

Football stars earn scholarship to Queen's

St. Andrew's football stars finalized their letters of intent last week to join the Queen's Gaels next year.

Aurora native Brendan Dilworth and Caledon native Nathan Falconi have been gifted full scholarships.

As a testament to their football careers at St. Andrew's College, both players earned the prestigious Addison Award. In memory of Harry J. Addison, this prize is presented to graduating football players who have made an outstanding contribution to the program at the school.

Both players were team captains this past year and almost ended their career with a title, if it was not for injuries in the final against Huron Heights Secondary School.

One of their most recent memories together outside of high school football was their experience as a part of Team Ontario in the International Bowl last year. The boys took on Team USA beneath the floodlights at the home of the Dallas Cowboys in Arlington, Texas. Although they lost and Falconi scored a touchdown, the experience was unparalleled at AT&T stadium.

Now, their careers take a new step in a place where school and football are prioritized above all else.

At 6'2, Dilworth is a force to be reckoned with. He can play on the offensive and defensive side of the line. He is a physical lineman with incredible intelligence on play calling throughout the others he plays with.

Gaels offensive coordinator Tom Flaxman shares why he chose Dilworth with a focus on offensive lineman in the program.

?Brendan is going to play interior for us the guard position,? said Flaxman. ?I think his intelligence is going to help us a lot on the offensive line. We have a huge focus on the offensive line in our program. We want to be known as a place where offensive lineman come to maximize their potential and certainly coach Nesbitt is doing a great job developing that and our program.?

Dilworth said he has always wanted to attend Queen's. He shared what he feels he needs to do to improve his techniques for his first year at university.

?The strength and conditioning staff here have put together a plan for me in the gym and also on footwork preparing me for the next level. I'm just going to keep following the plan they put me on and work

at it all the way through the summer. Then come into training camp next year at Queen's with the willingness to learn.?

As for Falconi, his skills are similar to New Orleans Saints player Taysom Hill. He can play quarterback, running back, wide receiver and even safety in some cases due to his speed and his versatility.

Flaxman says he loves that feature Falconi will bring to the team and how he will be an X-factor in the Gaels' no huddle offence.

?He's a bit of a Swiss Army knife he can kind of do a bit of everything. He can play some quarterback, he can play some running back, he can play some receiver and that is exactly how we will utilize him. His primary position will be at the receiver position,? explained Flaxman.

Falconi received multiple offers from other school in Canada and the United States. He shares why he chose Queen's above all else.

?I knew a lot of coaches there. Coach Flaxman, Coach Nesbitt and all of them. I've known them from Team Ontario and everything since grade nine. I was comfortable with the coaches at that point and after visiting two weeks ago and seeing the facilities and everything. It felt right.?

On top of playing football, the boys are required to adhere to standards held by the team and the school. Students will be taught how to be student athletes. The tools to be successful will be provided to these boys.

Structure is a big thing with mandatory study halls and freshman checks along the way. The university has the largest athletic department in the country and knows how to minimize the first-year culture shock that new students endure.

By Robert Belardi