

Neighbours of Mississauga Road

They Shoot, They Score:

Meet the Pinizzotto Family!

Page 4



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They Score:

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Photos by Anne-Marie May, Welcome Aboard Photography

Any hockey family will tell you that the game is not a hobby, it's a lifestyle. It's pre-dawn practices for fresh ice, weekend road trips for tournaments, and house parties to celebrate the end of the season and lasting friendships. For Linda Pinizzotto and family, it was all of the above times three, because all three of her sons lived or are still living the hockey life.

Linda began the athletic tradition when she was in school. She was the MVP for her basketball team and played basketball in university. She coached and mentored several hockey teams, and her sons carried on with Linda's enthusiasm for athletics from an early age. She shares, "The boys always loved sports. I coached T ball, baseball, and ran a 64-team Juvenile tournament for Clarkson OBA Baseball to expose players to Blue Jays scouts, but hockey really became a strong part of our lives. Whether it's in the hockey world, the baseball world, or even the real estate world, we've developed friendships all over the world."

She continues, laughing whimsically about the days when her sons were still at home, "We billeted eight kids, we had five hockey players living here! The house was like Grand Central Station. All of the parties were here, it was a ton of fun!" Despite the big-time contracts, the years that have gone by, and the ego that can go on in the game, Linda shares how nothing really has changed. She says, "I see them now and they're like 'Hey Mrs. P! How's it going?'"

The friendships that were forged on the ice have carried right through to today, and include relationships with some of the NHL's brightest stars including Rick Nash and Ray Emery. And while Linda is proud to maintain those friendships, nothing makes her prouder than the pro-hockey careers her sons have built for themselves. Her son Steven plays in the NHL in Edmonton, while son Jason plays professionally in the DEL League in Germany. That, in itself, is quite the experience according to Linda. When visiting one of Jason's games a few years ago, the crowd parted and celebrated her just as much as her son when they found out she was his mother.

Watching their careers grow has been a serious point of pride for Linda. When Jason was drafted third round in the OHL, Linda beams, "We had an idea going in, but talk about amazing!" Similarly with son Steve, watching him play his first NHL game in Vancouver was incredible. She shares, "We flew out to catch four games with Steve on the ice, with [Vancouver]. He's like his mom, he's determined! I'm so proud of him." And that goes for all of her three sons, as she confesses, "It's amazing. Anytime I go to see the boys. It feels good to be a part of it."

Off the ice, Linda is her own free agent. She is a real estate agent with Sutton Group Quantum Realty, a prolific entrepreneur whose endeavours have ranged from athletic organization to urban planning, and a radio host. Though she began her career work at Kodak and AECL, she eventually found her passion in real estate, and now boasts a top 1% position at her brokerage. Her 35 years of real estate expertise have lead her to become the voice of reason for the condo market on outlets such as the CBC, CP24, and Metro Morning. It further motivated her to create the Condo Owners Association or COA a non-profit organization. Most recently she has been recognized for her work with a sponsorship to be a member of the Order of St. George with an investiture this month by the Lieutenant Governor, and she will be named a Dame of the Order.

Entrepreneurship also happens to be how she met her husband, Derrick Thomas, the owner and President of IT Mayday. "When I met Derrick he was working as the IT Manager at Deloitte & Touche, managing infrastructure." With a passion for entrepreneurship, Derrick started ITMayday.com in 2010 to provide businesses with a wide range of computer services and website development. Says Linda, "We've been together since 2005, and the kids love him!"

The pair now enjoys spending time with their growing family that includes daughters-in-law Andrea and Carol, their three beautiful grandchildren and Chihuahua, Shelby. With an eye on the future, Linda looks to synthesize her hockey and professional side. With a wry smile, she adds, "It's time to build



my real estate team!" and has Andrea, a real estate agent on board to support her in her real estate business. Whichever direction the Pinizzottos decide to go next however, thanks to the brotherhood that fueled them and Linda's ceaseless hard work, they'll most certainly enjoy great success, one game at a time. ■

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For the Health of it

Warm Ups for Curling Success

Set yourself up for success with a proper warm-up before your curling game!

Curling, like other sports, requires us to perform skills using movements that differ substantially from our everyday activities. Many recreational athletes arrive at a venue and after a quick social chat, head out to the curling rink to start their first game. The next day, aching muscles groan and remind us that we're not getting any younger!

Incorporating a brief but proper warm up before every game will give your body a much better chance of preventing injury as well as reducing post game stiffness. The three components of a simple but effective curling warm up are step, stretch, and slide.

The purpose of stretching is to activate your cardiovascular system to warm up your body. This can easily be done in the curling lounge and should be comprised of a number of heart pumping movements such as running on the spot, jumping jacks, high knees, or stair climbing.

After the Step portion of your warm up you should feel invigorated and, essentially, ready for the activity of the game; certainly ready for the next piece of your warm up.

Dynamic stretching involves controlled, continuous movements

through a full range of motion and should immediately follow the step portion of the warm up for an additional five to ten minutes. The key here is to find and use your full range of motion in a continuous, non-static activity. Perform the exercises in six to ten repetition sets. The following are some of the many stretches that can be utilized: neck rolls, arm circles, golfer's twist, heel raises, body weight squats, or alternating lunges.

Don't confuse dynamic stretching with old-school static stretching where you find the stretch position and hold it... hold it... hold it for 10 or 20 seconds. Research has shown that static stretching actually puts an athlete's muscles to sleep. Save those for your post game stretching routine. Dynamic stretching, by contrast, activates your muscles and prepares them more effectively for activity.

The final phase of the Curling warm up is done on the ice. Several curling slides from the hack should progress from an easy leg drive to a longer, more forceful one.

A progression of 'five steps' can be used to aid in achieving better balance and increase strength. The 'five steps' drill would be done in the following order, with you ultimately ending at the predetermined position on the ice: backline, t-line, top 12 foot, half-way (between the 12 foot and hogline), and the hogline.

This simple warm up routine takes a few minutes and requires that you plan to arrive at the curling venue ahead of time, but it really optimizes opportunity to succeed. While you watch others struggle to warm up during their first two ends of the game, you will be ahead of them... ahead of their second-end form even as the game begins. ■

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