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Leckie hopes to end Vanier Cup drought

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

If Saturday's Uteck Bowl is the last game of John Leckie's four-year university career, the Georgetown resident would have a winning resume that would be the envy of most young football players.

The 21-year-old running back/slot-back won his third Yates Cup Ontario university championship with the University of Western Ontario last weekend, a 26-25 victory in Ottawa against the Gee Gees that put the Mustangs into the national semifinals this Saturday against the undefeated Laval Rouge et Or (noon, TSN).

Yet, as well as the Mustangs have played under coach Greg Marshall for the past few years, they haven't won the Canadian championship since 1994 and are still mindful of their 44-21 Vanier Cup loss to Laval two years ago in Hamilton.

Playing in a somewhat reduced role this year compared to his first three

seasons with the Mustangs, Leckie may get in on some offensive plays this week but is likely to be on special teams for most of the game, something he gladly accepts if his team can extend its season.

"Coming out of Georgetown high school, I knew that by coming to Western there would be a lot of talented running backs and there probably would be times that I wouldn't be starting, but most of all I wanted to play for a winning team and we've had a lot of success here," said the 6-foot, 200-pound kinesiology student.

"I've been looking at getting into the Masters program at Western next year and whether I can come back and play football for a fifth year here all depends on what my course load would be like, so I might be content to hang 'em up after this year."

Second-ranked Western will be in extremely hostile territory Saturday against a team that hasn't lost on home turf since 2004, a string of 42 consecutive wins at raucous PEPS Stadium in Quebec City.

The Mustangs have averaged a CIS-best 254 yards rushing per game in 2010 and Leckie said that he's been employed in practice this week as a blocker in some different offensive formations that Marshall plans to throw against the 11-0 Rouge et Or

"Laval's a dynasty with the way their organization is run and they're even tougher at home than on the road. But they're mortals and we know that we match up against them well in a lot of areas," he added.

"We've been pumping loud music through the speakers during practice to try to simulate what we'll experience with the crowd noise, and we've been using a silent snap count to offset that. It's so loud in that stadium that you can be standing beside someone and not hear what they're saying."

The winner of Saturday's contest will face the Mitchell Bowl champion, either Calgary or St. Mary's, in the Vanier Cup Nov. 27 in Quebec City.



Stingers stung in final

Kirsty Buchanan (18) of the Stewarttown Stingers sets up a play at the net for a teammate during the North Halton elementary public school volleyball championship match against the Hawthorne Village Huskies Tuesday night at Milton District High School. The undefeated Huskies captured the North Halton Tier I girls' title with a 25-11, 25-13 victory over the Stingers, who still advance to next Wednesday's eight-team Halton championships at E.C. Drury in Milton. In the North Halton Tier I boys' final Tuesday, Georgetown's Centennial Chargers defeated Milton's Chris Hadfield Hawks 25-19, 25-14. The North Halton Tier II finals were held Wednesday evening, with Stewarttown facing Sam Sherratt in the boys' contest and Georgetown South's Gardiner Grizzlies taking on Chris Hadfield for the girls title.

Photo by Eamonn Maher



JOHN LECKIE

Driedger earns all-Canadian status

Emily Driedger's first season with the University of Guelph's cross-country running team has been a success for the Georgetown District High School graduate from both an individual and team standpoint.

The 18-year-old finished 14th in the women's race at last weekend's Canadian Interuniversity Sport Champion-

ships in Sherbrooke, Que., earning all-Canadian status along with the CIS's Rookie of the Year award.

The Gryphons also won their sixth consecutive women's national team title and the men took the overall points trophy to make it five straight years that Guelph has swept the team hardware.



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