

**CLASS OF 2019**  
**TEAM: 2001 BURNABY CANADIANS**

**By Grant Granger**  
**Chair, Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame**



**Induction banquet Thursday, Feb. 27**  
**Reception 6 p.m., dinner 7 p.m.**

**Tickets: \$85**  
**tickets09@shaw.ca 604-436-6372**



Burnaby Canadians Anduccis were the 2001 Canadian senior women's soccer champions.

## *Nail-biting end to national title*

**Keeper scores in 11th round of penalty kicks to give Burnaby senior women's soccer squad Canadian crown**

**I**t's a story Hollywood producers would drool over. It comes complete with a long journey to conquer an extremely powerful foe, the overcoming of adverse conditions and a nail-biting ending.

The story of the 2001 Burnaby Canadians Anduccis senior women's soccer team was about three years in the making, says coach Danny Pietramala. The squad had been a merger of the Wesburn and Vancouver Canadians clubs. The amalgamation resulted in the senior women's team being in the middle of the pack of club teams around town. But then another club folded and, says Pietramala, the addition of four or five players from that team "put us over the top."

He credits his sister Nadia, Rosalyn Hicks and Phebe Trotman for playing large roles in taking the team to the next level.

For years, the women's ranks had been dominated by perennial powerhouse UBC Alumni winning the previous five provincial titles. The lineup included the likes of Burnaby South student Christine Sinclair (you may have heard of her), national team player Andrea Neil and the Canadian squad's backup goalkeeper.

"They had a pretty strong roster," says Pietramala. "We had lost to them the previous year in the final." But this time, Burnaby beat the Alumni 2-0 in the final to slay the dragon that had tormented the Canadians for half a decade.

That earned them the right to represent BC at the national championship in Vaughn, Ontario.

"We played our first three round-robin games, and then going into our next round robin game it rained for a day and a half. The committee was going to cancel the nationals," recalls Pietramala.

**O**ne of the teams, however, had a facility at North York where they could play and they ended up kicking off against the Ontario women's team at 9 p.m., in a game that ended in a tie.

Finally the rain stopped and a grass field opened up that was good enough to play on. Burnaby had gone through the round robin with the only blemish being the tie against Ontario which earned them a trip to the final. The other preliminary round group was won by Nova Scotia, which had yet to surrender a goal in the tournament.

That trend continued in the final.

"Both teams had superb goaltending," says Pietramala. "We both had chances but no one could score. Both deserved to win the game."

The Canadians were backstopped by Michelle Gademans, who went on to play for the Whitecaps women's team and Simon Fraser University.

No goals in regulation and no goals in overtime meant the national title was going to be decided on penalty kicks.

The drama had just begun. The initial five-shooter round solved nothing with both teams scoring twice. Then it was sudden death. But the

ending wasn't sudden. The teams traded goals and misses over the next five rounds to make it 5-5.

"It was very, very nerve wracking for me," says Pietramala.

Going 10 rounds meant every starting player but the goalkeepers had taken their turn at kicking from the spot and only the keepers were left. That, however, was good news for Burnaby.

"When it got down to Michelle shooting I was pretty confident we were going to win that one," says Pietramala of Gademans who was named BC adult soccer player of the year in 2001.

"Fortunately for us, Michelle was very good for us because she could play out and was good with her feet. Their keeper was basically just a keeper and just shot it right at Michelle."

**T**alk about a happy ending for the Canadians.

"We had a good party coming home," says Pietramala. "It was really special."

"I get a little emotional here. I coached them when they were kids in youth soccer and they really deserved it. A lot of them had never won a national championship and it was a big win for them"

The story also has an epilogue with the 2001 Burnaby Canadians Anduccis being inducted into the Burnaby Sports Hall of Fame.

"They're a good group of kids, but I'm really happy for them to get [inducted] because they were a really special group."