

The challenge is half the fun

Beating out close to 27 hopefuls for a spot on the Northern BC all-star ringette team, Jessica Heitman not only landed herself a centre position, she's also captain of the team.

"There's a lot of pressure leading the team," said Heitman, who's also captain of her Tween B Wildfire team. "But it's also a lot of fun and I enjoy the challenge - trying to keep everyone thinking positively and working together."

In her sixth year as a ringette player, Heitman has demonstrated she's got a natural ability on the ice. "I'd skated before," said the 13 year old, "but never competitively or anything. Then I saw a booth at the mall advertising ringette and I thought 'hey that looks cool, maybe I'll try it out.'"

Since then Heitman has been hooked, practicing at least twice a week and playing scrimmage games, she's certainly getting her fair share of ice time. Plus there's the once a month practice for the all-star team.

"It's tough getting together more," she said. "Just because there's five players from PG, five from Quesnel and two from Terrace. It makes it difficult to get to know your teammates and their style, but you do - fast."

Dad and coach, Sean, agrees that geographics make it difficult to pull a team together, but he and his daughter are confident in the teams ability. In fact, the father and daughter team feel the challenge is half the fun.

"We're learning together," said coach, "and growing together."

Captain Heitman agrees, but adds with a laugh, "sometimes I get annoyed, but mostly I really enjoy it. If I have something to discuss or work on - he's right there."



Jessica Heitman's looking to lead her ringette team to medal standings. AUTUMN MACDONALD/FREEPRESS

The Heather Park Middle School student doesn't seem to shy away from confrontation or challenges, traits that landed her the C on both her teams and lead her to a summer sport she's "real thirsty for." Heitman signed up for a season of lacrosse action, a sport known for its physical nature and intense endurance. "I just wanted to do something different," she said with a shrug and

a smile.

Dad laughs and offers his opinion, "I figure she's gotta take out her frustration somewhere - there's no contact in ringette."

Contact or not, these talented athletes certainly have a routine for getting psyched before a big game. "Oh yeah we have a song," said Heitman, "When World's Collide by Power Man 5000, it gets us pumped - definitely."