

BEYOND THE BLUE

OFFICIAL ALUMNI NEWS OF THE KITCHENER RANGERS



WINTER 2018 EDITION

JACK YORK



IMAGINE THIS SCENARIO.

You're eight-years-old, you come home from school and your mom or dad drive you to the rink. You get your hockey gear on, tie your skates—twice because you still haven't figured out how to get them tight enough—and then step on to the ice to play some stick and puck with your teammates. Pretty normal right? Well, for Jack York it was a bit different. He still got to play with some of his buddies, but there was a bit of a size and age gap.

"My dad, Jason played for the Boston Bruins and my brother and I got to practice with some of the guys," smiled Jack. "I remember seeing some players who I looked up to. The biggest memory I have is seeing Zdeno Chara at the rink, he was probably one of the biggest guys I've ever seen in my life. I have a lot of memories like that."

Not every kid can say they grew up skating with pro hockey players and hanging around NHL rinks. Most kids could let this get in their head and have a bit of an ego, but not Jack. "My Dad always tells me to stay humble, no one likes someone who is cocky," said Jack. "He would tell me to always be a good teammate."

Jack has taken this advice and ran with it. He has found himself in more of a leadership role this season, being in his second year.

Every team has a loud leader, but Jack brings more of a silent, but strong presence to the team, making him one of the more approachable guys for the rookies.



"We lost a lot of older guys last year, so I try to be a bit of a leader on the team," said Jack. "Last year, I was in the rookie's shoes so I know the pressures. I try to be a teammate that the younger guys feel comfortable to come talk to. I just want to be a nice guy."

The confidence, yet humbleness of Jack York isn't something that just happened. It came from years of being around his dad and watching how he handled himself. Jason York retired from the NHL in 2007 and went on to pursue his coaching career, but not with a team in the NHL. Instead he coached his biggest fan—his son Jack.

"Once my Dad retired, he would coach most of my minor hockey teams, which was awesome,"

smiled Jack. "A lot of players and parents thought it was pretty cool to have a former NHL player as the coach, but for me he was just my dad."

With Jack being in his first year of draft eligibility, it's hard to not feel outside pressures. He is leaning on his dad and his confidence to keep positive. "The more you think about the draft the more you get in your own head. I just try to stay focused and play my game. Seeing my Dad not get drafted in his first year of eligibility, but in his overage season, takes a bit of the pressure off. Obviously, I want to get drafted right away, but if I don't, I know that if I keep working hard there can still be a chance."

Having a dad who you can look up to and shape your game around is a huge positive in any young hockey player's life. Jack knows he is a lucky one and he doesn't take it for granted. "My Dad and I text or call after almost every game and talk about what went well and what didn't," said Jack.

"I THINK THE MOST IMPORTANT THING HE EVER TOLD ME WAS TO TRY AND BE THE HARDEST WORKER ALL THE TIME. NEVER LET ANYONE GET YOUR CONFIDENCE DOWN. MAKE SURE YOU PLAY YOUR GAME AND WORK HARD AND IT WILL ALL FALL INTO PLACE."



THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO CONTINUES

THE BATTLE OF WATERLOO IS MUCH MORE THAN JUST ANOTHER CROSS-TOWN RIVALRY. IF YOU PLAN ON TAKING IN SOME U SPORTS HOCKEY YOU MAY SEE SOME FAMILIAR FACES.

The Battle of Waterloo is a well-known series in KW. Every year the Wilfrid Laurier Golden Hawks and the University of Waterloo Warriors compete in baseball, basketball, football, hockey and soccer. At the end of the competition running from September to February, the school with the best record are awarded the Battle of Waterloo trophy. Every season the highlight of the competition takes place at The Aud, featuring both of the mens' hockey teams, called "The Battle at The Aud", which will take place on February 7th. If you plan on taking in some U Sports hockey, you may notice some familiar faces on the ice.

Both the Warriors and the Golden Hawks have Rangers alumni on their roster. Laurier features Mike Davies (KIT 2013-2016), Brandon Robinson (KIT 2013-2016), Jake Henderson (KIT 2015-2018) and coach Greg Puhalski (KIT 1982-1985). Waterloo's roster has Jacob Cascagnette (KIT 2014-2017) and coach Ben Fanelli (KIT 2009-2014).

BEING ABLE TO COMPETE BACK IN KITCHENER AGAINST OLD TEAMMATES OR PLAYING ALONGSIDE OLD BUDDIES IS SOMETHING THESE MEN LOOK FORWARD TO EVERY YEAR.

"It is a big game for us in the standings and it brings a lot of competition against some home city rivals," said Mike Davies. "Everyone has a bit of more of a jump in their step at the Battle of Waterloo." Mike has always been a big fan of Kitchener and has always known he would maybe one day make his way back. "I loved Kitchener. It's one of the main reasons I came back to attend Laurier. I loved my time here and built a lot of friendships that I still have today," smiled Davies. "I stay in touch with my billet parents from back when I was in Kitchener, we talk maybe once or twice a week. It has been an easy transition knowing the city so well."

