



Jason Kirby is headed to the Mann Cup with the Victoria Shamrocks. FREE PRESS FILE PHOTO

Dream time

Mann Cup highlight for Kirby

Going to the Mann Cup is a dream come true for Jason Kirby.

The Prince George native is a member of the Western Lacrosse Association champion Victoria Shamrocks who will start play on September 4 in Brantford, Ontario against the three-time defending champion Six Nations Chiefs.

The Mann Cup is the Canadian Senior "A" lacrosse championship and the Stanley Cup of Canada's national summer sport.

For Kirby, a veteran of the Shamrocks who took last year off to play for Cap-Abilities in the Prince George Senior Lacrosse Association, it's the highlight of his career.

"I'm so excited," he says. "If you know what the Mann Cup means, and most lacrosse players do, then you know how huge this is. If you're throwing balls around in your back yard and score a goal in overtime then you're doing it in the Mann Cup. It's like the Stanley Cup of lacrosse."

Kirby played in the President's Cup national Senior "B" tournament last year with the host Cap-Abilities team but says that experience can't compare to what's in store for him next week.

"Last year the thing was when we went to the Presidents Cup, if the team was going to be competitive then I would have been more excited," he says. "This year we all think we have a good shot."

Kirby was a star in

Prince George, but he's just another grinder in Victoria. Even though he scored two goals in a playoff game against the Maple Ridge Burrards this year, his main role on the Shamrocks this season has been checking and fighting.

"When it comes down to it, I'll be one of the guys who goes in there to fight," he says. "I can still put the ball in the net and play good defence."

Kirby says the Shamrocks have the deepest two-way team in the WLA.

"My role is totally different (than it was in Prince George)," he says. "I'm back to playing defence again. The only time I'll score is when I create a breakaway for myself. I don't get to score too much on the set offence."

The Shamrocks earned the right to play for the Mann Cup by beating the WLA regular season champions North Shore Indians 4-0 in the league final.

Kirby had to check North Shore's Paul Gait, who is considered by many to be the best lacrosse player in the world, during that series.

"He's certainly someone different, eh," says Kirby. "You've got to check him differently. I put him on his butt a couple of times."

Kirby will have a similar challenge in Brantford. The Chiefs have another top player, John Tavares, on their roster and most likely Kirby will have to check him.

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