

Valade named to Team Canada in upcoming U-17 Challenge

Written By Jake Courtepatte

Playing in front of close to 7,000 fans each night at ?The Aud? in Kitchener is no small task for a sixteen-year old.

Yet for Caledon's Reid Valade, a larger stage has already been set for the budding star.

Valade was one of 66 players chosen last week to represent Canada at the upcoming Under-17 World Hockey Challenge in Saint John, New Brunswick.

?Any time you bring together the best young players in the country there are bound to be difficult decisions when selecting players, and we feel the 66 young men we chose exemplify the core values of the Program of Excellence,? said Team Canada Head Scout Brad McEwen in a press release. ?We believe that these players possess a willingness to learn and grow as they progress through our program and represent Canada, and give us the best chance to compete for a gold medal this November.

The 5'10?, 160-lb. right winger had 31 goals in 55 games in his final season with the AAA Toronto Marlboros last year, complemented by 38 assists. Those numbers impressed the Rangers to take Valade as their first round pick in the OHL Draft this past April.

Facing off in all fourteen games so far as a rookie, Valade has provided a pair of assists in helping the Rangers to a 7-5-2 record to start the OHL season.

?Reid is a speedy winger that is constantly moving and putting pressure on the other team,? said Rangers general manager Mike McKenzie in a statement at the time of his drafting. ?He has electric speed and is always challenging defensemen wide, or jumping quickly in and out of holes for scoring chances. He has a good skill set which allows him to beat players one-on-one as well as finish off scoring chances when they arrive. He shoots the puck well and has a quick release.?

?Reid is a smart player that can play any type of game or role on his team.?

Valade added in a tweet that he was ?very honoured? to be pulling on the maple leaf at the upcoming tournament.

?Thanks to Hockey Canada for the amazing opportunity,? said Reid. ?I can't wait to get started!?

Split between Team Canada Red, Team Canada White, and Team Canada Black, the three squads will compete against the United States, Finland, Sweden, Russia, and the Czech Republic in the quest for the gold medal.

Action begins Saturday with Team Canada Red facing off against Russia, while Valade's Team Canada Black opens the tournament on Sunday in an all-Canadian matchup with Team Canada White alongside Kitchener teammate defenseman Donovan Sebrango. They go on to face both the Czech Republic and United States as well in the preliminary round before the knockout tournament begins on Thursday.

Both semifinal matchups as well as the bronze and gold medal games will be broadcast by both TSN and it French broadcaster RDS next weekend.

Valade's older brother, Riley, is a defenseman for the Ontario Junior Hockey League's Newmarket Hurricanes.