

Sports

sleblanc@haltonsearch.com

Retirement simply not on O'Shea's radar

Milton's 13-year CFLer says he's still got more to give on the gridiron

By **STEVE LeBLANC**
The Champion

Exactly when Mike O'Shea retires from football is anybody's guess, but the local linebacker figures he won't be the one to decide it.

"I'll be one of those guys that has to be told that they don't want me back," suggested the Argos' 35-year-old defensive captain, with an air of both candor and good nature at the fourth annual Milton Chamber of Commerce Sports Celebrity Dinner and Auction last Tuesday night at Glencairn Golf Club. "I don't think that many athletes really leave on their own terms. You hear of these guys who retire and there's usually some back story about how they weren't going to be re-signed. I'll be one of the ones who's asked to leave."

However, that's not likely to happen anytime soon for the 6'2", 224 lbs. Miltonian, who becomes a free agent February 15.

Taking some time to chat after an hour-long autograph session with his fellow celebrity dinner guests, O'Shea said staying with Toronto is obviously the ideal situation — especially since head coach Mike 'Pinball' Clemons and defensive coordinator Rich Stubler both re-signed just two weeks ago.

"He's (Pinball) one of the greatest people I've ever met. I think as more and more coaches pattern their coaching styles after his you're not only going to see more champions but more champion human beings."

While he's much closer to the end of his football career than the beginning of it, the three-time Grey Cup winner says he feels he's still got more to give on the gridiron.

"There's still room for improvement somewhere."

For O'Shea, the CFL's off-season doesn't translate into down time — not with a number of business interests plus a wife

"I'll be one of those guys that has to be told that they don't want me back."

MIKE O'SHEA

and three children, including baby girl Aisling, who arrived in October.

"I'm trying not to be as busy (with business interests) as last year," he explained. "This off-season is going to be about family and re-hab."

That's as far as he'll go when discussing the shoulder injury that plagued him through the latter half of 2005, stating in an always courteous tone that, "Yeah, we don't talk about injuries. It's too easy to blame them for things and I try not to do that."

A regular at the sports celebrity dinner, O'Shea said the annual fundraising event has become an enjoyable off-shoot of his career since he moved to town four years ago.

"It's a nice, intimate setting," he said. "I'm not really one to get star-struck, but sitting here between Guy Lafleur and George Chuvalo, hey that's pretty great."

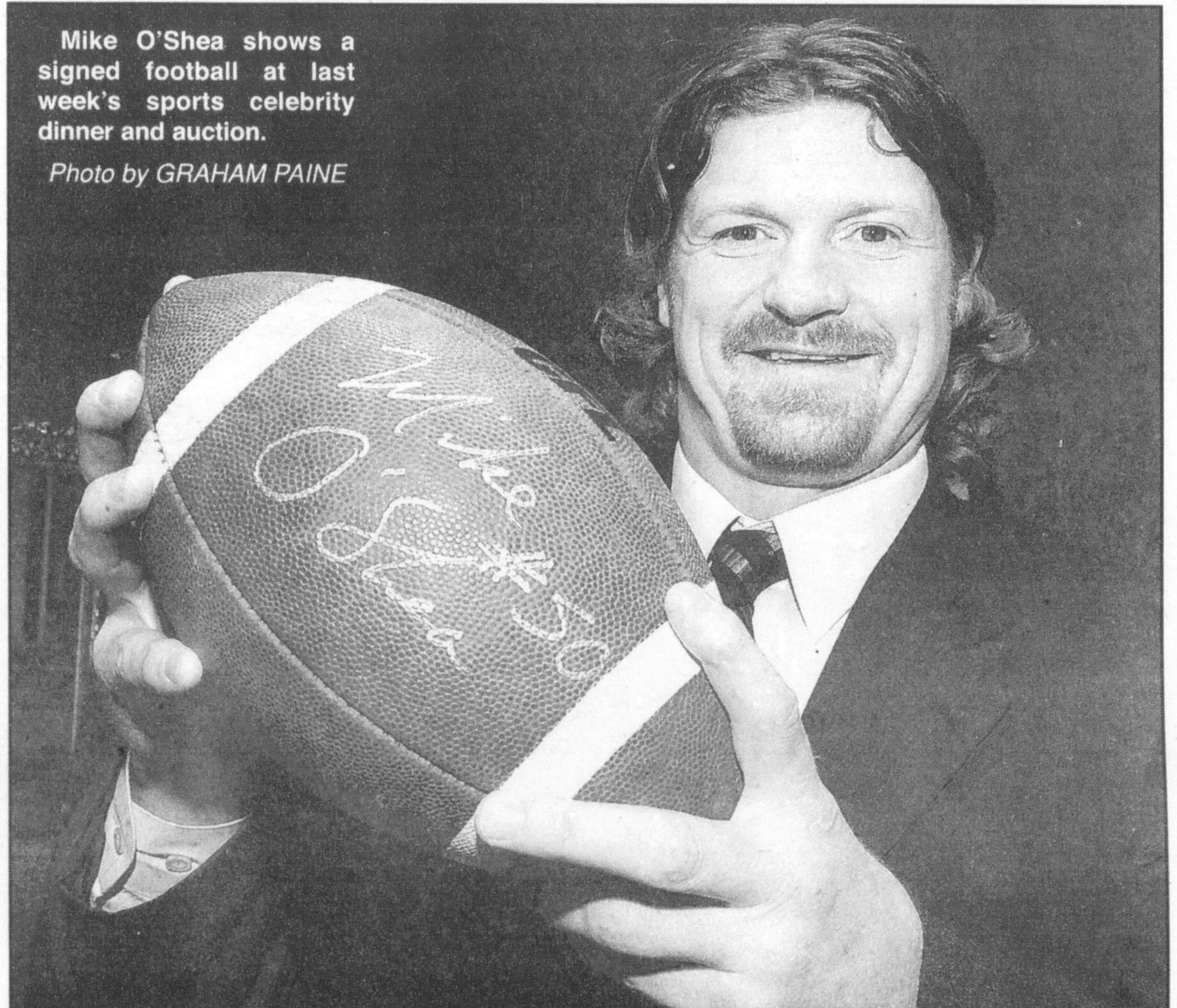
Every bit as rewarding for the humble yet personable CFL stalwart are opportunities to help out in the community, like one that presented itself just last month. Along with teammate Adrien Smith, O'Shea was on hand at Memorial Arena December 23 to team up with the Milton IceHawks in offering a sports package to disabled youth Gregory Sanderson, who had his hockey equipment stolen shortly before Christmas.

