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Gendron goes to league champion Peterborough in sixth round

Cull, Pasma crack top 10 at OHL priority draft

By PAUL SVOBODA
 Herald Sports Editor

A pair of Georgetown athletes took their first major steps towards realizing dreams of playing professional hockey Saturday in North York.

Trent Cull and Rod Pasma, graduates of the Georgetown Jr. B Raiders, cracked the top 10 in the first round of the annual Ontario Hockey League priority draft at the North York Centennial Arena.

When the call came, it came early as Cull was selected seventh overall and first by the neighboring Guelph Platers. Just two selections later, it was the Cornwall Royals using their first pick, ninth overall, to choose Pasma.

The pair became the second and third Georgetown Jr. B grads - all defencemen - to be selected in the first round of the OHL lottery in the past two years. Last year, Adam Bennett was chosen second overall by the Sudbury Wolves.

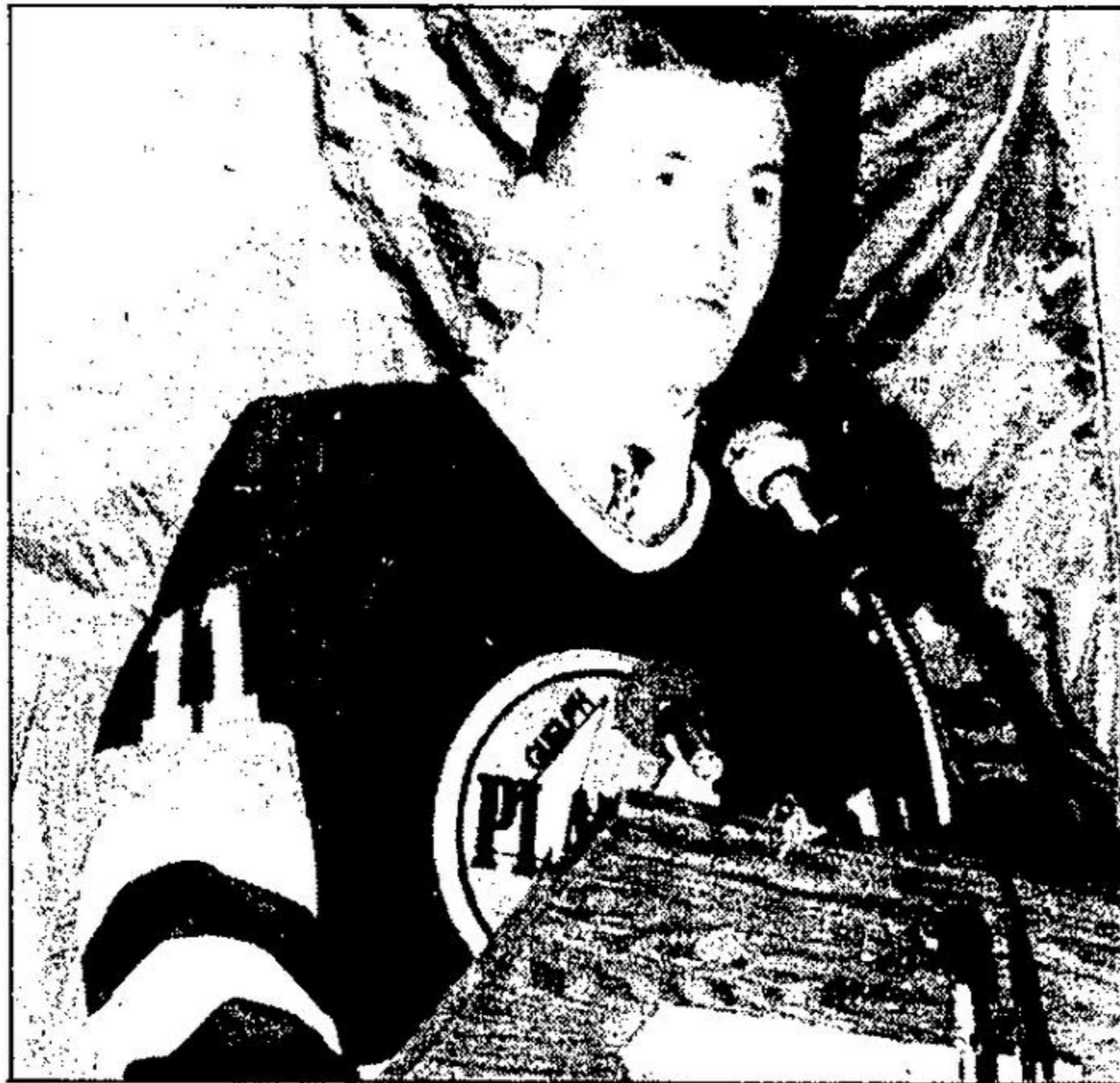
A third member of last year's Raiders, left winger Bryan Gendron, was also nabbed in Saturday's draft. The defending OHL champion Peterborough Petes made Gendron their seventh pick, 89th overall, in the sixth round.

Cull was ranked 10th and Pasma 18th heading into Saturday's draft and while each was projected as a first rounder, both were surprised where they ended up.

