

SPORTS & LEISURE

Two-sport star Brown faces tough choice

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

Growing up on Hawks Place in Georgetown, Connor Brown didn't have to travel far to find a good game of ball hockey or lacrosse going on.

There are only about a dozen homes on the cul-de-sac off Delrex Blvd., yet the 16-year-old had a few now grown-up neighbours who went on to some acclaim in Canada's two national sports.

Next door was (and still is) Travis Bland, who captained the Halton Hills Jr. B Bulldogs and was one of the leading scorers for Major Series Lacrosse's Ajax-Pickering Rock last summer.

Across the street were the Knoepfli brothers, Mike, Matt and Graham, who were all excellent athletes as well. Mike was a late Toronto Maple Leafs' draft pick now playing for Fribourg-Gotteron of the Swiss A league.

And a couple of doors down were the Veltmans, whose father Gerald was a founder of lacrosse in Halton Hills and his boys Peter and Daryl went on to be regulars in the National Lacrosse League.

"We couldn't keep (Connor) in the house," laughed Brown's father John.

"We were lucky to move here. Those guys had a huge impact on Connor growing up and have been really positive influences. They were really good about letting him get involved out playing on the street and that had a lot to do with his love for lacrosse and hockey. Travis is like a big brother to him."

Brown, a Grade 11 student at Christ the King, is ready to hopefully forge his own path to a pro career, but isn't sure yet what sport that might be.



Georgetown's Connor Brown (left in top photo and at right) has become a much-sought-after talent both on the ice and the lacrosse floor. He was taken fourth overall in last week's OLA Jr. A draft and is property of the OHL's Ottawa 67's.

Top photo by Eric Riehl
Photo at right by Eamonn Maher

The 6-foot, 180-pound lefthanded forward was picked fourth overall by the Mississauga Tomahawks in last week's Ontario Lacrosse Association Jr. A Draft after scoring well over half of his team's goals this past season for the Halton Hills midget Bulldogs, who had a pretty decent coach in box lacrosse legend Gil Nieuwendyk.

Brown also currently leads the second-



place 17-3-4 Halton major midget AAA Hurricanes in scoring and was taken in the ninth round of last year's Ontario Hockey League Priority Selection by the Ottawa 67's, who have had scouts regular-

ly checking the talented centre's progress.

Brown had 30 goals and 31 assists in 53 games in 2011-12 for the minor midget Hurricanes as they earned bronze medals at the OMHA championships.

Picking up organized lacrosse at age four with the Halton Hills Bulldogs' organization, Brown has won provincial gold medals at the tyke and peewee levels, along with a silver as a bantam.

Well aware that he's likely going to have to give up one of his favourite activities in order to achieve his goal of becoming a pro in the other, the Brown family is weighing its options carefully.

"I've been told since I was 13 that I had to make a decision between lacrosse and hockey by the next year, but I've kept on doing both and that's been good for me so far," said the aspiring firefighter.

"I love both. We'll see what happens."

Brown will also have to make a decision about where he's going to play box lacrosse this summer.

He was called up for three games by the Halton Hills Jr. B Bulldogs in 2011, getting two goals and three assists in a victory over the last-place Orillia Kings.

It would appear as though the 'Dogs are gearing up for another run to the Founders Cup national championship this summer, while the Jr. A Tomahawks are coming off a 2-20 season and have won just seven games in the last four years.

"Mississauga has already offered me a spot on their team and I would probably get more floor time there," he added.

"I've never played in front of big crowds like the Bulldogs get and they keep it local, so it would be a lot of fun to play in your hometown with your buddies from school. That's another option."

Bearcats win marathon contest



Lucinda Kollenhoven (20) of the Acton Bearcats provide some imposing net presence against the Aldershot Lions on Monday in a Halton high school senior girls' volleyball matchup. The host Bearcats won the first set 25-12 and then prevailed in a 34-32 marathon thriller to take the match and are now 8-3 this season. Coach Angie Kennedy is optimistic about the Acton seniors' chances of making the OFSAA championships in the single-A category, especially after beating previously undefeated Lester B. Pearson, a AA school, in three sets on Tuesday in Burlington.

Photo by Eamonn Maher



GOT GEAR?: A local drive to collect used baseball equipment for youths in the Dominican Republic has received many donations from the community and there's still time to contribute before the gear is shipped off at the end of the month. Started up by Georgetown native Patrick McCarthy, who now lives on the Caribbean island full-time, Don Wepf (pictured at left) and Marnie Carey, director of operations for the Georgetown Baseball Association, have been overseeing the collection of equipment at one of the drop-off stations, located at Apple Auto Glass at 354 Guelph St. To arrange a pickup of equipment, call 1-800-260-4443. Wepf's Swiss Electric company will cover the cost of shipping, slated to be sent to the DR on Jan. 31.

Photo by Eamonn Maher