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BRENNAN IS STICKING WITH HIS DREAM

Brian Wheeler | Sabres.com

Jul 10, 2007, 10:36 AM EDT

Although he didn't officially begin playing ice hockey until the age of 10, T.J. Brennan was born to play the game. Or at least that's what he'll tell you.

Brennan was faced with a difficult decision coming out of high school. Receiving multiple collegiate scholarships in lacrosse, Brennan choose to forgo a higher education and roll the dice with the sport he loves, opting to play hockey for St. John's Fog Devils of the Quebec Major Junior Hockey League.

The risk paid dividends when he was drafted by the Buffalo Sabres 31st overall in the 2007 NHL Entry Draft last month.

"It wasn't even a decision," said Brennan at Buffalo's rookie camp this week. "I wanted to play hockey. Whether or not it was going to workout, I didn't know. I just knew that's what I wanted to do."

In his only season with St. John's, the six-foot, 190-pound defenseman registered 16 goals and 41 points, while posting 79 penalty minutes in 68 games. He was awarded the Raymond Lagacé Trophy as the top rookie defenceman in the QMJHL.



"I was physical and I've always been around hockey my whole life," said Brennan. "Fisher Price had those little mini-sticks that I played when I was two or three years old."

"I soon as I started playing ice hockey, I just stuck with it. What other game can you have so much talent and require so much skill, but be able to hit someone as hard as you can and not get a penalty for it."

And there lies the paradox.

According to Brennan, his style goes against a common stereotype in hockey. An offensive defenseman that possesses good puck skills and a solid transition game, the Willingboro, New Jersey native likes to mix it up.

"I'm a hockey player," said Brennan. "Everyone's got that fire in them to play the game. I liked lacrosse because it was physical, but there is nothing like hockey. It's just something about the connection with the other guys that you have on the team and just being out there on that ice that you just forget about everything at that time. That's all I'm worried about. It's just an unbelievable feeling and if you don't get that feeling, you can't really go through with it."

"I like to jump into the play and be more of a threat. I like to see myself as that, but may play a little more physical. I don't think you see that too often out of offensive minded defensemen. I like to consider myself a pretty good teammate, one that will stick up for my teammates and am willing to do whatever it takes to win."

Brennan's style of play should hit home with Sabres fans. Patrons at HSBC Arena have become accustomed to their team's blueliners streaking from end to end.

It's a facet of the Sabres attack that will play to Brennan's strengths.

"That's why I was so excited to be drafted by Buffalo," said Brennan. "You see all the big name guys on their defense, like Brian Campbell, they jump into the play all the time. I've tried to model myself after him."

"It's good to see that they like that type of defenseman. I don't really need to change my style of play, I just need to improve on everything."

Watch a past video piece on Brennan from YouTube below.



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Statistics:

2008-2009 Regular Season

SKATERS:	GP	G	A	+/-	Pts
<u>T. Vanek</u>	22	15	6	1	21
<u>J. Pominville</u>	22	8	10	1	18
<u>D. Roy</u>	22	6	10	-4	16
<u>J. Spacek</u>	22	1	10	-4	11
<u>C. MacArthur</u>	22	6	4	-5	10
<u>A. Kotalik</u>	16	5	5	-4	10
<u>A. Sekera</u>	22	0	10	-6	10
<u>M. Afinogenov</u>	20	1	8	-9	9
<u>D. Paille</u>	20	2	6	0	8
<u>D. Stafford</u>	19	4	3	-2	7

GOALIES:	W	L	OT	Sv%	GAA
<u>R. Miller</u>	10	5	2	.910	2.56
<u>P. Lalime</u>	1	3	1	.879	3.31

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Upcoming Games:

@		Sat 11/29	7:00 PM	
vs.		Mon 12/01	7:00 PM	Tickets
@		Thu 12/04	7:30 PM	
@		Sat 12/06	7:30 PM	
@		Mon 12/08	7:30 PM	

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- Stanley Cup Champions
- Eastern Conference Champions
- Playoff Contender
- NorthEast Division Champions