

# Sports & Leisure

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## Georgetown native seeks spot on national basketball team

# Hrkac looking to take the next step

**N**o one can question her dedication to the sport of basketball, now Angela Hrkac wants to remove any doubt as to her ability.

Not that there is any question Hrkac can play the game—a selection to the Canadian Interuniversity Athletic Union (CIAU) second all-star team last year and four consecutive berths on the Ontario University Athletics (OUA) all-star team have proven that. But Hrkac would like to solidify herself among the best women's basketball players in the country by earning a spot on the Canadian national team.

It's a goal the Georgetown native took the first step toward realizing this year when she was invited to the national team tryouts in Vancouver in April. Though she didn't make the team, the three-day camp was a vital stepping stone.

"Getting invited is really important—getting into the national scene and being recognized," the 22-year-old said. "I was one of the youngest players. Most were in their late 20s or early 30s."

The national tryout also led to her first international experience. In June, Hrkac was named to the Canadian student team for the World University Games in Spain. The Canadian team won its pool but were knocked out in the quarterfinals by Russia. They came back to defeat Portugal to finish seventh, the best-ever showing for Canada's student national team. They followed that up with a fourth-place finish at the Jones Cup in Taiwan, although Hrkac said the team was beginning to show the effects of more than a month on the road.

Hrkac said the two events gave her a taste of how international play is different than the university game. A six-foot-three centre for the Lakehead University Nor Westers, Hrkac was the tallest player on the Canadian team but she was one of the shortest centres in the tournaments. Hrkac had often played against the Lakehead men's team to practice playing against taller, stronger players but said it still required an adjustment period.

"They warned us in training camp that the other teams would have a six-foot-seven girl standing in the middle of the key but until you actually walk in to the gym and see them, it's not the same."



did. We had a very athletic team so we had to outwork them."

That was nothing new to Hrkac. The Bishop Redding graduate has had to work a little harder than her opponents since injuring her anterior cruciate ligament in high school. Hrkac had seven operations over the next six years. Problems with her knee persisted because much of the cartilage had been removed so, after her third season at Lakehead, she underwent major surgery that involved breaking her leg to readjust the bones and relieve the stress on the knee.

"I had been through seven (operations) and at that point in my career I was willing to do anything to keep playing," she said. "I talked it over with the surgeon and that seemed to be the best option."

She rehabilitated the leg for the next six months and returned in time for the start of her fourth season. Hrkac showed no signs of the injury slowing her down as she finished second in Canada in scoring, averaging 19.1 points per game, and was one of the top rebounders in Ontario. The season earned her OUA player of the year and the CIAU's Tracy MacLeod Award, presented to the player demonstrating dedication and perseverance.

Her efforts helped Lakehead, which played most of the season with only six players due to injuries and departures,

Hrkac said the opposing teams played a much different style of game.

"They played a lot quicker style.

