

SPORTS & LEISURE

Will success come Sooner for Renton?

By **EAMONN MAHER**
Staff Writer

It seems a little ironic that, for someone who reluctantly had to pass on playing football during his years at Christ the King Secondary School, javelin thrower Tyler Renton has ended up attending one of the top gridiron universities in the U.S.

The 18-year-old Georgetown South resident accepted a scholarship offer this summer to attend the University of Oklahoma on a track & field scholarship and will study criminology.

The Sooners are perennially on the top 25 list of rankings for NCAA football teams, but they also have one of the best track & field teams in the U.S., sending sent two athletes to the Olympics in London.

"I love watching football and I'm excited about getting out to the first home game and be a part of the atmosphere. The capacity of the stadium is something like 85,000 people and the interest is really big down there," said the 6-foot-3, 200-pound Renton, whose size and athleticism would make him the perfect candidate for the tight end position.

"The coaches at CtK did ask me to play football, but I wanted to concentrate on throwing."

Renton had little experience tossing in the throwing events (javelin, shot put and discus) when he entered Grade 9 at

CtK, yet was still able to earn a bronze medal in javelin at his first Ontario high school championship meet and then won the gold as a junior the next year.

Under coach Richard Parkinson at the York University Track & Field Club, Renton got an invitation to last year's World Youth Championships in France, at which he placed 14th in the javelin.

Athletics Canada selected Renton for its long-term development program, because throwers generally don't hit their prime until their late 20s. Renton felt he was in the best shape of his career after stepping up his training regimen during the winter, but a broken left wrist hampered his weight-training schedule.

Moving up to the 800-gram javelin this year from 700 grams that juniors use, he was able to throw a personal-best 67.8 metres back in April that qualified him for the World Junior Championships last month in Barcelona, Spain.

And although he was only able to place 20th with a throw five metres shorter than his personal best, qualifying for the worlds piqued the interest of Oklahoma's throwing coach, former Olympic discus thrower Brian Blutreich.

"What we like about Tyler is that his coach has given him a good base technique for javelin to work with, because with most first-year throwers we have to make a lot of changes in their technique, but he's got all the basics down," said Blutreich of his first-ever Canadian pupil.

"We just need him to build up his strength in the weight room and do the type of exercises that will boost his javelin fitness. We're going to take it nice and slow, so he'll be just training during the (fall) indoor season and focus solely on the javelin to be ready for the spring."

Strep throat and an elbow injury in his throwing arm meant that Renton didn't compete in the Canadian Junior Championships upon his return from Barcelona. He has returned to top form now, however, and has set a goal of surpassing the 70-metre mark in his freshman year with the Sooners.

"Watching the Olympics every day was inspiring and I think it'd be really awesome to do that one day," Renton added.

"It was cool to see a guy I competed with (Canadian Curtis Moss), who was throwing the same distances as a junior that I have been doing, so it's good to know that maybe one day I can be where he is too. I'm on the right path so far. (But) when I got the scholarship into track & field, I wasn't thinking that I'd go to the Olympics or turn pro or anything. You've got to be the best in the world to make enough money to live on, and even if you do, you'll need something to fall back on eventually. The education is all worth it to me."



Javelin thrower Tyler Renton is off to the University of Oklahoma on a track and field scholarship. Photo by Eamonn Maher



Stephanie Masniuk of the Georgetown Ladies' PowderPuff League's bantam/midget #2 team attempts to throw out a Burlington baserunner during a recent girls' fast-pitch playoff game at the Georgetown Fairgrounds, won by the visitors 14-5.

Photo by Andrea Lefebvre

Girls' fastpitch reborn

Down to its last strike this past off-season, girls' fast-pitch in Halton Hills has undergone a successful rebirth under a new organization.

Known as the Kinsmen Girls' Softball League for over 40 years, the local service club announced last December it was no longer able to maintain its support for another season.

Stepping in to pinch-hit for the Kinsmen was the Georgetown Ladies' PowderPuff League, which had actually been established by graduates of the Kin youth leagues four decades ago.

The GLPL, previously consisting of teams of women age 19 and older, made a two-year commitment last winter to supporting girls' softball and is thrilled with how the first year went.

Approximately 120 girls, ages 5-18, were registered this year and the teams joined the Halton Interlock League to play against centres such as Burlington, Milton and Oakville.

"This Interlocking loop has allowed the girls to play a higher calibre of ball than they were used to in the previous league, while still focusing on the premise of participation, skill development and fun," said GLPL president Dee Dee Haynes-Ridley.

The GLPL has also been interacting with Softball Ontario to help improve the program, having been awarded with a SAFE Star grant this year, to aid in the area of umpire development.

Haynes-Ridley added that the organization would now like to offer development opportunities for coaches and players through skills clinics conducted by Softball Ontario that will eventually be available throughout the year.



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