

# Haas commits to U of T

Backstroke ace set to make splash with Varsity Blues

By **EAMONN MAHER**  
Staff Writer

Having just written the last exam to complete his studies at Georgetown District High School this past week, swimmer Kyle Haas wasn't exactly exuberant about his new freedom on Twitter.

"Done high school woo," was the extent of his celebratory tweet.

Haas will still have to get up at 4:30 a.m. six days a week and drive back and forth to swim practice with the Oakville Aquatics Club or McMaster University, usually followed by another two-hour late afternoon session.

The 18-year-old backstroke specialist has also applied for jobs to keep him busy until late August, when he'll start up financial economics courses at the University of Toronto and swim for the defending national team champion Varsity Blues.

As the fastest Canadian in his high school class for the 50- and 100-metre backstroke events, Haas was asked if he had any interest in attending a U.S. school on a scholarship.

"Not really," said Haas, who will receive a partial scholarship at U of T and train daily with more federally carded and world-ranked athletes than anywhere else in the country.

"I've trained at U of T the last couple of years with some of the coaches there and it's an environment I'm comfortable with. I also swam with a bunch of guys from there who are at the nation-

al level, it's close to home and I didn't really want to go anywhere else."

Haas began swimming competitively with the Halton Hills Blue Fins at age 12 and moved on to the Oakville Aquatic Club this past September in order to train under coach Sean Baker.

His current short-course personal bests of 25.04 seconds in the 50m back and 54.10 in the 100m back would rank Haas in the top eight at last year's Canadian university championships.

At U of T, Haas will be under the tutelage of legendary Blues' head coach Byron MacDonald and the National Swim Centre's Ben Titley, who oversaw the ascension of world-record-holding backstroke Liam Tancock of England.

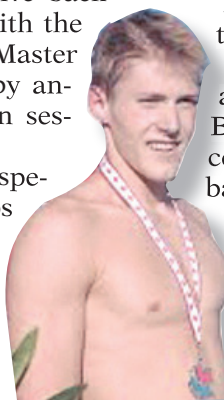
"Obviously we are excited to attract a top athlete like Kyle to the University of Toronto," said MacDonald, who has provided analysis for Canadian broadcast networks for the swim events at the Summer Olympics.

"He has natural speed and will make an immediate impact on our team as we continue to be in the hunt for the national team title."

The next big meet for Haas will likely be at the Canadian Swimming Trials in Victoria, B.C. April 2-4. He said he's keen on getting his times lower and rankings up as the season progresses.

"My first goal is to place in the A final at the trials," added Haas, who in the back of his mind is thinking about the 2016 Summer Olympics in Brazil.

"That's what everybody trains for, the Olympics, right?"



**KYLE HAAS**



## Aikido club opens its doors

Youth and adult members of Georgetown Aikido participated in the club's new Dojo grand opening and open house this weekend, performing demonstrations for visitors to the 29 Armstrong Rd. facility. Pictured above, the San an Dori Jyu Waza is demonstrated, in which three attackers (black belt Austin Gareau with sword, brown belt Alex Clarke with tanto/knife and brown belt Matthieu Verdon) take on one defender (Sensei Mike Klusoczky, far left). Aikido is a non-competitive martial art and a form of self-defense. For more info, visit the website [www.georgetownaikido.com](http://www.georgetownaikido.com) or call 905-873-3080.

Photo by Jon Borgstrom

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