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NEWS

Comedian not laughing at contest



By Jason Miller, The Intelligencer
Wednesday, November 5, 2014 3:35:22 EST PM



BELLEVILLE - Kyle Woolven is hunting for his network television comedy special breakthrough and Quinte can help him get there one vote at a time.

The Belleville native is heading up a sketch comedy troupe on the verge of earning themselves a \$500,000 production financing deal for a half-hour comedy special to air during CBC's 2015 prime-time schedule. Standing between Woolven's team and their first network deal is 50 other finalists across Canada vying to earn a top 15 spot.

"I'm pretty confident with the idea because it's something that's never been done before," he said.

Woolven is now banking on votes from the local community to propel his troupe, Toronto After Dark, into the next round. Things are looking up for Woolven as Toronto After Dark currently ranks twelfth in popularity and third in Ontario. Voting for the top 15 begins Nov. 6 and ends on Nov. 9.

"We have already been able to achieve so much with no budget," Woolven said about the pilot episode shot in various locations in Toronto. "A bigger budget will increase the overall value of the show."

Starting with a field of 285 teams, Toronto After Dark has already advanced to the top 50. You can watch and rate his video on the ComedyCoup website: comedycoup.cbc.ca.

The St. Theresa Catholic Secondary school grad's sketch troupe was conceived while studying at Humber College's comedy writing and performance program, from where he graduated in 2012.

Woolven isn't new to sketch comedy performances. He has entertained in numerous venues across the province, including two shows at Sans Souci this year and has written numerous scripts, but none have come this close.

"Out of the top 15 they can sign up to 10 projects to do an option with CBC," he said. "All of the shows they option will have the potential to make it on to CBC but only one group is going to get the \$500,000."

The 26-year-old describes his team's style of comedy as a hybrid sitcom, which utilizes a single-camera perspective documenting the life of a character, mixed in with Saturday Night Live type sketches.

"I still live in Belleville, just have a travel to Toronto a lot," he said about working with the other five members of his team.

Go to <http://comedycoup.cbc.ca/toronto-after-dark> just to view Woolven's series of videos.

Starting Nov. 6 there will be a "vote" button on the page.

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