

Byfield named to U-18 Team Canada selection roster



By Jake Courtepatte

Quinton Byfield has earned himself the opportunity to wear the maple leaf on his chest for already the second time in his short hockey career.

The former York-Simcoe Express captain was one of 44 players named to the Under-18 selection roster for Team Canada last week, for the upcoming Under-18 Hlinka Gretzky Cup in Calgary later this month.

Director of the men's national programs Shawn Bullock called the Under-18 camp "unlike any other."

"Players are being evaluated from the moment they arrive at camp and are preparing to compete in short-term competition," said Bullock in a press release. "Historically, Canada has been successful at the Hlinka Gretzky Cup, and we know all 44 players will come to camp ready to compete for a spot on the team and the opportunity to wear the Maple Leaf in international competition."

Byfield is no stranger to international competition: he was one of two Sudbury Wolves players named to the Under-17 Canadian roster in November in St. John's, Newfoundland.

He also took to the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto in early June to accept the OHL's Rookie of the Year honours, an award he called "super humbling".

The Newmarket native, tabbed as a consensus first overall pick before even the midpoint of the 2017-18 season, was named the winner of the Jack Ferguson Trophy last April as

the top choice by the Sudbury Wolves.

The six-foot-four, 200 lb. centre man gained a reputation among the minor AAA circles as the right combination of speed and skill, captaining the Minor Midget Express to an OHL Cup in March of 2018 while leading the team in scoring with 92 points.

The former St. Maximilian Kolbe CHS student added twelve points in the Express' playoff run, cementing his position atop the OHL's most wanted list.

Byfield excelled immediately in his jump to the major junior ranks, posting 29 goals and 32 assists to lead Sudbury in scoring. As a sixteen-year old, he lit the lamp more than any other Wolves rookie since 1997.

Though tabbed as a top prospect for the 2020 NHL Entry Draft, Byfield will focus on repeating Canada's success at the prestigious Under-18 tournament in the short term. Canada captured the gold medal on home ice in the 2018 rendition, posting a 6 ? 2 win over Team Sweden in Edmonton.