



FORWARD MICHAEL CATALANO READY 'TO PROVE THAT LAKE FOREST IS A POWERFUL PLAYOFF CONTENDER'

By Ross Forman, 02/02/26, 2:15PM CST

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Junior Catalano Sits Among Top SHL Offensive Threats, Especially On The Powerplay

Michael Catalano has had a breakout season at Lake Forest, where the Scouts are excited for the Scholastic Hockey League playoffs and the state tournament, rightfully so.

Don't look past Lake Forest in the post-season and every opponent must contain Catalano, or at least try to.

A junior forward, Catalano is one of the Scouts main offensive threats. He led the team in the 27-game regular season with 13 goals and 8 assists – and his 7 powerplay goals leads the league. Overall, he has 18 goals and 12 assists in 37 games this season.

Including three wins over defending state champion New Trier Green, which Catalano tagged as his favorite moments so far this season.

Catalano, 17, who lives in Lake Bluff, is in his second season on the top Lake Forest varsity team. He formerly has skated for the Highland Park Falcons and Lake Forest Winter Club. His career highlight was a Falcons state championship.

Will, er, can Lake Forest skate at the Allstate Arena in early March?

Catalano is optimistic.

His motivation this season is, "to prove that Lake Forest is a powerful playoff contender," he said. The Scouts earned the No. 6 seed in the state tournament and will open play against No. 27 Glenbrook South Blue.

"The SHL is very competitive and the pace is what makes that."

The Scouts finished 15–12 in the SHL.

"We figured out how to play together and it has really paid off this season," Catalano said. "We can go all the way, as long as we stay healthy."

Catalano and his older brother, Frankie, were Lake Forest varsity teammates last season. Frankie, 18, is now at Indiana University, where he plays fraternity hockey. Scoring the game-winning goal last season against Glenbrook North to take the season series, assisted by Frankie, was a personal hockey highlight for Michael.

Stevenson head coach Dan Wood didn't hold back when asked about Michael, simply saying, "He's incredible." Wood added that Catalano brings "the perfect combination of speed, grit and skill. He is a dynamic player who is a threat anywhere on the ice."

Saint Viator head coach Tim Benz tagged Catalano as a talented two-way player who can skate in every situation for the Scouts and is skilled on faceoffs. Catalano "is a big piece of their success this season," Benz said.

Catalano is a playmaker and goal scorer, and creative at both. Linemate Nate Robbins said it's been "amazing" to skate alongside Catalano this season. "He constantly makes plays, puts the puck in the net and has a super quick release," Robbins said. "He's always making us laugh off the ice and is a great teammate."

The Scouts will face Loyola Gold in the opening round of the SHL playoffs – and no doubt there will be a traditional Scouts game-day breakfast before they face the Rampblers. "We usually go to Egg Harbor Café in Lake Forest as a team to get some food," he said. "(The meal) creates a good bond between all of us that helps with better communication on the ice and brings us closer as a team."

Slapshots With ... Lake Forest Forward Michael Catalano

Jersey Number: 8

Hockey Career Awards: MVP of tournaments in Michigan and Wisconsin, Offensive Player of the Year

Scouting The Scouts: "We have a very strong team; everyone pushes each other to be better; that's what makes us a very strong team."

Golfing: "I went a few times with my dad as a kid and never lost the hobby." He still plays and caddies, too.

Off The Ice: Hangout with friends, weight lighting, golfing and skating outdoors in Lake Forest.

It Helps: "Weight lifting has helped me significantly, staying strong on my feet, creating a better balance."

Superstitions: "Don't let the blade touch besides the ice."

Favorite NHL Team: Chicago Blackhawks

Favorite NHL Player: Patrick Kane

Favorite Sports-themed Movie: Miracle

Favorite TV Show: The Sopranos

Favorite app: Instagram

Favorite High School Uniform (other than Lake Forest): Saint Viator (white)





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