

Football players learn about historic Yates Cup



By Jeff Doner]

Football players at King City Secondary School were given a rare opportunity to learn about and have some time with the oldest remaining football trophy in North America last week – the 115-year-old Yates Cup.

Nick Burns, a former winner of the illustrious trophy with the McMaster Marauders, brought the trophy to KCSS to inspire the players and give them a taste of what they can compete for at the provincial level.

The cup, donated by Dr. H. B. Yates of McGill University in 1898, has been presented to a winning team every year since, except during the two world wars. Now the cup is annually presented to the winner of the Ontario University Athletics football conference of the Canadian Interuniversity Sport federation.

Burns has been lucky enough to tour around with the cup and spread some of its history.

‘We’re just trying to give back,’ Burns said. ‘I’m a former McMaster alumnus and they’ve been gracious enough to give the cup to me and Super Elite – Burns’ football camp – so we can kind of share with the cup with kids.’

He added that it’s kind of shocking how little people know about the sports relic.

‘No one really knows it’s that old. It’s from 1898 and there’s only one trophy in North America that’s older and that’s a golf trophy down in the U.S.’

King City Lion and York Region all-star Luca Celebre said seeing the cup and learning about its history was uplifting.

‘It’s incredible,’ he said. ‘It’s the oldest trophy of its kind and for it to be at our school and to know that one of our alum won it, so it’s special for it to be here.’

Celebre, who is most likely returning KCSS for a fifth year to play with the Lions, said he has his sights set on competing for the trophy someday like his past teammate Nick Shorthill, who has recently won the cup twice with McMaster.

‘To see someone do it that we knew so well and to see this trophy back here just wants to make you do it as well,’ said Celebre.

‘I’ve got to work hard and I know I can – it’s a little hard being small – but I just have to keep it up and that’s somewhere I’d like to be.’

Jeff Masterson, athletic director at KCSS, echoed Celebre’s sentiments that the trophy helps players realize what they can achieve in the future.

‘That’s been a proud piece for us in getting guys to the next level and have them compete on the provincial stage,’ he said.

‘I think when you look at that trophy and you see 1898 stamped on it, it’s an impressive thing and I think it’s something that a lot of these guys aspire to – a lot of these guys are thinking next level and want to get to university athletics and university football and it’s a nice thing for them to aspire to.’

Burns, whose football camp Super Elite runs across York Region in the summer, said it’s fun showing off the trophy.

‘It’s pretty cool to be able to bring this to people. Parents appreciate it and kids appreciate seeing it once they know the history about it and it just kind of helps build football in our communities. We’re trying to grow the culture and atmosphere of football in Canada.’