

SPORTS & LEISURE

But will finish one more year at The Gunnery

Wood lands scholarship at RPI

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

Looking back a couple of years, it would have been easy for Jake Wood to stay at home and play for the Georgetown Jr. A Raiders, but the 17-year-old winger figured that some drastic changes were in order.

Wood did play a couple of exhibition games for the Raiders prior to the 2009-10 season before opting to attend a prestigious prep school in Washington, Connecticut called The Gunnery and he's excelled on and off the ice ever since, recently landing a full scholarship to Rensselaer Polytechnic Institution, ranked in the top 10 of NCAA Division I schools last season.

"Prep school turned out to be the best decision for me," said 5-foot-7, 160-pounder.

"I was struggling in school and not really where I was supposed to be. Here, it's structured so you're focused mostly on education and sports and my grades have improved to where I've made the honour roll both years I've been here."

Things didn't start off too well for Wood at the Gunnery, however, as he broke his ankle playing dodgeball early in his first year and missed the first five regular-season contests with the Highlanders. He recovered quickly though and had 19 points and 22 games, with his blazing speed and playmaking abilities catching the attention of RPI coach Seth Appert.

"He's the prototypical RPI forward—highly competitive, passionate, great vision, and excellent character," Appert said.

"Jake fits into our program very well, and we hope he is the first of many Highlanders joining us in Troy, N.Y."

Strangely enough, had Wood played with the Raiders, he would



Georgetown's Jake Wood passed on taking the Jr. A route and instead has spent the past two years at the Connecticut prep school The Gunnery. The former Halton Hurricane has flourished with the Highlanders on the ice and in the classroom and received several scholarship offers to some top U.S. colleges before choosing RPI in New York.

Submitted photo

have been a teammate of high-scoring forward Brandon Pirri, who spent one season at RPI before moving on to be a top prospect in the Chicago Blackhawks' organization.

Wood has one more year at The Gunnery and won't enroll at RPI until September of 2013. He has a number of options to ponder, including an invitation to join one of the top Jr. A clubs in Canada next season, the Vernon, B.C. Vipers, or play for the USHL's Sioux City, Iowa Musketeers while completing his high school studies in Connecticut.

He plans to major in business management at RPI.

"Graduating from The Gunnery is important to me and they would allow me to take my schoolwork to Iowa, so right now that would be my preference," he added.

Returning home in a couple of

weeks, Wood has a busy summer of training ahead as he'll skate four times a week with a group that includes NHLers Chris Camperi, Shawn Matthias and Ryan O'Marra.

He has also signed up for power skating classes with former world champion figure skater Barb Underhill, as the emergence of Carolina Hurricanes' rookie sniper Jeff Skinner has altered the thinking by some about how to approach skating drills.

"Jeff Skinner started off as a figure skater and didn't play hockey until later on and this class is similar to how he trains," Wood said.

"My coach loves my leg strength but he wants me to really work on my upper body strength, maybe putting on five pounds or so. The power skating is more to improve your core strength."



Going for the green

Cory Gentes of The Club at North Halton makes his approach shot on the 5th hole during the Ontario Professional Golfers' Association Golf Supply House Pro Pro Championship, held on his home course. The tournament is a two-person, best-ball format featuring head professionals and teaching pros and is held annually at North Halton. Gentes and partner Todd McGrath finished in a tie for 23rd at even par for the 18-hole tourney. The team of Scott Cowx of Ancaster's HHGC Teaching Academy and Otter Creek's Darren Allan combined to shoot an eight-under-par score of 64 to win by one stroke and repeat as champions, collecting the \$1,650 first-place prize. The Blue Springs Golf Club team of Greg Pacenti and John Finlayson tied for 16th at -1 for the round.

Photo by Eamonn Maher



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