

# SPORTS

**OUT WITH A BANG** Airdrie's Tier 1 PeeWee hockey club wrapped up its season with a tournament championship in Saskatoon, March 19-21. See page 20.

## Bantam girls hoopsters win provincial gold

**NICK KUHL**  
Rocky View Publishing

It's a scenario most players only dream about.

Down by one, with five seconds to play, with the ball and the team's fate in your hands.

Kaitlin Quong drained two pressure-filled foul shots to lead the Airdrie Bantam girls #1 team to a 40-39 win over the North Edmonton Basketball Association (NEBA) Staples, March 20. The win secured a gold medal at the Youth Provincial Basketball Bantam B Tournament in Edmonton, last weekend.

"You can't ask for a more exciting gold medal game or stressful gold medal game," said head coach John Quong. "They were, and are, the leading team in the province and they hadn't lost, from what we understood, for a couple years."

Airdrie had the ball and a four-point lead with less than 40 seconds left, but NEBA forced a pair of turnovers and scored to take the lead by one. Queue the foul on the younger Quong with five seconds left, where she went on to make both shots for the victory.

"You can't ask for more of a nail-biter or more excitement than that," Quong said. "It's really tough to explain in words the emotion and what a person goes through when you play a whole weekend, all the screaming and yelling, the highs and the lows. Once it's done it's just a blur. I'm still flying high right now."

Airdrie played NEBA in its opening game of the tournament, but lost a close game by six points. Quong said, however, that game, as well as a last-second one-point defeat in the Calgary city finals two weeks ago, became a rallying point for the team.

"(NEBA) has a huge team, the biggest team we've seen to date, period. So we're already going into the gold medal game with that thought, but we played a great game. It was tight all the way, as most of the game had only a two or three point difference," he said.

"And we've had such a roller coaster emotional-filled last month here for our girls. To watch all the girls collapse and break down at once (in Calgary), to the high of winning the gold at provincials



**HOOP IT UP** - Airdrie's Bantam girls won gold at the Youth Provincial Basketball Bantam B Tournament in Edmonton, March 20. The team includes (back, left to right) head coach John Quong, Mackenzie Roberts, Sarah Abbott, Mishy Coward, Hannah McCormick, Katie McCann, assistant coach Shane Wilkins, assistant coach Mitchell Quong, (front, left to right) Kayla Malone, Morgan Rolfe, Kate Paulsen, Kaitlin Quong, team manager and statistician Sarah Louder. Airdrie's Bantam boys team (inset) also fared well, claiming a silver medal.

and watch them all collapse again, but for another reason, is just a wonderful thing."

Quong also said the players were all well represented with friends and family in the stands, which ultimately helped urge them on.

"We had so many people up from Airdrie, from family to begin with, and others who were there for soccer provincials," he said. "It was a lot of support."

Airdrie's Bantam boys team also fared well in Edmonton by claiming a silver medal in the Bantam B component of the Youth Provincial Tournament. The team lost to Cochrane 66-52 in the final.

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