

Roger Thompson weighed his options and chose York9

Roger Thompson has signed a multi-year extension with the Nine Stripes, a decision he said was family-based.

“There were a lot of things to look at when it comes to my family and financially,” Thompson said. “The best decision was to stay here long term and be here with my family. Also, I did leave Sweden to come back in front of my family for my dad and my friends to be able to come and watch me play. I missed that being in Europe.”

The Canadian-Jamaican international spent a few years in Sweden playing for Trelleborgs FF and Ljungskile SK before securing a contract with York9 FC for the Canadian Premier League inaugural season.

“My last two years there, I became one of the key guys on the team. You learn a lot there as well and take responsibility for certain things. I think it helped me grow a lot and become a better player in the process.”

The 28-year-old missed the entirety of the 2019 Canadian Premier League campaign due to injury and the most important factor heading into this past summer's Island Games was remaining fit.

Moving into the project for next season, Thompson says he is excited to be under the tutelage of Jimmy Brennan and Paul Stalteri as well as the “young project” from Managing Consultant Angus McNab.

“He (McNab) wanted to rebuild the club and go young and help the young boys to get better. I feel like I'm at a point in my career where a project like that entices me. You know I want to stay home, I want to get better and play for the team closest to where I grew up. If I can help younger players get better in the process, I'll happily be a part of that.”

York9 conceded only seven goals in the Island Games; the least amount of goals conceded by any club in the tournament. Although the club didn't advance, Y9 were built extremely well from the back. At one point, Thompson led the league in attempted passes. It's a style of play he loves and he will continue to push the ball up the pitch.

In a defining offseason for the club, Y9 has seen the likes of marquee players such as Manny Aparicio, Joseph Di Chiara, Morey Doner and Matthew Arnone leave the club as well as Luca Gasparotto retire.

Thompson doesn't want to focus on what the club has lost but rather what the club has gained.

“It's not so much to think about what we've lost but try to work with what we have and see what these guys can do when they come in.”

York9 FC has been particularly busy in the transfer market this offseason, acquiring U18 Canadian midfielder Felix N'sa, defender Chrisnovic N'sa, goalkeeper Niko Giantsopoulos, midfielder Cedric Toussaint and Brazilian winger William Wallace to the roster.

He has seen improvements in the Canadian Premier League since its inaugural season and looks forward to seeing this league continue to grow competitively. Pacific FC and HFX Wanderers have improved and this league is moving in a direction that will hopefully knock off Cavalry FC and Forge FC off the podium.

“As the years go on, the quality is going to get better and better.”

By Robert Belardi