



Homegrown talent excelled on the world stage

DESIREE SCOTT WON HER FIRST OLYMPIC BRONZE MEDAL IN LONDON | 2012



Desiree Scott played five years for the University of Manitoba Bisons. *University of Manitoba Bisons Sports*

Desiree Scott doesn't regret staying at home to develop her soccer skills, and the decision sure didn't hurt her playing career.

The Winnipegger has been part of some historic tournaments with Canada's women's soccer team.

The program won its first-ever Pan American Games gold medal in 2011 and its first-ever Olympic medal in 2012 (adding another Olympic medal four years later), with the midfielder Scott playing a key role on those teams.

She's competed in three FIFA Women's World Cups (2011, 2015 and 2019), with Canada reaching the quarterfinals when it hosted the event for the first time in 2015.

Playing in nearly 150 games with the national team (as of 2019) has taken Scott around the world, but she's proud she honed her skills at home.

After playing her youth soccer in Winnipeg, Scott had offers to join college teams in the United States. She didn't entertain any of the offers and didn't visit any of the schools.

"I actually had a ton of offers to go to the U.S. to go to school, and that's usually the thing people

do when you're a soccer player," Scott said in a *Winnipeg Sun* podcast. "You go to the States and you play. I was a complete homebody and I still am."

"The fact that the year I graduated (from West Kildonan Collegiate) the Bisons had their first CIS season, it seemed the pieces all came together and I had the opportunity to play at home in front of my family and friends, which is what I wanted to do."

The University of Manitoba Bisons women's soccer team began play in Canadian Interuniversity Sport (CIS) in 2005, and Scott was named the Canada West Rookie of the Year. She was a CIS First Team All-Canadian in her fifth and final season with the team in 2009.

She was named the Bison Sports Female Athlete of the Year for the 2009-10 school year and later became an assistant coach with the Bisons team. In 2017, Scott won the university's Distinguished Alumni Award for outstanding young alumni.

"I'm pretty proud that my journey has kept me through the Manitoba system," Scott said in a *CBC Sports* podcast called *Player's Own Voice*.

Scott was eight years old when she started kicking a soccer ball around the backyard with her older brother.

"He would slide tackle me and things and never let me win, but it was something he would actually hang out with me (doing)," she said in a Utah Royals FC player feature video.

"My dad played, my brother played and we were all No. 11, so it's kind of within the family. I used to go to his games and it was just something the family bonded over. I was competitive and loved it."

Scott, who played on Manitoba's soccer team at the 2005 Canada Summer Games in Regina, won a championship in the United Soccer League's W-League in 2006 with the Vancouver Whitecaps FC and also played with the team from 2010-12. In the National Women's Soccer League, Scott played with FC Kansas City (2013 and 2016-17) before joining the Utah Royals FC in 2018.

She suited up for the Notts County Ladies FC of the Football Association (FA) Women's Super League in England in 2014 and 2015. The team reached the FA Women's Cup final in 2015, losing 1-0 to the Chelsea Ladies FC before a crowd of more than 30,000 at Wembley Stadium in London.

At the 2012 Olympics, Canada met the U.S. in the semifinals. With Canada ahead 3-2, goalkeeper Erin McLeod was called for a time violation and the U.S. was awarded an indirect free kick inside the penalty area. The shot went off the arm of Canadian



Desiree Scott (near) with Canadian teammates in 2014. *Winnipeg Free Press*

player Marie-Ève Nault and the Americans were awarded a penalty kick for a handball violation. The U.S. scored on the kick in the 80th minute. The game went into extra time and the Americans scored in the 123rd minute in their 4-3 victory.

“That loss for us was very heartbreaking,” Scott said in the *Sun* podcast. “We were so close to playing for a gold medal and then for it to just slip away in the last minutes of overtime.”

The Canadians bounced back with a 1-0 win over France to capture the bronze medal. Scott made a key defensive play in the 70th minute of the game. A France shot was on target to go in the net, but Scott kicked out her right leg and stopped the ball with her knee at the goal line.

“I happened to just be in the net at that moment when that ball was coming in and I knew this bronze medal was so close that I was going to throw any part of my body in the net so that it wasn’t going to go in, and I happened to be at the right place at the right time,” she explained in the podcast.

Scott was named the 2012 Manitoba Female Athlete of the Year by the Manitoba Sportswriters and Sportscasters Association.

At the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, she and her Canadian teammates won their second straight bronze medal with a 2-1 victory over host Brazil.

Standing only about five-foot-two, Scott got the nickname “The Destroyer” for her physical style of play.

“(The nickname) got coined to me in 2012,” she said in the Utah Royals video. “Our national team coach at the time, John Herdman, got interviewed



Desiree Scott in a 2014 game between Canada and the United States at Investors Group Field in Winnipeg, *Winnipeg Free Press*

and I was just starting in the centre-mid position and they were asking about me and he said, ‘She’s destroying them out there.’ And then boom, the Destroyer was born.”

In reference to her nickname, Scott said in the *CBC Sports* podcast, “I’m two totally different people. Off field, I’m the sweetest softie. On the field, I become someone else.”

Walt McKee was Scott’s coach with Team Manitoba at the 2003 Western Canada Summer Games and for her entire career with the Bisons. He described her as a smart, strong player with “all the tools.”

“She doesn’t let her size hamper her when she’s playing,” McKee said. “You can be the biggest person

in the world, but if you go against Desiree, I’ll put my money on Desiree every time.”

Scott held her fourth Desiree Scott Soccer Camp in support of KidSport Winnipeg in 2019 at Garden City Community Centre. She’s been a KidSport athlete ambassador since 2013.

“I love everything about Winnipeg,” Scott said in the podcast. “I think it’s important to give back to your roots and all the people who supported you along the way. It’s just home for me and I want to give back to that city. I’ve always wanted to put Winnipeg on the map and prove that good athletes and good players can come from there. I think it’s sort of been overlooked in the past.”