

Regional champs score spots on all-York squad

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It shouldn't come as any surprise that the league champions would have the most all-star players.

As York Region's high school hockey coaches listed their choices for best players, three members of Richmond Hill's St. Elizabeth Panthers rose to the top.

Matt Cupido, Rob Lisi and James Ryan were chosen as well as Markham Marauders Brendan Gaunce and David Paivel.

Brother Andre Cardinals defenceman Kevin Stevens, a Stouffville resident, rounded out the elite six.

Choosing the six best high school hockey players really wasn't that hard, Stouffville District Secondary School coach and league convenor Jamie Hewitt said.

Even with 15 teams playing Tier 1 in this area, Hewitt said the cream always rises to the top.

Three of the most popular, according to coaching polls, were Gaunce, Lisi and Ryan.

Gaunce, whose brother Cameron is a Colorado Avalanche draft pick, was taken second overall in Saturday's Ontario Hockey League draft by the Belleville Bulls.

Marauder's goalie Paivel earned his stripes during Markham's Cinderella-esque run through the playoffs after barely qualifying.

Leading all vote getters on defence was Stevens. The blueliner was key to the Cardinals success this year, Hewitt said.

"He's defensively good and a threat on offence," he added.

You have to watch Cupido to see just how key he was to the Panthers' first league title, Hewitt said.

"He doesn't jump out at you right away," he said. "He does things quietly, but effectively."

Of the players chosen to this year's all-star team, Ryan was the lone returnee.

