

Brothers Greer live their dream

Line up on same team for first time as professionals

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For Bill Greer, a 10-year veteran who has bounced around the National Lacrosse League from Columbus to Arizona, Anaheim to Rochester, New York, Orlando and Edmonton, it's a new experience.

The 29-year-old Edmonton Rush veteran is playing on the same team as his kid half-brother Zack for the first time as a pro.

"It's really exciting for us. We have been dreaming about this since we were kids, to play together at the professional stage. It's really a dream come true," said Zack, 25, who was recently acquired from the Minnesota Swarm for a first-round pick in the 2013 NLL draft.

"If I could play the rest of my career with my brother, that would be ideal."

"I was left in the dark," Bill said about the trade negotiations that had been ongoing for about a month before the two general managers agreed on a deal on March 2.

"For me, that was the best way to do it. I had no input. It was all Derek (Keenan, the Rush GM and head coach)."

While the Greer brothers played against each other a couple of times in the NLL, the trade reunited them for the first time since they played a few junior A games together when Bill was finishing his junior A days and Zack was a call-up with the Whitby Warriors in Ontario. Bill even drew an assist on Zack's first goal.

"He's been the guy I've leaned on for advice," Zack said of Bill. "He kept me motivated and focused, except when he played me."

"We talked once a week and we talked about our last games and what ways we could improve," Bill said about their recent conversations as NLL opponents. Zack was selected third overall in the 2009 NLL draft by the Swarm after to an outstanding collegiate career at Duke University. The forward studied sociology at Duke and set NCAA Division I records for goals (248) and points (353). He also scored 42 goals and 68 points while completing his masters of business

administration at Bryant University in Rhode Island. During Zack's freshman year at Duke, their father, Dan Greer, died. It was a difficult time for the entire Greer family and, despite the tears that were shed, Zack said it was a tremendous bonding experience.

"Dad's death really brought my siblings closer and we ended up taking a positive out of a negative," he said.

Bill said their father is one of the reasons they reached the professional lacrosse level.

"We played sports all the time," Bill said. "Dad played hockey and lacrosse and we looked up to him because he had the fanciest stick skills. He made an ice rink in the backyard every year and he even had a homemade Zamboni."

Success at the college level, however, has not translated into similar success at the pro level for Zack. He scored only 15 goals and 18 assists in 17 regular season games with the Swarm before being dealt to the Rush. Despite those struggles, the gritty forward was surprised to hear he'd been traded.

"It was kind of a shock to me, but things had not been going as planned, especially on the scoreboard. From a lacrosse perspective it does kind of make sense," Zack said. "I definitely think there was some pressure coming out with the hype that surrounded my college game, but these guys (in the NLL) are men and not college kids. Getting banged around was definitely an adjustment for me."

When the Greers were kids, they could always be found with either lacrosse or hockey sticks in their hands. Although they didn't always live together, they were very tight growing up.

"We were really close. Dad was great at making sure we were close on the weekends and had dinner together on Tuesdays," Bill said.

"We made a point to get out to each other's sporting events and I tried to convince my mom and dad to try to stay up late to watch Bill play," Zack said.

In high school, they played volleyball, basketball and ran on the cross-country team, but hockey and lacrosse were their two favourite sports. Bill decided to pursue lacrosse after he was not drafted by the Ontario Hockey League, and Zack chose lacrosse because he thinks it was always his best sport.

But they aren't the only ones in the family who love lacrosse. They have three other sisters, one of whom, Kalley Greer, backstopped Canada to a bronze medal at the 2009 women's lacrosse World Cup in Prague, Czech Republic.

Bill also has two brothers-in-law, Dan and Paul Dawson, who play in the NLL, and his wife is expecting their first child in mid-April.

"She just might have a future in lacrosse," Bill said about the future Greer.

Uncle Greerzo (Zack's nickname) might one day be able to help improve the offensive skills of a future national team player, but for now he's just excited to be wearing the same jersey as his big brother.

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