"It was a complete surprise, I had no idea Guelph would pick me," said an elated Cull minutes after mounting the podium to acknowledge Guelph's selection. Pasma likewise expressed some surprise in being chosen by Cornwall. "I was a little bit surprised they took me. We had talked before the draft and we had it narrowed down to Cornwall and Peterborough."

Raider coach Peter Sturgeon, a spectator at Saturday's proceedings, was obviously a proud mentor as his charges donned jerseys from their respective new teams.

"Not bad for a pair of stumblebums from Georgetown double-A," quipped Sturgeon. "They're both pretty good kids with a lot of potential. They've got the tools. They both improved their skating and puckhandling and their intensity improved all year. They're a credit to the community and the GMHA. They've been given the opportunity and now it's up to them."



Trent Cull thanked his family and coaches, Rod Pasma chatted with Cornwall Royals officials and the pair eventually congratulated each other at Saturday's OHL draft. (Herald photos)



Sturgeon cited the fact all the Raider grads will be moving to strong OHL clubs with long histories of winning. Both Guelph and Cornwall have won Memorial Cups in recent years and Peterborough captured the league playoff championship this past season.



Bryan Gendron

While Cull and Pasma possess vast potential in the skill areas of the game, both are well aware of their size as being a major factor in their being selected so early. At only 15-years of age, Cull already stands 6-foot-2 and tips the scales at 185 lbs. while Pasma, 17, currently goes 6-foot-4, 204.

"I'm aggressive and I like to handle the puck as much as I can," said Cull, assessing his biggest attributes. "I'm going to work on getting some pucks in the net and I'm going to work on my shot."

Pasma said he hopes to give Cornwall some offence and also contribute to an already-strong defence. "In camp I'm going to carry the puck a lot and I'm going to hit," he said. "I'm going to work on my lateral movement and I'd like to be a bit faster."

Cull plans on "pumping some iron," this summer and he'll also play as much summer hockey as he can. "I'll do the best I can," he said of next fall's Guelph camp. Being close to home in Guelph will be an added bonus for Cull. "Yeah, mom and dad will be coming to watch me," he said.

Pasma will be farther down the road in Cornwall but he says he's looking forward to going there and he hopes to add another five to 10 pounds of solid muscle before he hits the ice in the fall. "I met Orval Tessier (Royals coach) and he's a

Continued on Page 17



GMHA retains AA status

A motion to apply for single-A status within the Ontario Minor Hockey Association was soundly defeated by the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association at a special meeting Monday.

The motion had been tabled at an executive meeting two weeks ago suggesting the GMHA consider dropping its double-A status in an effort to have rep teams become more competitive and to attract more players to the program.

According to GMHA secretary Judy Pries, GMHA president Carson Mininch checked population figures prior to Monday's meeting and it is doubtful whether Georgetown would even have qualified for single-A status. Double-A centres include those with populations of between 25-50,000 while single-A covers communities of between 13-25,000.

Three reasons GMHA motion wasn't answer



Paul's Call

Paul Svoboda
 Herald Sports Editor

There are three obvious reasons why the Georgetown Minor Hockey Association shouldn't have been considering a drop from AA to A within the Ontario Minor Hockey Association.

Georgetown's burgeoning population?

Yes, with the expected growth continuing in town the question will actually soon become redundant as Georgetown will not come close to meeting the OMHA population requirements for a single-A centre. Apparently it doesn't now.

Past success in the OMHA?

Yes, GMHA secretary Judy Pries mentioned after Monday's special GMHA meeting in which the motion to consider applying for A status was defeated, that it would be unlikely the OMHA would consider approving of a drop to A for Georgetown due to its reputation as a good hockey town.

Presence of a Jr. B team?

Yes, the fact the Raiders are a competitive Jr. B squad which promotes the use of local players would also factor in a decision to drop classifications.

But the three biggest reasons why the question should never have been considered were to be found at Saturday's OHL priority draft.

Adam Bennett, Trent Cull and Rod Pasma.

On June 17, Bennett, a GMHA product, will be drafted in the first round - likely within the top

10 - of the NHL draft.

On Saturday, Cull and Pasma, both GMHA products, were first round picks - within the top 10 - in the Ontario Hockey League's priority draft.

They cut their teeth on double-A hockey in Georgetown. Would they have made the same strides against single-A competition?

As GMHA president Carson Mininch said last week, good players will be discovered where ever they play. True. To an extent.

But it's much easier to get noticed playing in triple-A and double-A tournaments and playoffs.

Peter Sturgeon, head coach of the Raiders, has spent his life playing hockey at highly competitive levels. A Boston Bruin draft choice, a member of the now defunct Colorado Rockies and a journeyman pro in just

about every North American minor league you can name.

As Sturgeon has said in the past, it's tough enough for an AA kid to make it to junior hockey.

Scouts pay the most attention to AAA, less to AA and even less to A. Competitively, an A team will not get invited to AAA tournaments with the frequency an AA team will.

Sure, the GMHA is concerned with every kid, not just the potential stars. And registration has dropped off.

But the kind of attention attracted by guys like Bennett, Cull and Pasma will do more for promoting hockey in Georgetown than any renewed success in the OMHA playoffs.

Perhaps new avenues need consideration.

The AA vs. A question is redundant anyway. New answers must be considered.