

McRogers named to Canada Under-20 rugby squad



By Jake Courtepatte

A good showing in Houston has landed Jack McRogers a spot on Team Canada for the Junior World Rugby Trophy championship this week in Romania.

The longtime Aurora Barbarian and McMaster University student was among eight Ontario-born athletes chosen for the squad, after a successful outing in two friendlies against Team USA in Houston in mid-June.

McRogers, who also has plenty of experience at the provincial level in his budding rugby career, said his family has been "incredibly supportive."

The McRogers family history with the Barbarians spans a few generations: his father, who joined the club as a Toronto Barbarian before amalgamating with the Aurora Rugby Club in 2002, had Jack first take to the pitch in Grade Eight.

"I was in New Zealand at the time," said McRogers. "Our family was there for about thirteen months or so. I didn't have a rugby team at Newmarket High School until Grade Eleven or Twelve."

It was with the Raiders that he took up the position of fly-half, acting as a part coach as well to assist the budding program.

"It wasn't great rugby, but it was a good time," said McRogers. "A good atmosphere teaching football players how to play rugby."

Transitioning to the position of hooker at the provincial and national levels, it was Rugby Ontario coaches Mike Curran and Sean McDonough that first distinguished McRogers' quick-thinking ability to work out of a scrum.

"I was 18 at the U19 CRC's, I was more of a flanker at that time. I had no idea how to throw the first game, just some awful throws, it was fun though. I've been working really hard at it, to go top level that's where I fit."

Now in his third year in McMaster's Kinesiology program, he seems destined for a career path as a teacher: the "family business", following in the footsteps of both his father and grandfather, who were high school teachers.

Yet the prospect of a career in rugby is still very much an option for the young McRogers.

"There's no doubt in my mind that I want rugby as a career," said McRogers. "I want to play rugby as long as I can. If an offer from anywhere would come, I would probably put a lot of things, including school, on hold for the time. If that offer comes you don't want to miss it, I can come back and finish school."

"There's been a lot of hype around the Ontario Arrows, I've been lucky enough to play a couple of games for them, I think that would be ideal if I could play professional rugby in Ontario and maybe pick up classes at the same time. That would be unbelievable to have that opportunity in Ontario, I don't know if it's going to come but I'd jump on that."

The World Junior tournament, which opened Tuesday for Canada with a match against Portugal, will be streamed live in its entirety on the World Rugby website.

McRogers and the squad will then face Uruguay on Friday, and Fiji on September 5 in round robin format.