

## WATER POLO CHAMPIONSHIP

# Yelizarova makes a splash at tourney

By TIM SWITZER  
Leader-Post

Anna Yelizarova may have to take on dual roles in her next water polo movie: Director and star.

The 14-year-old centre was certainly the star of the show during the Canadian under-16 girls club championships over the last four days at the Lawson Aquatic Centre.

Yelizarova scored 20 goals in six games during the tournament, including three on Monday as she led her Montreal CAMO team to the national title with a 7-5 win over the Calgary Renegades A.

"From the beginning of the tournament she did a lot for us," said CAMO head coach David Paradelo, whose team fell 5-4 to Calgary earlier in the tournament. "Her goal scoring is important but so is getting her teammates involved. She always has three or four people on her so she has to know when to give the ball up and the other girls have to know when to give the ball to her.

"We played more as a team (Monday). That was our problem the first game. We played as individuals. (Anna) wanted to do so much herself the first game. She came back though and played tough. She gave responsibility to the others and took care of her own responsibilities."



JOSHUA SAWKA/Leader-Post

Members of Montreal's CAMO celebrate victory.

Not surprisingly, Yelizarova, a junior national team member, was named a tournament all-star and the most valuable player.

Expect plenty of footage from this most-recent event on Yelizarova's next water polo video. On her home computer in Montreal, Yelizarova produces highlight tapes that she uses to motivate herself and her teammates.

"I'm planning on making a documentary someday," Yelizarova said. "But

for now it's just the tapes with the slow motion, music and that kind of thing."

The next one ought to include Yelizarova's third quarter-goal from Monday's championship game. Just 35 seconds into the frame, she grabbed the ball in front, and with her back turned, fired a backhand shot past Calgary goalie Breanna Gadzosa for what turned out to be the game winner.

Also scoring for CAMO in the final

were Jasmine Gamache (with two goals), Elise Martin and Catherine Pineda-Tessier. Julie Oppenheim scored twice for the Renegades while Brittany Tyler, Kelly McKee and Taylor Shelby added singles.

Martin and McKee were also named tournament all-stars along with Rebekka Steenkamer (Ottawa Titans I), Victoria Smith (Fraser Valley), Molly Gritchen (Vancouver Pacific Storm) and Regina Piranhas goaltender Sidney Cyca.

The Pacific Storm took the bronze medal. Regina finished seventh overall after beating the York Mavericks 8-6 in their final game.

Water polo is far from done this summer for Yelizarova. She is among the top 18 players attempting to secure a spot on Team Canada for the junior Pan American championships in Rio de Janeiro in late July.

With water polo filling up much of her spare time, it could start to wear on Yelizarova. Not so, said the Grade 9 student.

"There's never enough water polo," Yelizarova said. "The game means everything to me. I'm the type of person who would rather go back to the pool after a big tournament rather than get my rest. If coaches give me a break, I still go to the pool where my mom works. I just love the sport more than anything else in the world."