodowsky recently competed in Italy at the Junior World Team Championships after being two of the eight skaters who qualified to represent the US as the US Junior World team. Last year Stewart was the youngest skater to compete in the 2010 Speed Skating Olympic Trials.