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Teen stars at both kinds of football

DOING IT ALL The two sports complement each other, Steen says

Shawn Steen has a dilemma, but it's one almost any athlete would dearly love to have.

DARIO AYALA THE GAZETTE



Shawn Steen, 15, of the powerhouse bantam Triple-A North Shore Lions, excels on gridiron as well as the soccer pitch.

The Pierrefonds native excels in both soccer and football, and while that isn't necessarily so rare, it is when you consider to what extent Shawn has been dominant at both sports.

He just completed his second year of Triple-A soccer with the Lakeshore program and finished third in the league with 15 goals in 16 games, which represented more than 40 per cent of his team's 37 goals on the season.

Meanwhile, Shawn is enjoying yet another excellent season with the powerhouse bantam Triple-A North Shore Lions. The safety-defensive halfback leads the team with nine interceptions in as many games, returning three of them for touchdowns, while also serving as the team's kicker, punter and returner.

Shawn also plays on the Pierrefonds Comprehensive high school soccer, basketball, volleyball and tennis teams, which makes for a busy athletic year for the 15-year-old.

But he knows very well that at some point, probably within the next two years, he'll have to focus on one sport, and Shawn says that decision will be made with the future in mind.

"I like both sports (soccer and football) equally, but whichever sport can take me further is the one I'll eventually focus on. I want to get scouted, get a scholarship and play in the States. I want to play at the highest level possible."

Shawn began playing soccer when he was only 4, and he was eventually recruited to start playing football five years later. He says the two sports complement each other perfectly.

"Soccer helps me with football because I have a lot of stamina," he said. "But football also helps me with soccer because I don't get pushed off the ball too easily."

Two years ago, Shawn played at the Quebec Games for the Lac St. Louis soccer team and, based on his performance, was invited to join the provincial team program.

He declined, however, because it would have taken too much time and energy away from football.

Last season, Shawn made the jump to the provincial Triple-A level from the regional leagues in both soccer and football. He scored four goals last season for Lakeshore as a defender, while in football he was named the provincial league's top defensive back in his rookie season of bantam.

"It was a big step up for both sports, but in different ways," he said. "The speed of the game increased in both. In soccer, you had to be thinking two or three moves ahead all the time, while in football you get breaks between plays, but you have to be ready on every one because one bad play can really hurt your team."

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