

It's Matt Gibson!

Look, it's a downtown Las Vegas local rolling out of Frankie's Tiki Room like the cat that ate the canary. It's a screenplay writer in a baseball cap that clashes with his Hawaiian shirt cruising West Hollywood. It's the blonde pony tailed and unshaven half-Canadian crease attackman for the New York Lizards. It's a 25-year-old well-rounded icon in Major League Lacrosse who has reinvented himself for the benefit of the team. It's Matt Gibson, and he's not to be stopped.

"Not to be stopped" is in Gibson's DNA. The son of a Cornell hockey player from the Great White North and one of five brothers, Gibson is no stranger to high-level competition. He followed his older brother Brendan's footsteps to the level of captain of Jack Moran's Chaminade (N.Y.) High lacrosse program and they tucked a few Catholic League Championships under their belts. With their fraternal bond and Matt's respect for his older brother, the game plan was to follow him to a college so they could be difference makers. Older brother Brendan chose a path through the Ivy League and informed Matt that he would be going to Yale.



"Yale? Are we really gonna do this?"

That was Matt's first thought. He liked the Ivy League cache, but Yale hadn't won an NCAA championship in lacrosse since 1883. By design, the campaign from Point Lookout, N.Y., to New Haven, Conn., was about making an impact. The Gibson family made an immediate and lasting impact on the program by introducing their leadership on and off the field. His parents, James (who goes by "Slice") and Rosemary (who goes by "Rary" on the barrier island on the south shore of Long Island), implemented their blue-collar work ethic by running Yale Lacrosse tailgates for six years. The Gibson's humble realism brought the program closer to its potential than it had been in years and set the stage for the team, and their cutting-edge lacrosse warriors, to excel. Perhaps, in that order.

As a team, the Bulldogs competed in their best form in decades. Matt blazed a trail of domination and garnered most of the associated awards. You could still make a case Gibson didn't get the recognition he deserved in college, specifically his senior year.

His current Lizards teammate, Tewaaron Award winner Rob Pannell of Cornell, captured all the headlines as the NCAA's top attackman. Gibson garnered honorable mention recognition on the All-American list his sophomore and junior year at Yale. He was conspicuously left off the list his senior year among some of today's heaviest hitters of the game like Peter Baum, Will Manny, Steele Stanwick, Marcus Holman, Mark Matthews, Jordan Wolf and Garret Thul. In 2012 came the mathematically accountable argument for better recognition. A chunk of the Ivy League tournament record book, an Ivy championship and first-team recognition in that league.

Gibson still holds the record for most assists in an Ivy championship game (four), most points in an Ivy championship game (six), most assists in the Ivy tournament (12), and most points in an Ivy tournament (14) but for some reason he was left off the 2012 USILA All-American lists completely. The absolute truth is that Gibson is zero percent hung up on it.

Fast forward to Major League Lacrosse and you'll find the league's 2012 rookie of the year testing the limits of his own explosive game. Primarily a feeder and playmaker his whole life, Gibson platoons on the Lizards attack with Rob Pannell and Tom Palasek -- only Gibson spends almost no time with the ball. Add the marquee player in the league, Paul Rabil, to that mix and you've got three of MLL's top-10 goal scorers and then Gibson at 17th with 21 goals in a dozen games.

Since his arrival on the Lizards, Gibson has become friends with Rabil. Despite his mammoth skill and personality, Rabil and Gibson are always exchanging tricks of the trade to elevate their own game. When Rabil reverts to the simplest axiom of picking a vacant area on the field and sprinting to it to get open, Gibson takes notes. By employing that strategy in the MLL that moves at light speed, Gibson gets open more. From there, his gift takes over.

You need the hands of a surgeon to either catch-and-shoot or redirect the ball past the goalie through a keyhole-sized margin of error before getting mauled. If you have seen Gibson's legendary stick trick videos, you know about his hand-eye coordination and milliseconds don't put him in a rush. If you have seen his string of goals in 2015 – the quick sticks, the slightest redirections to the back of the net, the impossible craftiness that only finds corners – you have seen the human MLL highlight film that is No. 66 in black, white and green.

It may be his Twitter and Instagram handle, and the place his fans get a personal look at him, but following @itsmattgibson alone doesn't cover the multidimensional success story. If you want to talk movies with Gibson, you will steal his heart and attention immediately. Not watching them, writing them. As a bi-coastal professional, he's already rewritten scripts for some of Hollywood's finest. If you can get him to tell you the story of his own original screen play, "Ashtrays," you will likely ask for a ticket to opening night.



Matt Gibson is eventually going to reach the higher level of success he deserves. It might be in the form of a 2015 MLL title for the New York Lizards next month in Georgia. It might be his name up in lights on a Hollywood marquee. The beauty is that, for him, there's no reason it can't be both.