Davies has been able to stay in touch with some current Rangers and has even been able to share some empathetic advice with Nick McHugh. While playing for Saginaw, Mike took a slapshot to his face and suffered a broken jaw. He was wired shut for three months. "Nick and I have both had major injuries to our jaws. Just recently, I was giving him some advice on how to overcome it and a couple tips on how to cope with such an odd injury," said Mike. "Injuries are such a mental game, so I am happy to help him get through this in any way I can."

Ben Fanelli, the associate coach with the Warriors, is one of the most well-known blueshirts. Coaching with Waterloo is something Ben is proud of, especially being able to do it in KW. "I see coaching at Waterloo as an opportunity to stay involved in an amazing community," said Ben. "The University of Waterloo has an impact around the world and it is humbling to be a part of that." A lot of what Ben has accomplished he chalks up to his time with the Rangers.

RANGERS ALUMNI TO MAKE AN IMPACT DURING RIVALRY

BOTH THE WARRIORS AND THE GOLDEN HAWKS HAVE RANGERS ALUMNI ON THEIR ROSTER, INCLUDING:



MIKE DAVIES
(KIT 2013-2016)



BRANDON ROBINSON
(KIT 2013-2016)



JAKE HENDERSON
(KIT 2015-2018)



GREG PUHALSKI
(KIT 1982-1985)



BEN FANELLI
(KIT 2009-2014)



JACOB CASCAGNETTE
(KIT 2013-2016)

In a portion of Bob McKenzie and Jim Lang's book, "Everyday Hockey Heroes" Ben talks about experiencing a catastrophic injury and how he used his platform to help others.

"The Rangers community, staff and players are why I am where I am today," said Ben. "It is so cool to see how my teammates with the Rangers have leveraged their time in Kitchener to be successful today." Golden Hawks Head Coach and Rangers alumni, Greg Puhalski, has been able to do just that. He played for two and a half seasons with the Rangers and was also an alumnus of Laurier. He very fondly remembers the competition of the Battle of Waterloo. "It is something that our guys look forward to every year," said Greg.

"Going back to my time at Laurier it's always been a real big rivalry. I think for us this season, we just want to make sure we are entertaining. The product we put on the ice is something we are very proud of here at Laurier. It is a good game to watch, and we just want to play well.

I mean, anytime you play Waterloo a victory always makes it that much sweeter. We love seeing a full rink, which enhances the overall impact of the game."

Whether you're a Laurier fan or a Golden Hawks fan, one thing we all can agree on is supporting our Rangers alumni as they compete during The Battle of Waterloo.

The game takes place on Thursday, February 7th at 7pm at The Aud.

**TICKETS ARE STILL AVAILABLE AT
KWTICKETS.CA**

ALUMNI GAME



CEREMONIAL PUCK DROP - ALLAN ROURKE

On Friday, November 4, 2018 the Rangers hosted Kitchener alumni at their annual alumni game. Alumni were invited to the Wright Auto Sales Lounge on the concourse to enjoy a meal with friends, family and former teammates prior to the game. The pre-game ceremony featured alumni, Allan Rourke performing the ceremonial puck drop.

Enjoy the photos below of some of your former Kitchener Rangers and their families.

DINNER IN THE WRIGHT AUTO SALES LOUNGE



WHERE ARE THEY NOW?



JEFF SKINNER

Position: LW
Years with the Rangers: 2008-10 (Two seasons)
Games Played: 127

CAREER REGULAR SEASON STATS

Goals: 77
Assists: 64
Points: 141
PIMS: 106

Jeff Skinner was drafted 20th overall by the Kitchener Rangers in the 2008 OHL Priority Selection. He played two seasons with the blueshirts.

He led the Rangers in goal scoring during his rookie season and participated in the 2009 Ivan Hlinka Memorial Tournament for Team Canada. In his second season with the Rangers, he tallied 50 goals and 40 assists for a total of 90 points in 64 games played.

The Markham, ON native was drafted by the Carolina Hurricanes, 7th overall in the 2010 NHL Entry Draft. He began playing in the NHL at the age of 18.

During his rookie season with the Hurricanes, he tallied 31 goals and 63 points and became the youngest winner of the Calder Trophy, which is awarded to the NHL's top rookie. He also appeared in the NHL All-Star game as an 18-year-old.

He went on to play with the Carolina Hurricanes for eight seasons and was the assistant captain during the 2017-2018 season. On August 2nd, 2018, Skinner was traded to the Buffalo Sabres, where he currently resides.

Jeff played in his 600th career NHL game on November 19th, 2018.



JOIN OUR FACEBOOK ALUMNI GROUP!

Send an email to Jess Korol at jkorol@kitchenerangers.com for your invitation and start connecting with long-lost friends and teammates now!



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