

## Brody Clarke is putting in the work on and off the basketball court

Brody Clarke was born to play basketball.

This statement has defined Clarke's tenure in the sport due to the fact that his parents are notable basketball players Norman Clarke and Natalie Vukovich.

While there is no denying his natural abilities and their contributions to Clarke's development as a player — Clarke has elevated his game through an incredible work ethic on and off the court.

Clarke was born in Toronto and grew up learning the game of basketball through his mom, who won two national championships at Laurentian University, and his father, who played for Canada at the 1988 Olympics in Seoul, Korea.

"[We're] kind of a basketball family, so I kind of just got into it when I was young and I've always loved it," says Clarke.

He was also inspired by the Toronto Raptors, who gave him something to aspire to as a young basketball player in the Six.

The dream to become an elite basketball player is not one that comes easily, even with Clarke's background.

From a young age Clarke worked hard to learn how the game flows offensively and defensively.

The thing that Clarke believes has made the biggest difference in his game is drilling footwork with his dad, a signature of his game at the university level.

"Whenever I get a chance to go home and get in the gym with him, he's always making sure that I'm working on my pivoting in the post and working on, you know, using my jab step to my advantage," says Clarke. "That's always something that I think that I've excelled in and I think I'll continue to excel in."

After making the decision to not pursue Division-I basketball, Clarke set his eyes on playing university basketball in Canada.

Clarke met with coach Barnaby Craddock at the University of Alberta for a campus tour in the spring of 2014, and after getting a taste of the engineering program and the team, his mind was made up.

He would suit up for the Golden Bears.

"I came out in like May for my visit and it snowed and I loved it," says Clarke. "I don't know. It was one of those weekends where everything seemed like it was right. So it was really hard to turn it down from that point."

Over the past four years, Clarke has been an invaluable member of the team helping guide them to a Canada West basketball championship in 2017.

"He's a great teammate," says Geoff Pippus, former Golden Bears basketball player. "He can handle the ball, he can make plays, he can shoot; he's really turned into a complete player."

Pippus added that Clarke is a versatile two-way player that is committed to working on every aspect of his game. Not only is he a threat in the post, but he can shoot from the outside making him a difficult player to cover.

"I think that I'm basically going to just try and do whatever is necessary for us to try and get a win depending on what my role is with the team," says Clarke.

Clarke was named Canada West Rookie of the Year in 2017 and was recognized as a U Sports All-Canadian the past two years.

He has won multiple awards, including the Ken Shields Student-Athlete Community Award in 2018 and the Wardlaw Porteus Trophy as the team MVP last year.

Clarke has one more year of eligibility and will return to the Golden Bears this fall when he starts his MBA.

"There's an overwhelming level of respect that I feel like is prevalent in the U of A athletics community," says Clarke. "And that's just something I'm really proud to say that I got to be a part of it. It's just an awesome community to be part of."

Clarke was drafted to play professional basketball for the Edmonton Stingers in the CEBL (Canadian Elite Basketball League).

The partnership between U Sports and CEBL allows players to play professional ball without affecting their college eligibility.

"I'm usually out here every summer anyways, kind of just training and getting in the gym with Jordan Baker and coach Barnaby as much as possible," says Clarke. "So this is a better opportunity to train and get better with pros."

Clarke is excited to learn as much as he can during this experience and contribute in any way he can to the team.

Although he has only suited up for a few games, he stated that the CEBL is highly competitive basketball that the community can easily get behind and that the Stingers have an opportunity to inspire youth basketball players in Edmonton.

“I think that it's really important for kids who have basketball aspirations to be brought out to watch us weekly by their parents,” says Clarke. “My parents would have been taking me 100 per cent and it would have just made my dreams feel even even closer, even more attainable at that age — it would have made me love basketball even more than I already do.”

After next season with the Golden Bears, Clarke hopes to play professional basketball, potentially overseas, for as long as possible.

He will get a taste of international play next month when he [suits up](#) for Canada at the 2019 Summer FISU Games.

And knowing Clarke's dedication to the game it is hard to imagine him not having a successful career wherever he lands.

“He's always doing the extra work — always in the weight room, always putting up extra shots,” says Pippus. “He's just super responsible and as he's grown really turned into a leader, not just because he's one of the best players in Canada, but because he does the work every day.”

So Clarke may have been born to play basketball, but his drive and work ethic are what have allowed him to excel at every level of the game he has played.