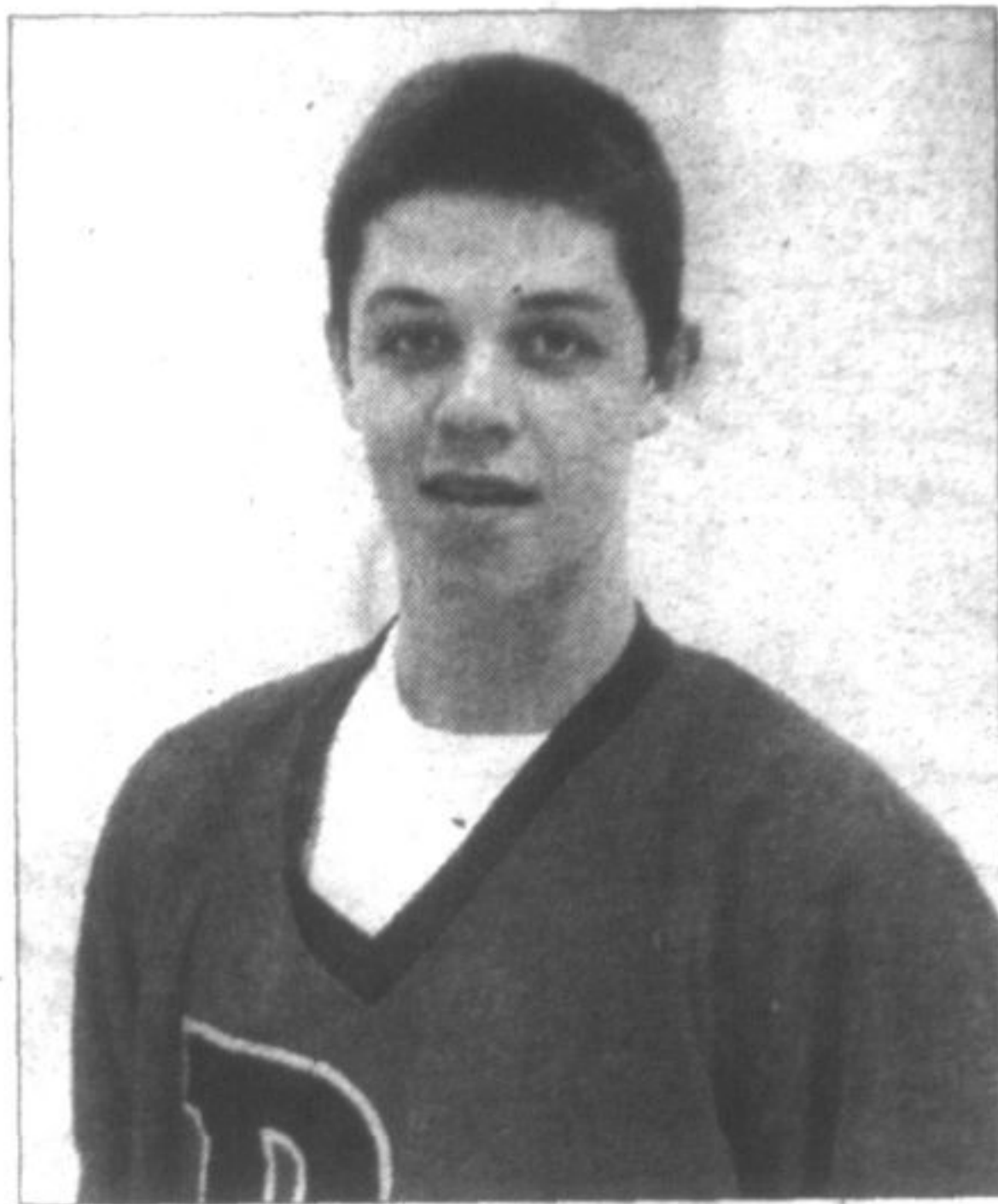
DAVID PAIVEL, MARKHAM MARAUDERS

