

# a YEAR TO REMEMBER

FROM WINNING THE MINTO CUP TO  
CELEBRATING A NCAA TITLE AT  
SYRACUSE UNIVERSITY TO TAKING  
HOME TOP PLAYER HONOURS  
FROM THE ONTARIO LACROSSE  
ASSOCIATION, STEPHEN KEOGH  
IS ON AN UNBELIEVABLE  
WINNING STREAK

// By Roger Lajoie

**S**tephen Keogh is living a lacrosse player's dream. The 21-year-old Toronto native is on some kind of a roll. He has been a part of a Minto Cup title team and an NCAA Division 1 championship club in the same year, playing with two lacrosse powerhouse organizations.

But the product of the Toronto Beaches Minor Lacrosse Club credits his roots as a younger player for the success he's been enjoying — and those roots are firmly planted in the Ontario Lacrosse Association (OLA).

"Being able to play against the best players in the OLA for all of my younger career really helped me," Keogh says. "The talent in all of the OLA is really unbelievable.

"It's been awesome the last year, just unbelievable really, but the experience and coaching I got in the OLA growing up really was a big part of my development."

Keogh couldn't have asked for a better start to his career in the OLA, or a better ending. He was

the Jr. 'A' rookie of the year in his first season in the OLA in 2004 (Joe Nieuwendyk Award), and he was the most outstanding graduating player in the OLA in 2008 (E.W. Billy Evans Award).

In between he played most of his games with the Beaches, building off a terrific rookie season when he scored 21 goals and had 35 points in 20 regular season games. He followed that up with an eight goal, 15-point performance during a surprising 11 game playoff run.

He continued developing into a star player with the Beaches Jr. 'A' club, making the all-star team in both 2007 and 2008, after emerging as a big-time scorer with 30 goals and 65 points in 18 games in 2006.

He led his team in goals with 21 in 2007 and got off to a tremendous start in his fifth season of Junior 'A' last year, with 10 goals and 16 assists for 26 points in his first nine games. But with his Toronto Beaches team not in title contention, he was acquired by the powerhouse Orangeville Northmen as they were making a run at a championship.

"It was good for the Beaches to release me," Keogh says of the move. "Orangeville runs a great program, they really wanted to win and it was a chance for me to maybe win a championship in my final year too."

You can take away the 'maybe' from that.

Photo: Syracuse Athletic Communications

Keogh and his Beaches teammate Todd Hosmer joined the Northmen and helped them capture the Minto Cup, with Keogh earning tournament MVP honours (Jim McConaghy Memorial Award) by scoring 10 goals in the four games.

"I've been waiting for this since my first year of Junior 'A,'" admits Keogh. "At the tournament, all the guys came together. We've been wanting this since we came here. It's been a great year for me, winning an NCAA championship (with Syracuse University) and now this. It's a great feeling."

It was Keogh's experience at Syracuse, combined with his great play with the Beaches that led Orangeville coach Matt Sawyer to decide to add Keogh to the mix.

"We feel we've got the best organization in the world and getting a player like Stephen, well it made us just that much better," Sawyer said at the Minto Cup final.

"I couldn't be prouder of these kids and of the role Stephen played. Both of them only had a few regular season games to learn our system but they fit in so well.

"We wanted to make sure we weren't rocking the boat and we had no worries about that with Todd and Stephen. I've never been big about the deadline pick-up, but Stephen was a great addition for us."

Keogh's Minto triumph followed up his tremendous debut with Syracuse, where he finished seventh on the club in scoring with 20 goals and two assists as a freshman after attending Brewster Academy in New Hampshire in 2006 and 2007.

While at Brewster he set the school's all-time scoring record and was a 2007 U.S. Lacrosse All-American. That set him up nicely to join Syracuse, one of the most prestigious lacrosse programs in the country.

"I guess I impressed the coaches at the Academy enough to get my chance at Syracuse," Keogh says. "It's an unbelievable place. I remember watching Syracuse as a little kid, with all the great tradition they have here, with all of the terrific players who played here. It's such a great program and then to win a championship, well that was really special."

Indeed it was. Keogh scored the Orange's



Keogh (#28) will be counted on to help Syracuse win back-to-back NCAA titles.

Photo: Syracuse Athletic Communications



Stephen Keogh's 10 goals at the 2008 Minto Cup earned him tournament MVP honours.

Photo: Hired Gun Photography

player in the family (he has two brothers and two sisters).

"Matt's the only one in my family who plays, but I had a lot of people helping me out as a player growing up," Keogh says. "All of my coaches, and some family friends, helped me along the way to be a better player.

"The Toronto Beaches organization was great to me," he adds. "They kept me focused and I learned through them to keep practicing and just work my hardest every day. That has really helped

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