

PEI

# Football community on P.E.I. pays tribute to family members lost in car accident

Melissa and Layla MacDonald died after a motor vehicle collision in Cardigan on Nov. 14

CBC News · Posted: Nov 19, 2021 6:54 PM AT | Last Updated: November 19, 2021



Players, coaches and other community members gathered at a field in Rollo Bay, P.E.I., to pay tribute to Melissa and Layla MacDonald. (Brian Higgins/CBC)

---

On a rain-soaked field in Rollo Bay, P.E.I., coaches, parents and football players from across the province said goodbye to some of their own, as Melissa MacDonald and her eight-year-old daughter, Layla, passed home turf for the last time on Friday.

The two died in a head-on [collision in eastern P.E.I. Sunday afternoon](#).

Last Sunday's accident in Cardigan was still raw for the more than 50 people who attended the tribute — many involved with the Island football community.

"Horrible in a word but at the same time there's a strong family group in the football community and I think that's very evident behind us here today with the number of people that's assembled from right across P.E.I. to celebrate the lives of two amazing individuals," said Justin Dunn, a coach with the Charlottetown Privateers football team.



Two roses were put up on the digital display board outside Layla's school. (Brian Higgins/CBC)

---

MacDonald was a coach for the Wildcats football team in Souris and her daughter Layla was known as an enthusiastic young player.

Football was a family affair and kindled friendships across the province.

"She started coaching one year to train in Charlottetown with the Privateers as there wasn't a program for her son Alex in Souris," said vigil organizer Colleen Henderson.

"Then she came up and coached Atom football and she was the trainer for the Bantam and Varsity team up here and she was an amazing coach. Amazing woman."

Outside Layla's school, La-Belle-Cloche, on the electronic banner were two red roses — one big, one little.

Some people who attended the vigil wore football jerseys or tie-dye — the bright colours a favourite of young Layla.



The people gathered wore tie-dye colours to show their support for the family. (Brian Higgins/CBC)

---

"Layla is definitely a beacon of light. Anytime that you would see Layla there would always

be a gigantic smile from one side of her face to the other," said Dunn.

"Layla in her own right was a fierce competitor on the football field. Absolutely, she suited up in flag and tackle herself and they'll be very dearly missed."

- [Woman, child dead in eastern P.E.I. highway accident](#)
- [Tragic weekend brings traffic fatalities on P.E.I. to 15 for the year so far](#)

Public health guidelines kept numbers small inside for the [funeral happening a little earlier](#).

But the rain didn't stop those gathering outside showing their support for the family.

The funeral procession on Route 2 slowed to a near stop, as the remains of Melissa and Layla MacDonald passed the field for the last time.

---

*With files from Brian Higgins*

## Popular Now in News

### 1 ANALYSIS

**Parliament gave Zelensky a hero's welcome. He gave us something else: a cold dose of reality**

921 reading now

### 2 Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelensky addresses Parliament as Russian forces edge toward Kyiv

659 reading now

### 3 'Off-grid' couples wage B.C. court battle as 'communal living' attempt ends in acrimony

624 reading now

### 4 ANALYSIS

**Many Ukrainians now believe they can defeat Russia's army, complicating diplomatic negotiations**

608 reading now

### 5 Russia puts Trudeau, foreign affairs and defence ministers on its 'black list'

414 reading now

---