Position: Goalie.

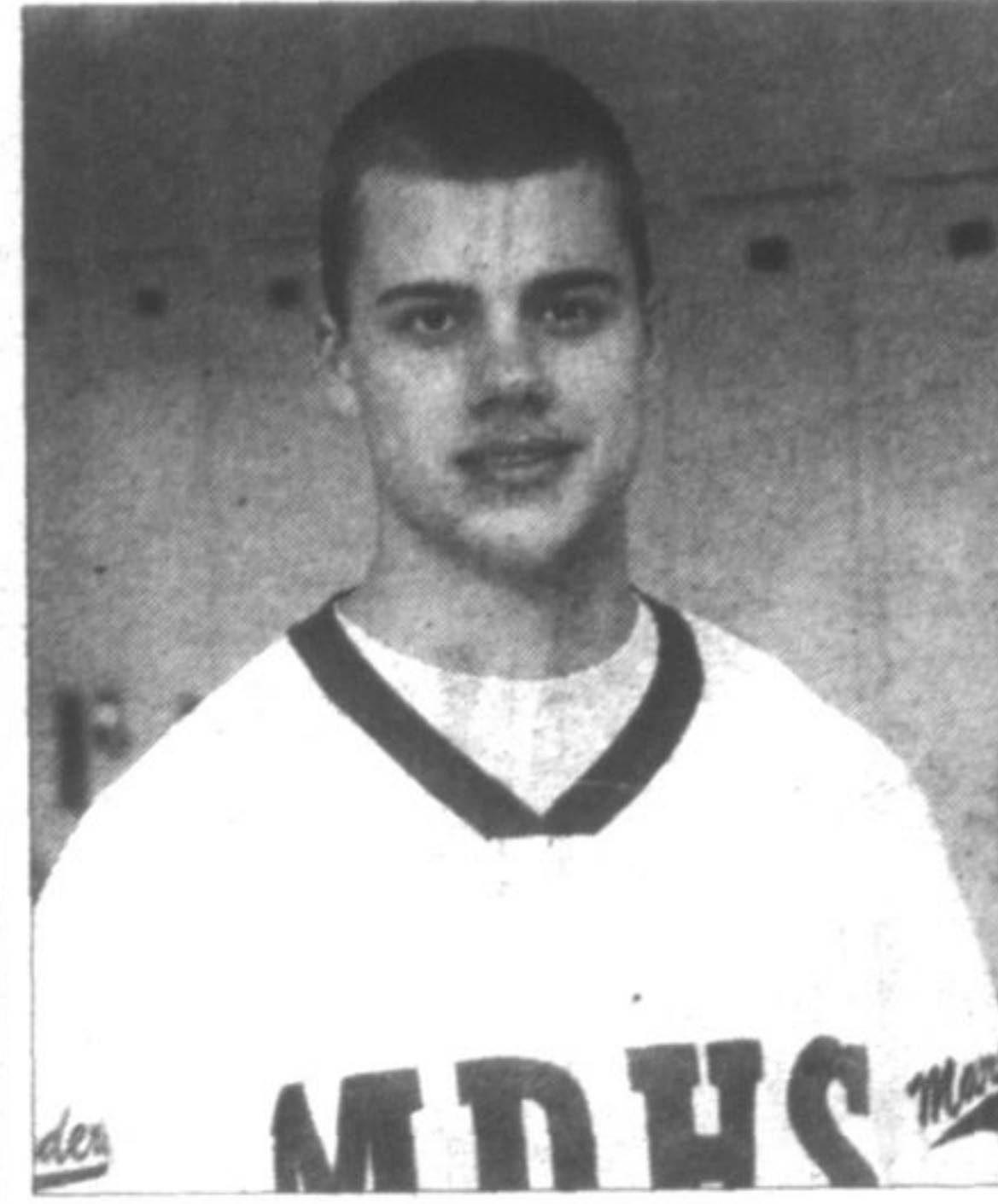
Grade: 12.

