

Aurora's Robert Thomas celebrates Stanley Cup win



By Jake Courtepatte

He may not have been on the ice when the final buzzer sounded in the St. Louis Blues' Game Seven win in the NHL's Stanley Cup Finals, but that could not stop the shine in Robert Thomas' eyes last Wednesday.

The Aurora native, plagued with an injury sustained by a Torey Krug hit in Game One of the series with the Boston Bruins, took to the ice in his jersey post-game to celebrate with his teammates.

‘Just incredible,’ Thomas told a throng of reporters during the celebration. ‘It’s the greatest accomplishment of my life, so far.’

That list of accomplishments is growing at a ridiculously rapid rate, and he’s only a teenager: Thomas has so far seen a pair of OHL championships, a Memorial Cup, an IIHF World Junior championship, and now a Stanley Cup.

‘I feel like I’m on top of the world.’

The 19-year old St. Louis Blues prospect was honoured in October of 2018 at the Mayor’s Breakfast of Champions as the 2018 Athlete of the Year, sponsored by Sport Aurora.

A staple in the York-Simcoe Express AAA minor system from a young age, the Canadian hockey world first caught a glimpse of Thomas on the gold medal winning Team Canada at the 2018 IIHF Under-20 World Championship in January.

The 2017 first-round draft pick of the St. Louis Blues capped off an incredible Ontario Hockey League season as the leading scorer of the Hamilton Bulldogs, leading to hearing his name called as the league's Most Valuable Player following the Bulldogs championship title in May of last year.

Thomas was leading the OHL's London Knights in scoring when he was traded to the Bulldogs in a blockbuster in January, setting up Hamilton for their successful run.

Though the Bulldogs were forced to give up a promising prospect, four second-round draft picks, and a third round pick to acquire the prized centre-man, the Aurora native led his team the remainder of the season in putting up four goals and 25 assists in 22 games with his new club.

He spent the better part of three OHL seasons with the Knights, catching the eye of scouts after a successful stint in the York-Simcoe Express minor system and with the St. Andrew's Saints varsity squad.

Thomas joins another former Saint as two of the newest members to win the prized Cup, that of Michael Del Zotto, class of 2008. On the opposite end of their careers, Del Zotto joined Thomas in the press box for the final game after a decade in the big show, yet told reporters it was "unbelievable" to win his first Stanley Cup ring.

It is still unclear as to whether or not Del Zotto will see his name engraved permanently on the mug, as rules state you must play 41 regular season games to earn the honour, whereas Del Zotto only took part in seven.