



Major Shona Couturier at a competition held in Victoriaville in 2023.



Major Shona Couturier at the Canadian Armed Forces National Swimming Championship.

Photos: courtesy

She swims for her well-being

| Yves Bélanger, *Servir*

As a member of the Patriotes, the Canadian Armed Forces' (CAF) representative swim team for the Montreal region, Major Shona Couturier, deputy commanding officer at the 2nd Canadian Division Support Group Technical Services, admits she takes up the sport primarily for her own enjoyment.

She first became interested in water sports at the age of 10. "I signed up for synchronized swimming, but I soon realized that it wasn't quite what I was looking for," she laughs.

So swimming became her main discipline. "I love being in the water. Plus, I like playing a sport where girls aren't judged by their physical appearance." She also appreciates the fact that swimming is a sport accessible to everyone. "It's inexpensive and many municipalities have a pool to practice in all year round."

From the moment she steps into a pool, Maj Couturier feels completely free. "Swimming really relaxes me psychologically and makes me feel good. It's so pleasant to move around in the water." The officer trained in a swimming club throughout her teenage years. "However, I took a break from training when I went to college and university."

Her comeback

Three years ago, some of Maj Couturier's friends decided to sign up for a half-Ironman. "I liked the idea of working as a team and going each with the event in which we excel. Of course, I chose swimming." On the other hand, she had to face a difficulty. "I'd never swum in open water before. It's very different. In spite of everything, I managed to get through it honourably."

The experience reconnected her with the well-being she felt in the water. So she decided to return to the public pool on a regular basis. "That's where I met a group of women who were training to swim. They told me I could become a master and compete with them. I accepted the challenge. A few months later, she received her master's certification.

She joined the Patriotes team

In 2023, she qualified to be part of the Patriotes, the team representing the Montreal region at the CAF national swimming championships. "It allowed me to meet other CAF members who share my passion for the sport. I really like the team spirit between us."

From March 22 to 25, Maj Couturier was among the swimmers who competed in the national championships held in Ontario. She is proud of her results in the women's 30-34 category. These included third-place finishes in the 200-metre individual medley (IM) and 50-metre breaststroke.

"In the relay, the women's team took second place in the 4 x 50 IM and third place in the 4 x 100-metre freestyle. In the mixed relay, we took fourth place in the 4 x 50-metre IM.

In conclusion, Maj Couturier will be competing in a number of civilian events over the coming months.



To join the military swim team