



Ryan Smith

Starting in the sport of rugby at the age of 14, Ryan Smith was a standout player for Mayfield Secondary School in the 1990s, captaining the Junior and Senior teams and earning the Senior MVP accolade. Smith's first exposure to high performance rugby came with the arrival of Pacific Pride coach John MacMillan to Smith's home club in Brampton, Ontario. As a proud member of the Brampton Beavers RFC, Smith spent his formative years developing through the ranks of U17, U19 and senior men's rugby. MacMillan introduced the idea of playing rugby beyond high school and university, and Smith pursued Ontario U19 camps.

After joining the University of Guelph and achieving an OUA championship in his first season in 1998 (as a reserve) and then OUA All Star status the following year, Smith made the Ontario U21 team in the summer of 2000, and went on to compete in the final of the Canadian Championships in Ottawa. He then travelled to Victoria to spend a season with the Castaway Wanderers prior to joining the Pacific Pride program in 2001.

His two successful years with the Pride included an undefeated season and wins over the New Zealand Youth and German and Chilean national teams. In 2003, he kicked the winning drop goal in a 6-3 victory over James Bay, a game that proved to be the catalyst for selection into the summer tours for the Canadian squad. He would eventually be selected to the 2003 Rugby World Cup roster in his first season with Canada's Men's Rugby Team.

Over the next eight years, Smith accumulated 51 international caps and competed at three Rugby World Cups (2003, 2007, 2011). His 10 Rugby World Cup matches include starts in all four games in 2011 enroute to Canada's best Rugby World Cup performance in the professional era. He is second all-time in tackles. He was selected as player of the year in 2005 and captained Canada during the Churchill Cup in 2006. He also played in 10 sevens tournaments between 2003 and 2005 and appeared at the 2005 Rugby World Cup Sevens.

Success on the national team translated into a professional contract in the NPC (National Provincial Championship) in New Zealand with the Southland Stags as only the second Canadian player at that time to play in the league. He then signed with Montauban in France, winning the France Pro D2 Championship, playing two successful years in the Top 14 and qualifying for the Heineken Cup in the 2008/2009 season. Smith was a fan and club favourite in France, starting in 39 of his 57 appearances and playing every position in the backline.

With nine international tries (two at the Rugby World Cup) and eight professional tries, he was a consistent threat with the ball in hand. Also known for his staunch defence, steady and consistent play, and reliable leadership, Smith was a mentor for many younger players on Canada's Men's Rugby Team and abroad. He served as a Rugby Canada Player Representative from 2008-2011 and as part of Canada's Men's Rugby Team's Leadership Group from 2004-2011.

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After retiring from playing in 2011, Smith joined the leadership of the Prairie Wolf Pack, helping build the foundations for a program that would develop numerous future national team players and go on to win the Canadian Rugby Championship. He has also coached various youth and age-grade teams in Calgary.

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