

OTHMANN MAKING STRONG CASE FOR OHL SUITORS

SCORES OHL CUP WINNING GOAL IN OVERTIME FOR DON MILLS FLYERS

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TORONTO - Pickering's Brennan Othmann made another emphatic statement prior to the Ontario Hockey League draft, scoring the winning goal in overtime to lift the Don Mills Flyers to their first OHL Cup championship on Monday, March 18.

Othmann took a feed from Shane Wright on a two-on-one and buried a high shot past Toronto Red Wings goaltender Josh Rosenzweig 1:30 into overtime to complete a come-from-behind 6-5 win for the Flyers, who have lost only one game all season - a 5-4 overtime decision to Detroit Compuware in the Whitby Silver Stick tournament final.

The star-studded team will surely see many of its players selected in the April 6 OHL draft, likely led off by Wright, who has been granted exceptional underage status.

But Othmann, Wright's winger all season, has cer-



Sabrina Byrnes/Metroland

(Left) Whitby's Brenden Sirizzotti, right, shown here during the annual Gloria Rints Memorial International Silver Stick tournament, was named the OMHA Eastern Triple A player of the year for the 2018-19 season. (Right) Pickering's Brennan Othmann, who plays for the Don Mills Flyers minor midget team, scored the winning goal in overtime in the championship game of the OHL Cup.



Photo by Dan Hickling/Hickling Images

tainly also made a case to be selected high.

A five-foot-11, 160-pound left shot, Othmann was named player of the championship game after scoring twice and assisting on another, and finished the tournament as an all-star with eight goals and 14 points in seven games. Only Wright, the tournament's MVP, matched his goals and surpassed his point total.

"It's amazing. I can't take credit for it," Othmann said about the winning goal, in an OHL video after the

game. "I have great teammates and Shane made a beautiful pass. I just saw the opening and I buried it."

Othmann now has an incredible 74 goals and 86 assists in 79 games with the Flyers this season, tied with Wright in goals and eight back of him in points.

Liam Arnsby of Ajax was also a significant contributor to the championship, with a goal and assist in the final, and winner of 23 of 33 faceoff attempts.

Arnsby's goal tied the game early in the third period, after the Flyers had

fallen behind 4-1, and his assist came on another tying goal, with 4:05 remaining in regulation.

Othmann and Arnsby, along with Wright and two other Don Mills teammates, also recently represented Ontario at the Canada Winter Games in Alberta, where they lost an overtime heartbreaker to Quebec in the gold medal game. Othmann shared the tournament lead with 10 goals in six games.

The Flyers carry an overall season record of 73 wins, six ties and one over-

time loss into their Greater Toronto Hockey League final against the Toronto Marlboros.

Don Mills has played for over a year now in memory of goalie Roy Pejcinovski, who was murdered in his Ajax home along with his younger sister Vana, 13, and their mother Krissy.

The Whitby Wildcats, fresh off an Ontario Minor Hockey Association (OMHA) title, were also at the OHL Cup tournament, but a 2-2 record was not enough to advance to the quarter-finals.

Brenden Sirizzotti, who was named the OMHA Eastern AAA league player of the year at a banquet during the tournament, led the Wildcats with four goals and seven points, followed by Ryan Winterton with two goals and five points.

The Whitby team has also dealt with adversity, having lost captain Owen Brady to cancer midway through the season. Brady is on the road to recovery and celebrated the OMHA championship with his teammates on home ice March 3.

OPINION

EARLY TRAINING CAN HELP PREVENT MENTAL HEALTH ISSUES

COLUMNIST DOUG SMITH SAYS YOUNG ATHLETES ARE MORE OPEN, RESILIENT



DR DOUGLAS SMITH
Column

letes and everyone else is vastly superior to waiting for damage to occur.

We have all heard about the epidemic of famous athletes revealing their long history of mental health issues. It is sad that so many of these athletes have carried so much pain for so long.

We often hear it said that one in five athletes will at some point have to deal with one or more of depression, anxiety, drug addictions, divorce and a host of other personal problems.

Rather than dealing with these conditions after the fact - with antidepressants,

anti-anxiety pills, hospitalization, removal from the sport or being declared mentally ill - there is a more proactive, effective and safer solution. I strongly suggest we should be addressing these psychological issues at an early age with athletes, before they become chronically habitual and too late to change.

My vast experience with all ages of sports people tells me that young athletes carry less baggage and learn mental and emotional concepts much faster than older athletes. They naturally have more

fun and enjoyment in their sport.

Without solid psychological support over years of competition, older athletes tend to lose their sense of fun, passion, enthusiasm and love for the sport because of all the training and competition over many years.

When we train younger kids to think, feel and act to the same pressures as elite and professional athletes over a number of years, they become more immune and inoculated to the same stresses.

My experience over the last 40 years has demon-

strated clearly that younger athletes learn the psychological skills of confidence, focus, motivation, drive and how to believe in their exceptional ability much more quickly than pro athletes.

Youngsters are more flexible, open-minded and willing to try almost anything new. The pros think they know everything and are less likely to try learning how to use their mind differently.

Kids are more resilient regarding mistakes and losses than older athletes and they learn how to think correctly, follow di-

rections and focus with more ease.

Older athletes who did not have the right psychological training to deal with failure, fear, frustration and several years of constant stress of playing competitive sports are at a severe disadvantage.

These individuals, regardless of talent and ability, are arguably more susceptible to mental and physical injuries that may last a lifetime.

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