

# Wins gold in Austria

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Betty Zbril, 22 of Outlook, Sask. has skated her way to a bronze medal in Austria under the guidance of her coach Florence Krilow of Denholm.

The medal, plus 8 others for the Canadian team, was earned at the 5th Special Olympic Winter Games in Salzburg, Austria at the end of March.

Krilow said Monday she was terribly proud of the Canadians, "we were the noisiest and the best dressed," she laughed. Krilow was accompanied by another Saskatchewan coach Sharon Mitrov of Regina. The team travelled 18 hours to get to the games and team pictures were taken in Toronto before the athletes and coaches boarded the plane for Austria.

Upon arrival, the only practise the Canadian team had was early on Saturday morning. Krilow says she doesn't know how they held together - the coaches were tired so the athletes had to be completely worn out, she said.

But hold together they did - she scooped up 9 of the 13 medals available for skating events.

From the team, Jerry Anderson won gold in speed skating, Jenny Williams

claimed a silver and bronze in speed skating, Roddy Jensen was the surprise, said Krilow, he took a gold in alpine skiing and Betty Zbril took the bronze for figure skating. Tyler Gilbert unfortunately missed a gate in the alpine skiing and was disqualified.

Krilow has been working with Zbril and supervising her training for two years. The young woman won gold at the Zone games in Melfort earlier this year and Krilow believes she had the ability to take gold in Austria as well.

Zbril can be tempermental, stated Krilow, but she has great footwork and is not afraid. One day she will be a powerful skater - already she has begun to work in a generic program.

Krilow believes there will be great things ahead for the Canadian Special Olympic skaters. She said in the United States the skaters are already doing axles, pairs and dancing. "If you had have told me a few years ago that Special Olympic athletes could figure skate I probably wouldn't have believed you because of the coordination needed - but I would have been wrong, that's just not so," stated Krilow.

Forty-five countries attended the games in Austria. Krilow felt very bad

for the Russian team because there was obviously no money, they were poorly dressed and they had very poor equipment. She said, one day she witnessed one skater come off the ice and give her skates to the next skater so she could perform.

The United States on the other hand was the opposite from Russia. There was one coach for every participant, said Krilow.

As for the Canadians, there were 145 people in the delegation, who had a wonderful time and had the best outfits in Austria. Much of this is thanks to Avon who provided gorgeous ski jackets, pants and fleecy jackets and also too Adidas who provided track suits, bags, letter jackets, T-shirts - "it was beautiful equipment," stated Krilow, "we are very lucky."

Krilow has been teaching skating for 30 years. In fact, she met her late husband Nick - also a skater - while they were both skating in England.

Krilow has been involved with Special Olympics for the past 10 years. She has been a coach for the past five. She said the competitive spirit with Special Olympic skaters is amazing.

Special Olympics is the provider of sport for the handicapped - those

mentally disabled. Special Olympics also provides funds for these sports.

Zone 7 athletes come from anywhere between Meadow Lake and Rosetown. All of the sports mean hard work for both athletes and coaches, but these athletes give 100 per cent of everything they have, explained Krilow.

"I was very proud of the effort they put in - of Canada and of the Special Olympics as a whole. The support locally for our athletes was just wonderful.

The Austrians are very formal people but we livened things up - they called us the crazy Canadians, she laughed. All of our athletes cheered everyone else on. These athletes are never jealous or envious of others. If someone else wins they are truly excited for them. "We were a terrific unit and a great team," enthused Krilow. We told the athletes it didn't matter if they personally won because we were Team Canada and somebody was going to win.

There was open marking for the these games, said Krilow. They held up the numbers so everyone could see what they had achieved. It was very exciting, she concluded.