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Page and Knoepfli

Raiders honor pair of sharpshooters

Mike Knoepfli and Stace Page will be gone next season but the Georgetown Raiders are making sure they're not forgotten.

The Raiders announced Sunday at their annual banquet that they will retire Knoepfli's number 21 and Page's number 22.

Raider GM Jack Moon said Page and Knoepfli "were instrumental in the turnaround of the franchise."

"What can you do for players that have done what these two have done for our hockey team?" Moon asked. "Do you give them a special trophy that's going to get thrown in a bedroom? You want to do something so that they'll be remembered for years to come."

Both players were unaware the honour was coming.

"It was a bit of a shocker," Page said.

The duo will join David 'Duke' Bouskill (#27) as the only retired numbers.

Page rewrote the Raider record book. He set team single season and career records for goals, assists and points. In four seasons he played 194 games, scoring 160 goals and compiling

344 career points. This season he joined Brampton's Marty Wells as the only player in Central Ontario/Provincial Junior Hockey League history to record two 50-goal seasons and the sixth player to record two 100-point seasons.

Page didn't set the league on fire right away. The Brampton native scored a modest 34 points in his rookie season on a team that won only six games. The following season, with the addition of some talented rookies, Page lit up opposing goalies for a team record 54 goals and 123 points and was named the Ontario Hockey Association's Jr. A player of the year.

Among the rookies joining the team was a highly sought-after player from the Mississauga Reps of the Metro Toronto Hockey League. Knoepfli was from Georgetown but the Raiders still had to convince him to join a perennial cellar-dweller. They did and he went on to score 100 goals and 214 points over three seasons and 129 games.

Things did not start out well, though. Knoepfli injured his knee in his first game with the Raiders and missed the next six weeks. He finished the year fifth



Stace Page, left, and Mike Knoepfli, right, display the numbers that won't be seen again on a Raider jersey. Raider GM Jack Moon, centre, announced that the Jr. A hockey team will retire both players' numbers.

Photos by Herb Garbutt

on the team with 47 points. That allowed him to slip in under the radar in his second season but teams that had watched him closely should have been ready. He racked up 45 of his points in the final 27 games.

With Page drawing more attention from opposing checkers, his production dropped to 40 goals and 80 points. Meanwhile, Knoepfli scored 37

goals and led the team with 84 points. He was named the conference's most improved player—an award Page won the previous year. Suddenly instead of a first and second line the Raiders had lines 1A and 1B—a formula that led them to a team record 32 wins and the conference final.

In the 2000/01 season Page matched his team goal record

and notched 107 points, claiming the West Conference's MVP award and his second conference scoring title. Knoepfli had 45 goals and 83 points in 46 games. The only disappointment was a first-round playoff loss. Both playing injured, the Raiders' dynamic duo combined for 11 goals and 26 points in seven games.

"Me and Page got this award but you're only as good as your teammates," Knoepfli said.

"We were surrounded by a lot of good players," Page added.

The two teammates will face off against one another next season after accepting scholarships—Knoepfli to Cornell and Page to St. Lawrence. They will be officially honoured next season. In the meantime, the Raiders are faced with the task of replacing their top two snipers. Moon said that's not possible.

"I don't believe you can. Guys like that come around once a decade. To have them both at the same time was incredible."

—By Herb Garbutt, staff writer

The Georgetown Jr. A Raiders handed out an impressive collection of hardware at their annual awards banquet on Sunday. The Jr. A squad honored (back, from left) Tim Williams (veteran player of the year); T.J. Trevelyan (rookie of the year); Mike Knoepfli (scholastic award, player of the year); Stace Page (captain's award, most valuable player); Kyle Rogers (booster club commitment to Georgetown Minor Hockey award); Dan Rogers (defensive player of the year); (front, from left) Ryan Busby, (most improved player); Bill Fetherston (defenceman of the year, three-star player of the year); Ryan McCarthy (sportsmanlike player award). The sportsmanlike player is a new award named in honor of former trainer Leonce Paulin. The team also presented awards to Andrew Groombridge and Tom McEwen (outstanding contribution to the team by a non-executive member) and Bert Wilson (outstanding contribution to the team by an executive member).



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