



Pembroke Lumber Kings' forward Ryan Casselman, steps over the boards for a Lumber Kings power-play. The game was played in Pembroke, against the Cumberland Grads, Friday Nov. 7.



Scott, Bill, and Kim Casselman praise Ryan after traveling 3 hours to watch him play hockey.



Casselman's billet family, the Minns' provide an extended family for the hockey team.

# Chasing The Dream

Story and photos by James Paddle-Grant

Anyone who knows Ryan Casselman, knows that although he's a very quiet individual, his talents speak for himself while on the ice.

This year, Casselman moved on to the next level, jumping from playing junior C hockey for the Napanee Raiders, to playing junior A hockey for the Pembroke Lumber Kings as a 17 year old.

Beginning to skate at the age of three, hockey has been a major role in Ryan's life, with his father Scott Casselman being a major influence.

Casselman has a strong connection with his family, as his grandparents and parents attend nearly every one of his games, travelling roughly three hours from Napanee to Pembroke to watch their son play.

Casselman made a name for himself as a hockey player last year, becoming the Empire B Junior C hockey league "rookie of the year" while playing for the Napanee Raiders. Casselman found the transition very difficult at first, as he noted he became homesick and began missing family and friends. He further mentioned that school played a large factor and that it was very helpful in his process of becoming more comfortable with the relocation.

"Once you start hanging out with the guys or your friends, you don't really think about home anymore

because it feels like home. It just takes a little bit to adapt," said Casselman.

When asked about the experience of moving from Napanee to Pembroke to live with a billet family, Casselman stated that although he obviously misses being able to sleep in his own bed and see his friends and family, Casselman genuinely enjoys the experience.

"It's been awesome, I couldn't ask for any better billets. There's a lot more freedom but it's also a lot harder with school and hockey" stated Casselman.

Scott Casselman mentioned that it has been very difficult for he and his wife, as they had to make the ultimate sacrifice of letting their son move out a few years early to chase his dream.

"If he doesn't meet his goal, then basically I feel like I gave up on him a couple of years early where basically we would have two more years of raising him at home and I've kind of given that up for him to try to meet his goal," stated Casselman.

Ryan Casselman noted that moving away from home forces you to grow up and start looking after yourself more.



Casselman, on his phone, communicates with peers from home.



Pembroke Lumber Kings' forward Ryan Casselman, (back row, highlighted) listens to his coach, as he explains a drill, midway through a practice.

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