

Newmarket's Williams leads Northeastern to Beanpot title

By Jake Courtepatte

TD Garden. 15,000 fans. And a trophy.

What a way to end a college career.

Newmarket native and ex-Aurora Tiger Eric Williams captained the Northeastern University Huskies to their second-straight Beanpot tournament title on Monday at the home of the NHL's Boston Bruins, taking down the rival Boston College Eagles by a score of 4 ? 2.

"It's incredible, to be able to get a win in my last Beanpot tournament," the college senior told a packed-house press conference following the game. "But I'm also extremely happy for the freshmen who haven't experience this feeling yet. It's an amazing feeling. It's something none of us are ever going to forget."

A battle of cross-town rivals in the Boston area since the early 1950s, the Beanpot is played annually between Northeastern, Boston College, Boston University, and Harvard University in front of a rabid fan base of college rivalry.

For Williams, who is enjoying his best season statistically since his sophomore year, it's the icing on the cake for a stellar college career.

"I wish I could play in this tournament every year until the day I die. It's that much fun."

Despite the program failing to reach the Beanpot spotlight for over thirty years, Williams said he felt good about the program's future when he made his college decision midway through his second year with the OJHL's Aurora Tigers.

"Obviously, having not won it in so long, there was a little bit of pressure but I think everybody in the locker room, coming to the tournament every year, was so eager to be the first team to break that streak. Being able to do that last year really got us able to experience that feeling?and made us want it every year going forward.

"You realize how big it is, when you talk to other students, teachers, staff?just every time you run into them they're asking if you're gonna win the Beanpot this year. It's such an incredible experience."

Earning the bragging rights to one of the most coveted titles in college hockey certainly cements Williams' legacy amongst the Northeastern captains, especially considering it is the team's second title in two years. The Huskies took down the Boston University Terriers in the 2018 championship, 5 ? 2, for the school's first Beanpot since 1988.

"Everyone in that locker room was so eager to be the first team to break that streak. We got that feeling and we wanted to experience it again this year," said Williams. "And every year after."

After cutting his teeth with the York-Simcoe Express AAA minor program, Williams transitioned smoothly to the Junior A level as an important piece of the Tigers' blue line. In his second year with the club, he was given the title of assistant captain, riding a 50-point season in 2014-15 to a scholarship offer from the prestigious Huskies program.