

## Bancroft's McDowell goes 77th overall in OHL draft



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By Nate Smelle

Bancroft's Trevor McDowell recently took a huge step forward towards his dream of becoming a professional hockey player. While watching the Ontario Hockey League's draft online on April 5, McDowell and his family found out that he had been drafted by the Windsor Spitfires. After learning that he had been chosen in the fourth round, 77th overall, McDowell said within five minutes he received a call from the Club's owner, the general manager and the public relations director. "I was very excited," McDowell said. "I was not expecting to go that early so I was happily surprised." McDowell's parents Terry Van Bakel and Norm McDowell are "super excited" by their son's success and "extremely proud" of his achievement. "He has worked hard on and off the ice both working on his skills and conditioning and studying game," said Van Bakel. We would like to take this opportunity to thank his Jets coaches: Shane, Tim and Shawn. They influenced him with their love of the game and they introduced him to the concept of "practice makes perfect." In Trevor's major Pee wee year, they introduced the boys to a "5,000 puck" challenge, asking the boys to take 5,000 practice shots. This introduction to the discipline of practice showed him how much he can improve with practice and he has continued to work on his game in this way. "As every aspiring hockey player knows, being drafted into the OHL is a big accomplishment, that requires a lot of hard work and dedication. In order to make the cut, McDowell has followed an on and off-ice training regiment that keeps him busy all year round. During the season, on top of his game schedule, he said he practices two to three times a week and works out off-ice as much as possible. In the off-season, McDowell picks up the pace with his off-ice training, working out six days a week and practicing skills for an hour per day. Acknowledging that this year's off-season training schedule will look a little different because of the COVID-19 pandemic, he said he would usually also be on the ice once or twice a week in the summer training with the Belleville Senators strength coach. While playing with the Quinte Red Devils AAA squad last

year, McDowell said they won the OMHA AAA Championship, and were on pace to be a contender for the OHL Cup before the season got cut short because of COVID-19. Noting that the Windsor Spitfires training camp is set for August, McDowell said "I am trying to get stronger and faster and develop my puck-handling skills that I will need at the next level." Modeling his game after his favourite National Hockey League player, Kris Letang of the Pittsburgh Penguins, he said he is working to infuse the Canadian defenceman's offensive style into his own style of play. Having grown up in the Bancroft area, McDowell said he has many fond memories from his time playing for the Bancroft Jets. "My best memories playing in Bancroft include the friendships we built being together for so many years and the big OMHA run we had in my final year in Pee wee (u13) where we were unstoppable and swept in the finals versus South-Huron," he said. "That year was very important for my development and I should really thank the coaches for that. Overall, it was pretty special to win after all those years of not quite making it."