

Caledon Citizen's Student - Athlete of the Week: Hall Wolfpack running back Roy Van der Veen signs Letter of Intent with the University of Waterloo Warriors

By Jim Stewart

It's been a big week for Robert F. Hall CSS running back Roy Van der Veen.

Not only was the Grand Valley resident selected as The Caledon Citizen's Student-Athlete of the Week, but he also signed his letter of intent to play football for the Waterloo Warriors of the OUA.

In a signing ceremony in Hall CSS's cafeteria on Friday, Van der Veen's Varsity Football coach Jonathan Beresford praised his running back's 'football IQ, toughness, skill, selflessness, and accountability. [Roy's) ability to teach our younger athletes gained [him]the utmost respect from his teammates.'

Coach Beresford also lauded Van der Veen's qualities as 'hard-working, always-improving, focused' student at Robert F. Hall.

Although Coach Beresford stopped short of describing Van der Veen as the 'strong, silent type', he was impressed with 'how hard Roy worked day in and day out in practice, in games, and in the classroom for five years. How Roy led a whole football team without saying a single word, but through his consistently positive actions.'

The veteran Wolfpack football coach highlighted key performance moments demonstrated by his versatile team leader: 'I think throughout the playoff run towards the championship, Roy played Offence, Defense, and Special Teams. Every team scouted and game-planned to stop him, but he was still able to impose his will with his physical playing style.'

The proof of Van der Veen's efficacy is in the team numbers and Coach Beresford delineated a stats line that was truly impressive.

'Roy won 22 games out of 24 games played, with two championships in three seasons (COVID took away his Grade 11 and 12 seasons). It was never about yards, 'how many touches,' or TDs; it was about helping the team win!'

On Friday afternoon, Van der Veen's teammates, coaching staff, family members, and representatives from the University of Waterloo Warriors flanked Van der Veen in photos that celebrated his hard work on and off the field.

Van der Veen will attend the University of Waterloo's St. Jerome's College in September and will be pursuing an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Business. UW Warriors' Associate Head Coach and Recruiting Coordinator Darrell Adams believes the Wolfpack running back will 'fit our offensive schemes' as 'a coachable student-athlete' who is as 'advertised by Coach Beresford.'

Coach Adams knows the pressure felt by freshman football players entering the OUA, but he believes 'Roy will compete for a position in our backfield and on our special teams.'

'He'll also play when he's ready.'

Prior to the signing ceremony attended by over 100 teammates, coaches, students, and family members in Robert F. Hall CSS's cafeteria on Friday afternoon, Roy took time from his studies and training to answer our interview questions:

The Caledon Citizen: What qualities did you demonstrate in your sports season to earn Student-Athlete of the Week honors?

Roy Van der Veen: I tried my best to be a leader. Although I'm quiet, I demonstrated being a leader by going 100% in reps during practice and giving it my all in games.

The Caledon Citizen: What were your key statistics and performance moments from the 2022-23 season that you are most proud of?

Roy Van der Veen: The game that I was most proud of was the semi-finals game. Although I did not pass my personal best for yards or touchdowns, it was the coldest and hardest game of the year. We had to earn each yard and first down as we played on the muddy field.

The Caledon Citizen: In addition to your high school sports team(s), what other community teams do you play for and at what level?

Roy Van der Veen: Outside of school, I play for the North Halton Tide during the summer; they are in tier two.

The Caledon Citizen: How would you describe yourself as a student at Robert F Hall? To which sports teams and clubs do you belong? Honor Roll?

Roy Van der Veen: As an R.F. Hall student, I am very quiet. I come to class and get my work done. I am also on the track team ? doing shotput in the spring.

The Caledon Citizen: What are your post-secondary plans regarding prospective academic/athletic destinations?

Roy Van der Veen: My post-secondary plans are to go to Waterloo University taking their Honours Arts and Business program. I will also be playing for their football team.

The Caledon Citizen: Who is your role model in terms of the person you admire the most?

Roy Van der Veen: The people I admire the most are my parents. They are the most hard-working people I know. They started with nothing back in Holland and now they own a successful business. I learned from them that hard work can get you very far in life.

The Caledon Citizen: How do you feel about being selected as The Caledon Citizen's Student-Athlete of the Week?

Roy Van der Veen: It's a big honour to be selected for Athlete of the Week as it shows what my coaches see in me.

If you are a community or high school coach who would like to nominate a Caledon-based student-athlete for The Caledon Citizen's Student Athlete of the Week, please email me at jim@lpcmedia.ca.