The Argos/IceHawks' joint donation was part of a huge outpouring of support for the local teen, which didn't surprise O'Shea in the least.

"You expect nothing less in a town like Milton," he said.

Mike O'Shea shows a signed football at last week's sports celebrity dinner and auction.

Photo by GRAHAM PAINE

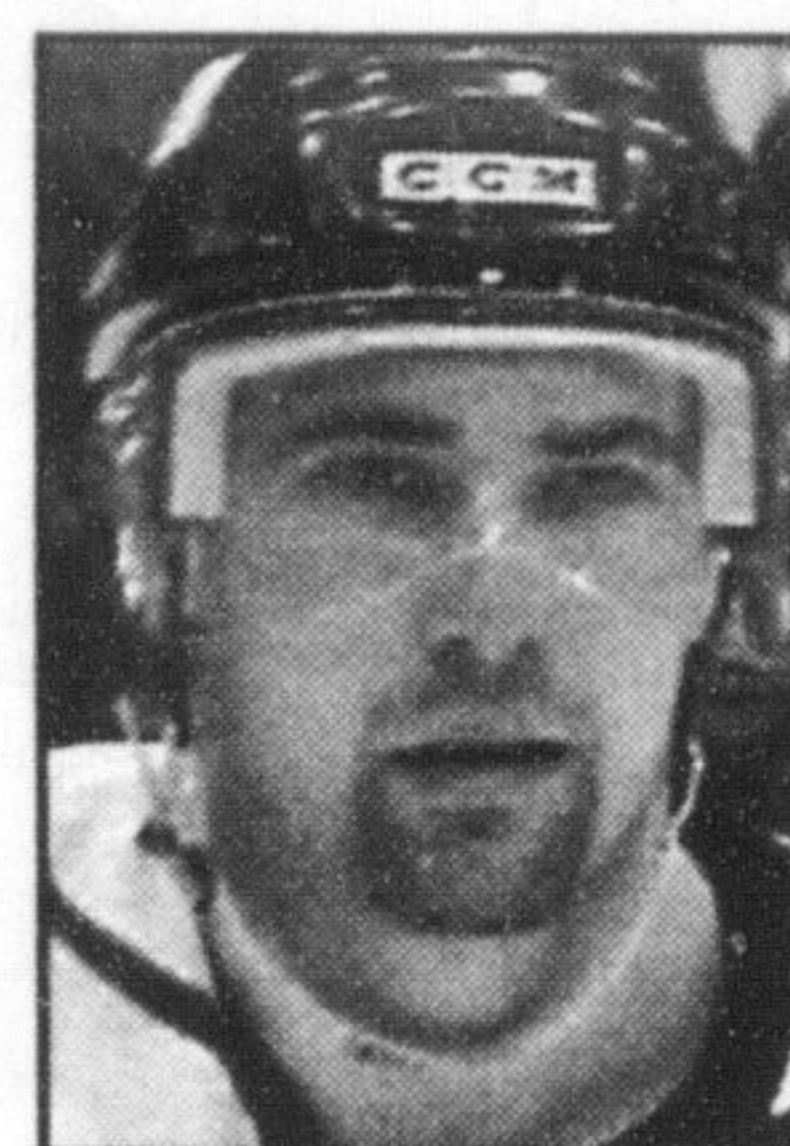


Bertoli named all-star captain

Scott Bertoli will be upgrading his Trenton Titans' assistant captain's 'A' — at least for one night.

The 28-year-old Miltonian has been named captain of the American Conference team for tomorrow evening's East Coast Hockey League All-Star Game in Fresno, California. This marks the second time in his seven-year ECHL career that the left winger has been selected as an all-star starter, adding to the nod he received in 2001.

Bertoli has 13 goals and 27 assists in 39 games this season, which puts him top-20 in league scoring. His Titans have struggled offensively for much of



Scott Bertoli

the season, but have won their last two games — including an 8-3 pasting of Dayton Saturday night — and sit third in the American Conference's North Division at 20-16-2.

Tomorrow's ECHL all-star game will air on the NHL Network at 10 p.m.

Meanwhile, fellow Miltonian Jarrett Konkle will also compete in all-star action tomorrow night — doing so in the United Hockey League's annual classic in St. Charles, Missouri. The 23-year-old winger

is enjoying a productive rookie campaign with the Elmira Jackals, with 21 goals and 14 assists in 40 games.



PRIVATE
CHAMPIONSHIP
18 HOLE GOLF
COURSE

Milton/Oakville
905-878-2303

Mississauga
905-826-6464

MEMBERSHIP
OFFICE

Open:
Mon. - Fri. 9 am - 4 pm

**SPECIAL
RATES ON
2006 Memberships
until Jan. 31st, 2006**

**Call today
for details!**