Age: 17.

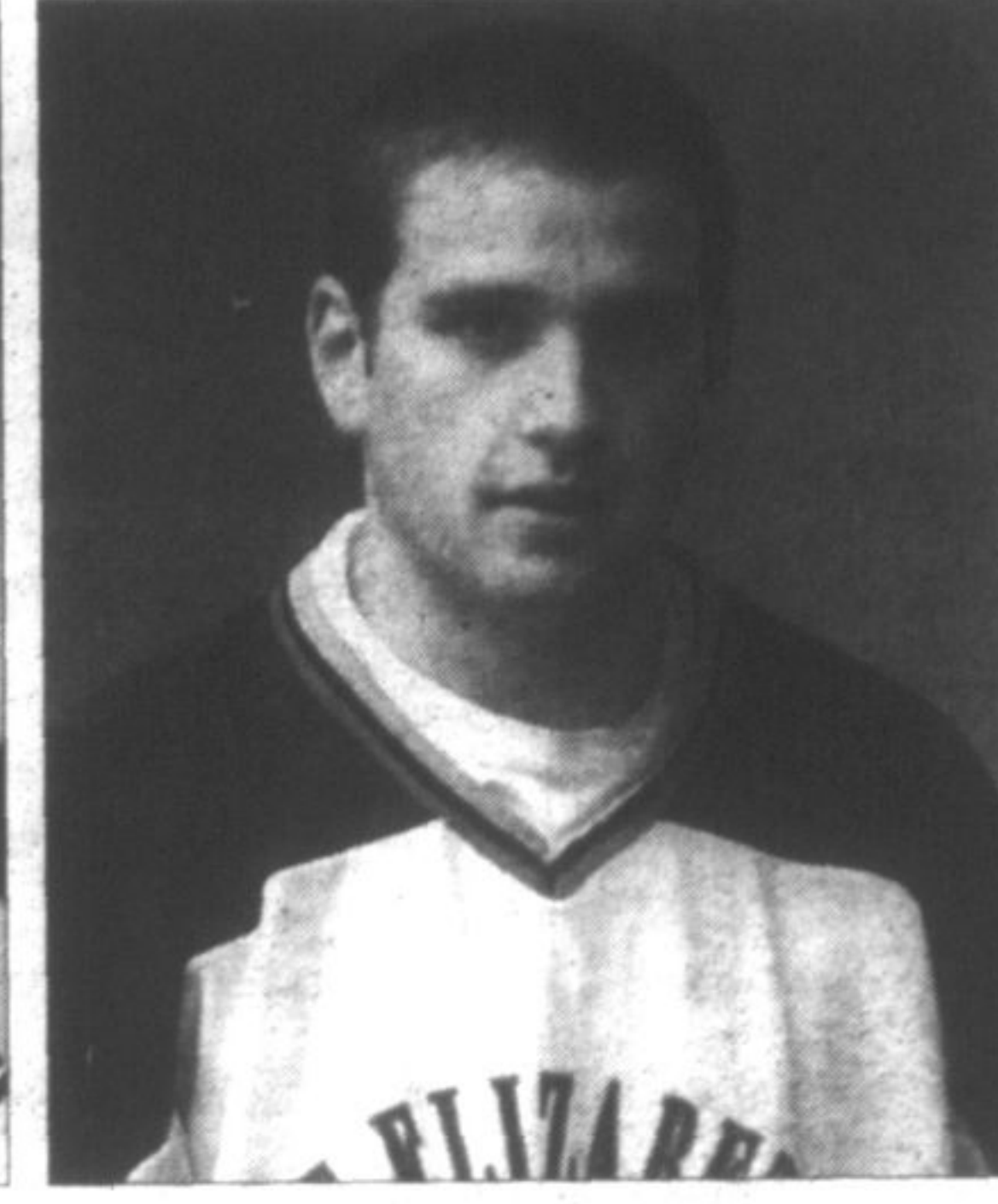
Stats: 2.12 goals against average and two