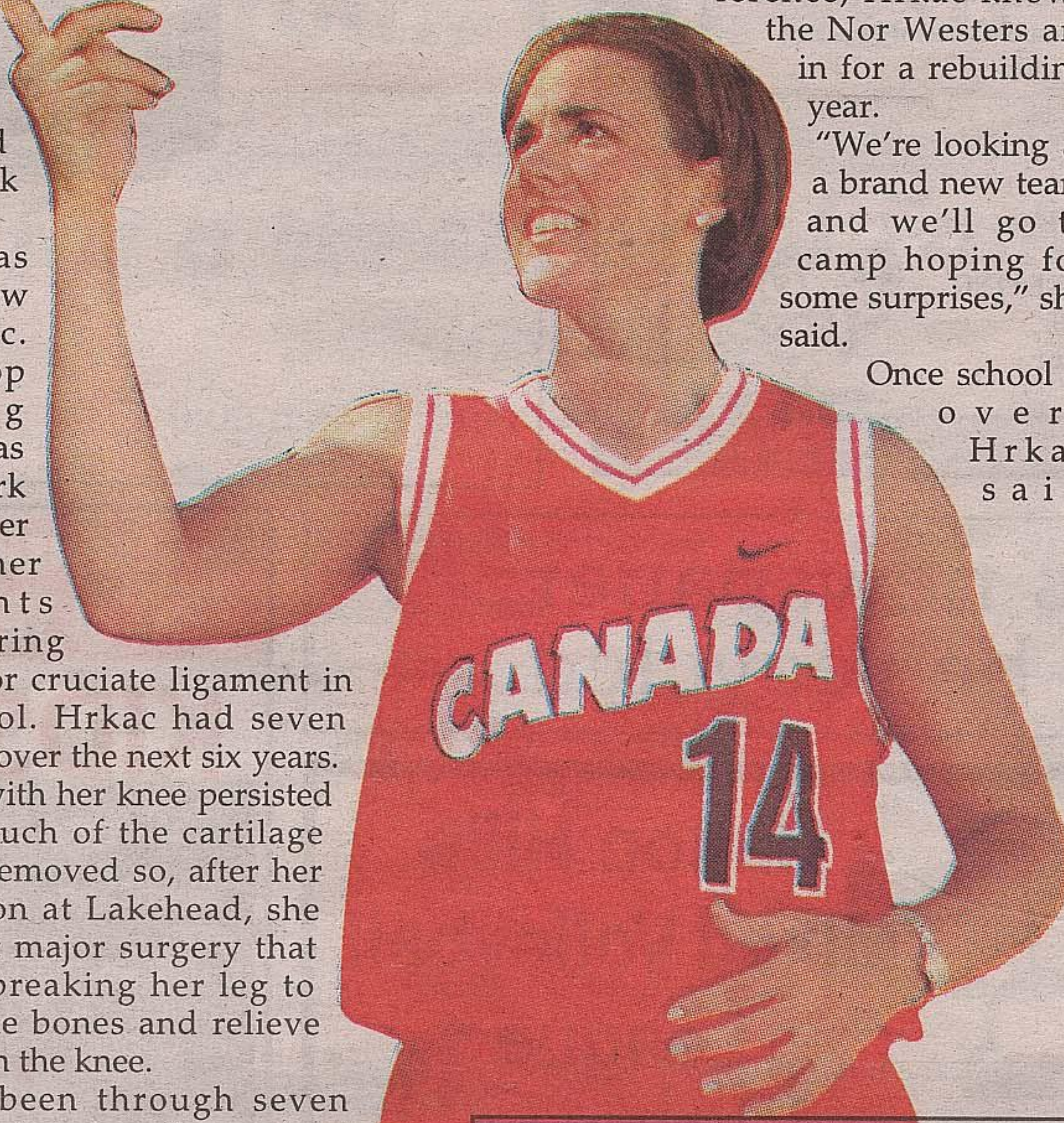
"We didn't have the size or strength that they

make it to the Ontario semifinals, where they were knocked out by Western. It also attracted some interest from Europe and an offer to play for a team in Germany.

Hrkac turned down the contract to return to Thunder Bay for her final season. Lakehead is losing three players and its coach, so, after four years of either finishing first or second in the conference, Hrkac knows the Nor Westers are in for a rebuilding year.

"We're looking at a brand new team and we'll go to camp hoping for some surprises," she said.

Once school is over, Hrkac said



**Angela Hrkac has been among the elite of university women's basketball players, but the Georgetown native is now hoping to make it on the international scene by earning a spot on Canada's national team.**

Photo by Ted Brown

Europe remains an option. She knows cracking the Canadian team lineup will be difficult because the team won't want to make many changes heading into the Olympics.

"A lot of players will probably leave after 2000 and that will be my best chance but I'll still try for it next year."

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

## Raiders open pre-season with 5-4 win

**I**t may only be pre-season hockey but the Georgetown Raiders hope it's a sign of things to come.

The Raiders opened the exhibition season by edging the Milton Merchants 5-4 on Friday. With the goal of joining the league's elite teams, knocking off last season's regular season champions is not too bad of a start.

Jeff Seeds continued to be a thorn in the side of his hometown team. The Raider winger beat Joel Cameron on a breakaway with 52 seconds to play to give Georgetown the victory.

"I don't hold a grudge against Milton anymore but there's always extra incentive (playing against Milton)," said Seeds, who had two goals and two assists against his former team.

The Raiders took full advantage of the Provincial Jr. League's decision to eliminate the red line this season. Trailing 4-3 in the third, they used a long pass to set up both Tristan Fairbairn's short-handed equalizer and then Brydon Butterworth sent Seeds in alone for the winner in the final minute.

"The team is full of speed this year and we're going to try to execute the two-line passes," Seeds said.

The familiar combo of Seeds and last season's scoring champ Stace Page staked the Raiders to a 2-1 lead in the opening period. Billy Fetherston's goal helped maintain the one-goal edge in the second but Milton rallied to grab the lead in the third.

Another Milton native also helped sink the Merchants. Adam Bertoli had two assists playing on a line with Seeds and Page. Bertoli isn't likely to keep that job but his production would be a bonus to the Raiders this season. Former Wellington Duke Doug Orr is likely to occupy the left side when the season starts but he didn't dress for Friday's game.

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