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Michael McNiven hopes to develop with Brampton Beast

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Michael McNiven seems to have a bright professional hockey career in front of him, and it's starting with the Brampton Beast.

The 20-year-old goalie, a prospect within the Montreal Canadiens organization, has played a couple of games with the ECHL's Beast in his first professional season and is taking the positives out of playing at a higher level.

"It's a long season. There's lots of time to work and get better each and every day," McNiven said after a 5-4 overtime loss to the Manchester Monarchs on Oct. 17.

"That's the plan, coming here in the morning, working as hard as possible, having a good day at work, going home, getting rest and getting ready for the next day."

McNiven, a Georgetown native, joins the Beast after a strong Ontario Hockey League career with the Owen Sound Attack.

Last year, he was named the Canadian Hockey League's goaltender of the year and guided the Attack to the OHL Western Conference final.

He turned a lot of heads with his play last season, but he acknowledges that going from the OHL to the ECHL is a big step up.

"I find that it's a lot of go-go-go instead of systems play. It's a really fast game," he said.

"The pucks go east-west, north-south real quick. It doesn't matter if it's in their end or your own end, you've always got to be ready."

McNiven wasn't picked in the 2015 NHL Draft, but impressed the Canadiens enough to earn an entry level contract in September of that year.

It could still be a few years until he gets to the NHL since Carey Price is still the go-to guy for the Canadiens while there are other prospects waiting in the wings for an eventual call up.

One of them is Zach Fucale, who played a lot of minutes with the Beast last year, helping them reach the playoffs for the first time in franchise history, before earning a spot on the American Hockey League's Laval Rocket this year.

Beast coach Colin Chaulk said there's good characteristics young goalies could learn from Fucale.

"He committed his everyday life to being an elite athlete, from the food he put in his mouth to therapy on his days off," he said. "Everything was committing his entire day and life to being in the NHL. What that does for a team is gives you hope and when you



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Rob Beintema/Metroland

Goaltender Michael McNiven is starting his professional hockey career with the Brampton Beast.

have that, it's pretty darn dangerous."

Even with the Beast, it looks like there will be competition for the starting goalie job as Marcus Hogberg, an Ottawa Senators prospect, was assigned to the Beast by the AHL's

Binghamton Senators since Ottawa doesn't have an ECHL affiliate and Brampton is the closest option.

Chaulk is looking forward to watching McNiven and Hogberg push each other for minutes in goal.

"The message we send is

it's not where you start, it's where you finish," Chaulk said. "Whoever it is that great and dominates here - goalies and players all the way through, coaches included - you'll get an opportunity to compete at a higher level."

Raiders get back into win column

Veteran netminder Mario Cavaliere stopped all 23 shots directed his way as the Georgetown Raiders blanked the host North York Rangers 3-0 on Sunday afternoon in an Ontario Junior Hockey League contest.

Cavaliere picked up his

10th win of the campaign and second shutout in Georgetown's second win in less than 24 hours, after a 3-1 triumph over the St. Michael's Buzzers Saturday night at the Alcott Arena.

Zack Dybowski, Jason Smith and Jordan Crocker scored for

the 11-3-1-0 Raiders on Sunday.

Smith, Jacob Payette and Nicolas Vlahos tallied against St. Mike's and first-star Cavaliere made 24 saves.

Cavaliere, a 20-year-old from Mississauga, was named the Ontario Junior Hockey League's

South-West Conference Goal-tender of the Month for September after posting a 7-0-1 record with a 1.59 GAA and a dazzling save percentage of 0.952.

Georgetown suffered its first home loss of the season on Wednesday, a 2-0 decision versus

the Kingston Voyageurs.

This week, the Raiders play host to the 0-13-0-1 Milton Ice-Hawks on Wednesday at 7:30 p.m. and the Wellington Dukes on Saturday as part of the Wenjiang Festival daylong hockey festivities, at 7:30 p.m.



COUNTDOWN TO THE

RAIDERS

NEXT HOME GAME

Saturday Oct 28th, 2017

7:30 pm at Mold-Masters SportsPlex

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