

Aurora's Mack Lemmon attends Maple Leafs prospect camp

By Scott Wheeler

From July 9-to-12, the Toronto Maple Leafs hosted their annual prospect camp, inviting 34 highly regarded young players to take part in a variety of drills, skates, scrimmages and off-ice workouts.

The camp, hosted out of Etobicoke's MasterCard Centre for Hockey Excellence, grants many of these young men the opportunity to taste hockey at the professional level, something they've strived for their entire lives.

This year, for Aurora native Mack Lemmon, a dream became a reality when he received his invite.

For the undrafted Niagara Ice Dogs forward out of the Ontario Hockey League (OHL), this experience was extra special.

"I was fortunate enough to get invited as a free agent and I'm extremely thankful that I was given the opportunity," he says. "Since I was a young kid, it has always been my dream to make it in hockey professionally."

After being selected twenty-third overall by the Belleville Bulls in the 2011 OHL Priority Selection, Lemmon has spent the last two years with Belleville and later Niagara when he was traded, coming back to attend Aurora for schooling and the summers. For the self-described physical power forward, this Leafs camp was an all-time high though.

"My first pro camp was definitely one of the better experiences I've had in my life so far," Lemmon says. "I learned so much." As an 18-year-old at his first professional camp, Lemmon felt it went well.

"I played alongside Josh Burnside from the Mississauga Steelheads of the OHL and Kevin Goumas from the University of New Hampshire," he says. "I played my style of game and felt like I left a good lasting impression."

With big expectations, Lemmon hopes the camp wasn't his last stint with an NHL jersey on, hoping to take his game to new heights this upcoming season.

"I've been training hard all summer so far," Lemmon says, explaining that the NHL remains his goal. "I hope to get drafted by an NHL team in 2014."

It's been a dream for me to hear my name called by an NHL team at the draft for many years so I'm going to do my very best to make that happen."

Last season, Lemmon registered five goals and four assists to go along with 115 penalty minutes in 52 games for Niagara. Known more for his physical game, Lemmon hopes to add more of a scoring touch to his game this year.

As a hopeful professional and travelling junior hockey player, Lemmon is quick to point to the Aurora community for undying support along the way. Like many young hockey players, Lemmon feels fortunate to have grown up in an enthusiastic hockey community.

"My friends have been great; they have shown so much support over the past couple of years and I don't think they know how much I appreciate it," he says, also paying tribute to his coaches.

In the end though, more than anything else Lemmon credits his family.

"My family have always been there for me. Without them I wouldn't be where I am today. I couldn't thank them enough for everything they've done for me so far on and off the ice," he says. "I'm a very lucky guy."