

Mete eyeing spot on World Junior hockey roster



By Jake Courtepatte

2016 has been quite a year for Victor Mete.

After winning the Memorial Cup with the London Knights, and subsequently being drafted into the NHL by the Montreal Canadiens, the former Country Day Schooler is looking to earn a spot on the coveted Canada under-20 roster for the upcoming IIHF World Junior Hockey Championship.

Now in his third season with the Knights, the defenseman played for the King City's Country Day School Cyclones from grade five right until 2013, when his outside commitments as one of the game's elite players became too demanding.

A student of the King City independent school since grade 2, Mete is an offensive-minded defenseman and a product of both the York Region and Toronto Jr. Canadiens AAA programs. He was taken in the first round of the 2014 OHL Draft by the Owen Sound Attack after posting almost a point-per-game pace, and was sent to the Knights before playing a game.

Mete said he thinks experience on the CHL's top team has done well to prepare him for the pro level.

"In an NHL season you play 82 games, in our regular OHL season we play 68 so playing those extra games almost makes it like an NHL season. You kind of have a first look at how it's going to be. The compete level is higher at the NHL, but also if you're winning the Memorial Cup everyone wants to win it so the compete level is there as well."

The Knights gave up six draft picks to get a hold of Mete, extending into the 2019 season.

Now his sights are set on wearing the leaf on his chest.

He was one of 32 players named to the junior camp roster, which began on Sunday in Blainville, Quebec.

As the leading defenseman in plus-minus this season in the OHL with a plus-23, as well as a defending Memorial Cup champion, Mete likes his chances.

"Everything so far has been good and I can't complain," he said. "This year has been a better start than my last two. I have to keep it up and keep pushing forward."

The tournament, in which Team Canada is an annual contender and is watched by millions nationwide, will be held this year at Toronto's Air Canada Centre and Montreal's Bell Centre.

"I watch the tournament every Christmas and I have a lot of great memories of that," said Mete. "I've had a chance to play with a couple of guys who have played recently. My first year in London, Max Domi won gold for Canada, and last year it was Mitch Marner. That was really cool to see."

Growing up in the Woodbridge area, Mete would not only realize his dream of dressing for the red and white, but also playing on his hometown Toronto Maple Leafs' home ice.

"That would obviously be special. Watching every year, I've always wanted to play in that tournament. It's exciting to have the possibility to do that and I hope I get a chance to represent my country. Playing in Toronto, where I'm from, and then playing in front of fans in Montreal would be such a great experience for me and my family."

The eighteen-year old has racked up eight goals and sixteen assists through 26 games with the Knights this season.