

St. Max's Di Girolamo taking on international sevens competition



By Jake Courtepatte

Dylan Di Girolamo has been surrounded by rugby his entire life: yet he faces his stiffest competition yet next month in donning the red and white.

Canada's Under-18 men's sevens team head coach Nigel D'Acre recently announced the squads for the upcoming Men's U-18 Can-Am Sevens Tournament, to be held at Fletcher's Field in Markham on July 11-13.

From a field of over 200 Canadian male athletes, the Kettleby native saw his name make the list.

"This is my first time representing Canada," said the 17-year old St. Maximilian Kolbe student. "I'm looking forward to a high pace game with a high level of competition. It makes me proud to represent my country for a sport I love."

Set to suit up for the "Canada Red" squad, Di Girolamo and his team will face off against three other squads from across North America, including two from the States and "Canada White," which comprises of athletes from British Columbia.

"The challenge faced in Canada and the USA is giving our players meaningful competition at an affordable price to the players," said D'Acre in a press release. "Competitions such as this is a great

progression for the athletes in their development.?

For Di Girolamo, that progression comes alongside a familiar face: that of Lucas Vanderburg, a native of Mount Albert and a teammate on the Aurora Barbs for the past three seasons, something Di Girolamo said will make the experience ?very enjoyable? and ?really exciting to play at such a high level with him.?

Both Barbs were scouted for the squad after Canada Rugby set up a number of high-level tournaments for the country's top young rugby superstars, including the recent U18 San Diego Tour, Las Vegas, and Tropical 7s tournaments.

?Going on these tours to the states to play, it encourages me to always play my best no matter the score,? said Di Girolamo. ?I just have such a passion and love for the game.?

With his future sights set on collegiate rugby and a possible roster spot with the Toronto Arrows of Major League Rugby, the next step for the budding star is a berth onto the 40-man Canada Under-18 sevens squad.

The series kicks off on July 11 with Canada White facing off against the USA Stars.