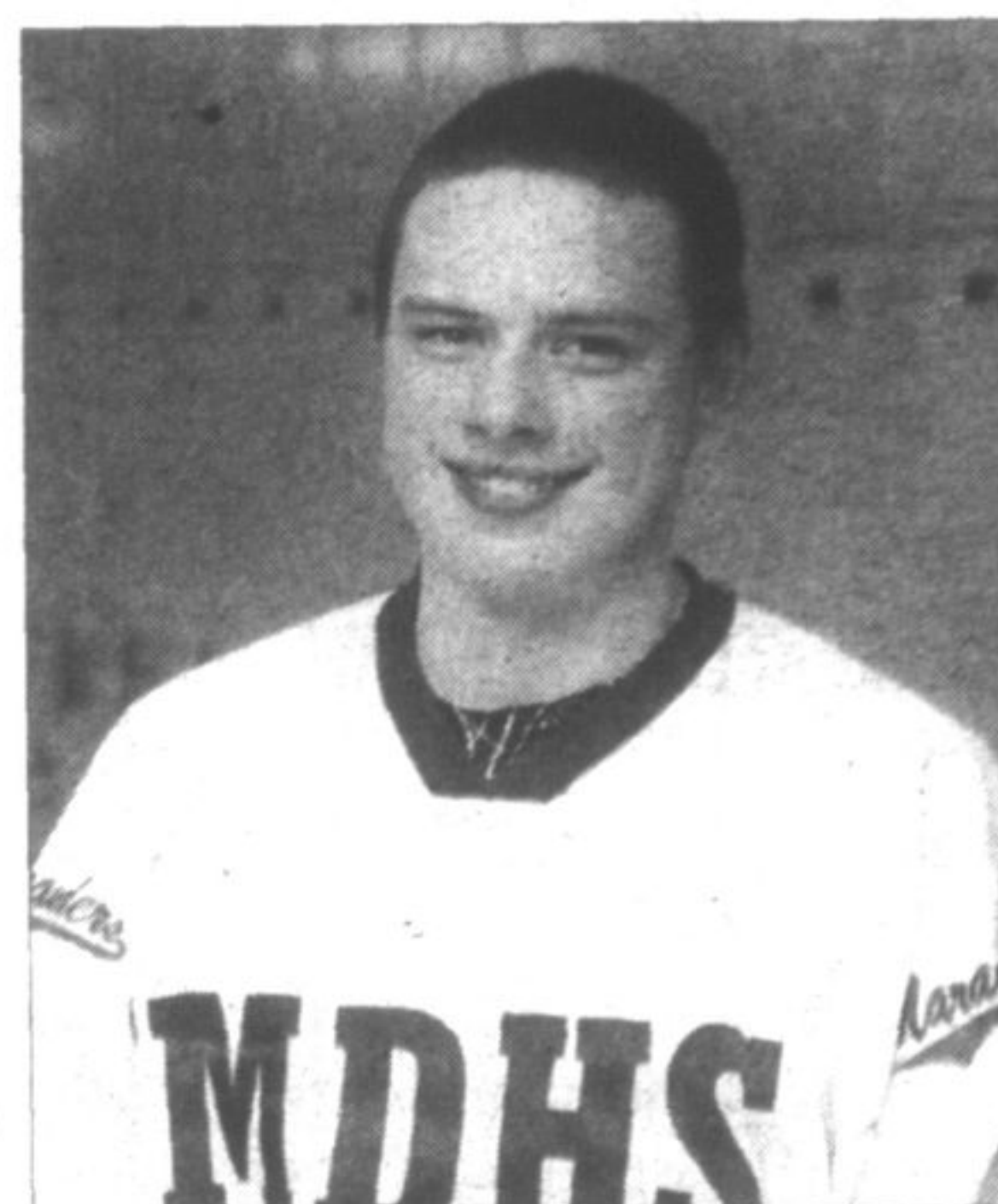
KEVIN STEVENS



DAVID PAIVEL



MATT CUPIDO



BRENDAN GAUNCE



JAMES RYAN



ROB LISI

shutouts.

Highlights: Reaching this year's YRAA final and defeating archrival Brother Andre in the semifinals.

NHL Idols: Ryan Miller and Patrick Kane.

Coach says: "He was definitely the core of our team. He'd come up large in big games and you can trust him. He was the total anchor of our backline. He has great reflexes," Martin Gasteiger said.

Goals: A career involving sports management or to continue with my hockey career.

KEVIN STEVENS, BROTHER ANDRE CARDINALS

Position: Defence.

Grade: 11.

Age: 17.

Stats: seven goals, 15 assists.

Highlights: Making the senior boys' hockey team in Grade 10 and advancing to OFSAA in 2008-09.

NHL Idols: Steven Stamkos, Drew Doughty and Nicklas Lidstrom.

Coach says: "He sees the ice well, he's extremely strong at handling the puck and making the good first pass and he has a real feel for the game," Dave Turner said.

Goals: To pursue a post-secondary education in a field related to physical fitness and health and to play Jr. A hockey next year.

MATT CUPIDO, ST. ELIZABETH PANTHERS

Position: Defence.

Grade: 12.

Age: 18.

Stats: four goals, 10 assists.

Highlights: Winning the region and going to the AAA/AAAA provincials and being chosen to the York Region Media Group all-star team.

NHL Idols: Drew Doughty.

Coach says: "He's the quarterback to our offence on the power play. He sees the ice really well. He doesn't panic and makes good decisions and makes few turnovers. He makes really good first pass to help us get out of our end," Dom Cugliari said.

Goals: Attend university and continue playing hockey.

BRENDAN GAUNCE, MARKHAM MARAUDERS

Position: Forward.

Grade: 10.

Age: 16.

Stats: three goals, 11 assists.

Highlights: Reaching the semifinal and losing the silver medal game in a tournament played at Iroquois Park Arena in Whitby in December 2009. Defeating archrival Brother Andre in the YRAA semifinals.

NHL Idols: Sidney Crosby and Brendan Shanahan.

Coach says: "It's more than about statistics with Brendan. He's a great athlete. We used him on defence and forward. He was versatile. His natural position is centre. He had a dominating presence on the ice. He was strong when he has the puck and great on faceoffs," Gasteiger said.

Goals: To play at the highest hockey level and work hard to get a university degree in business.

JAMES RYAN, ST. THERESA PANTHERS

Position: Forward

Grade: 12.

Age: 17.

Stats: 14 goals, 21 assists.

Highlights: Winning the Sir Oliver Mowat Tournament final with victory over Brother Andre.

NHL Idols: Martin St. Louis.

Coach says: "He's an awesome kid with great character. He's a real leader on our team on and off the ice. For a guy who is just five-foot, seven-inches, he has great vision on the ice. He's a great skater and he can handle the puck quite well and has a high hockey IQ. He's also a good student," John Spicer said.

Goals: To get an NCAA hockey scholarship and to become a firefighter.

ROB LISI, ST. ELIZABETH PANTHERS

Position: Forward.

Grade: 11.

Age: 16.

Stats: 10 goals, 12 assists.

Highlights: Winning the YRAA title, going to OFSAA and being named to YRMG all-star team.

NHL Idols: Joe Sakic.

Coach says: "He's a terrific two-way player. He works hard at both ends of the ice. He sacrifices his body," Dom Cugliari said.

Goals: Get a science degree while playing U.S. college hockey.

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