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Nova Scotia's Sidney Crosby has all the tools Are the Georgetown Raiders close to landing... *the next Great One?*

By **HERB GARBUTT**
Staff Writer

As with any young hockey prospect being compared to the greats of the game, there is always the weight of expectations.

Georgetown Raider GM Jack Moon had read the stories and heard the hype but got his first chance to see the next hockey wonderkid Sidney Crosby on the ice Sunday. The 14-year-old didn't meet his expectations.

"He's better," Moon said after watching the Nova Scotia native in a three-on-three game with Raider veterans.

"I was amazed how great his shot was and how quick his hands were," said Raider owner Stuart Hyman.

Crosby made quite an impression on the Raiders and

the team can now only hope they did the same. They did their best, showing Crosby the town's arena, the team's training facility and local schools as well as introducing him to players and the family he would stay with if he decides to play for Georgetown.

As Crosby was presented with a Raider jersey with his name on the back, Hyman told him, "Hopefully, this isn't just a souvenir."

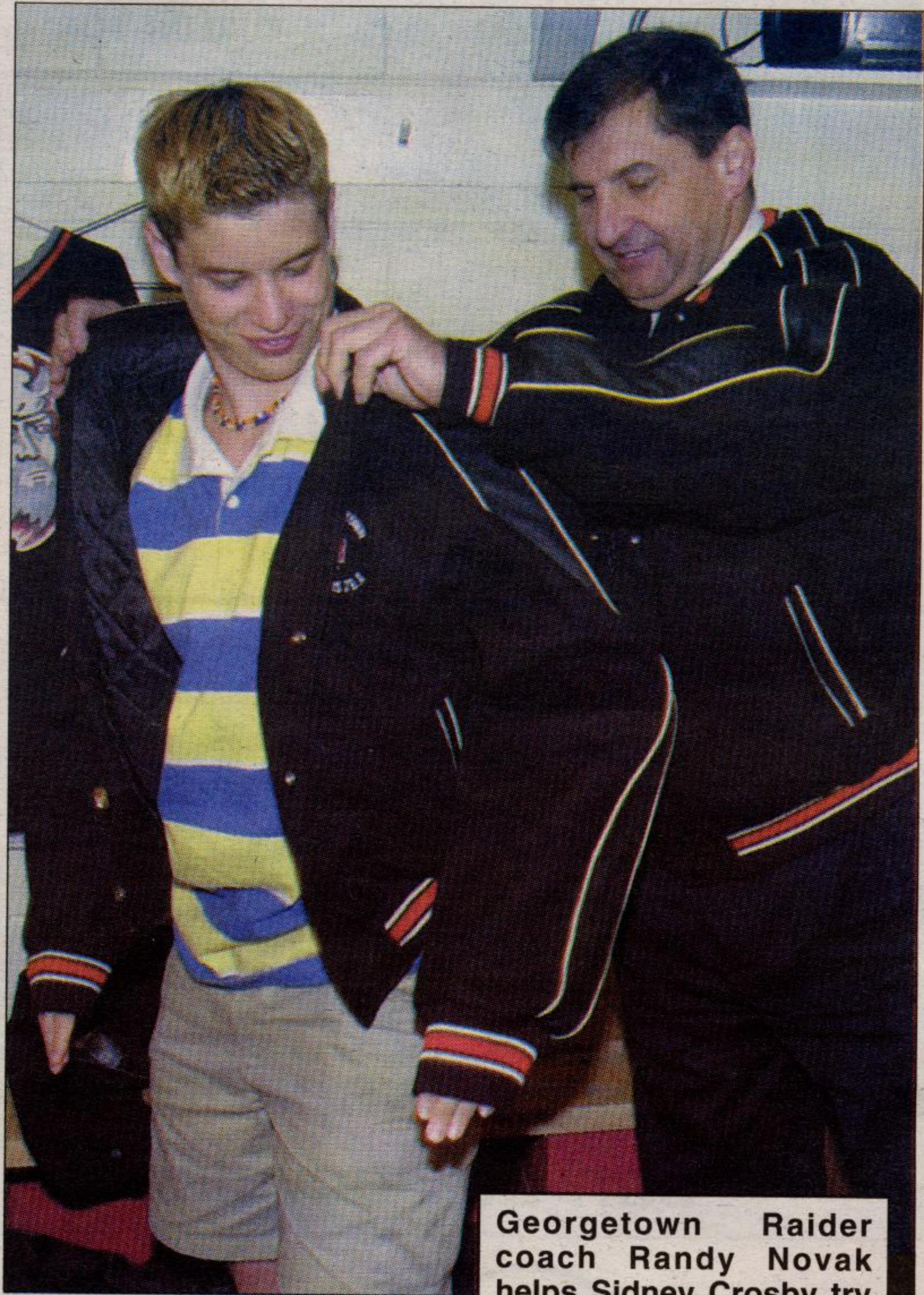
Crosby, who won't turn 15 until August, will now take the summer to make the important decision of which road to follow in his hockey career. He'll at least have the support of his parents, who joined him on his weekend visit to Georgetown.

"It's not like I'm a novice at this," said his father Troy, who played major junior hockey with Verdun and was drafted by the Montreal Canadiens. "I

know how it works. Hockey and education are both very important and we're going to make sure we do our homework."

The younger Crosby also does his homework. He has a 90 per cent average in his first year of high school. His stats on the hockey rink are even more impressive. Playing against opponents two and three years older than him, he led the Dartmouth Subways midget AAA team in scoring with 95 goals and 193 points in 74 games. Detractors pointed to a weak Nova Scotia league but Crosby showed he could perform at the highest levels as well, leading Dartmouth to the Air Canada Cup—the national midget championship—and winning tournament MVP honours while his team took the silver medal.

Suddenly Crosby was the



Georgetown Raider coach Randy Novak helps Sidney Crosby try on a Raider jacket. The highly-touted 14-year-old was in town on the weekend as he narrows down his options for next season. The Raiders hope to have Crosby, the MVP at the national midget championships, in their lineup next season.
Photo by Herb Garbutt

latest player to have 'The Next Wayne Gretzky' tag attached to him. But Crosby shyly dismisses the comparison.

"I know myself there's not going to be another Wayne Gretzky," he said. "There's going to be comparisons if we're in the same situation. We're both offensive players but if I can do one or two things that he could do, I'll be happy."

One player Georgetown fans might compare Crosby to is Stanislav Chistov. The Russian sniper played with the Raiders as a 15-year-old before being drafted fifth overall by Anaheim in the 2001 NHL Entry Draft.

"Sidney is more well-rounded," says Todd Christie, who has worked as the agent for both players. "(Chistov) has tremendous offensive abilities. Sidney has that and every other aspect. In 30 years he's one of the best, if not the best

player, I've seen for his age. He's incredibly mature."

And while a 'next one' label brings plenty of attention and accolades, it also brings critics just waiting to replace it with 'the next flop.'

"I know there are people out there who are doubters and you just have to use those types of people as motivation," Crosby said.

The Raiders would like nothing more than to have Crosby make believers out of Georgetown hockey fans.



Sidney Crosby and his father Troy (far right) have grown used to the media attention since his play started drawing comparisons to Wayne Gretzky. The Raiders management, including GM Jack Moon (left), are hoping to convince the 14-year-old to play Jr. A in Georgetown next season.

Photo by Herb Garbutt

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