

MEAGHER, Rick

# Belleville's Rick Meagher <sup>Intell</sup> <sup>Bel - Blues - M</sup> NHL's top defensive forward <sup>June 7/90</sup>

BY ROB SAVAGE  
For The Intelligencer

TORONTO - Although he's "getting near the end" of his career, Rick Meagher is still experiencing great moments in hockey.

One such moment came Wednesday night when the 36-year-old veteran from Belleville captured the Frank J. Selke Trophy as the top defensive forward during the NHL's nationally televised awards ceremony in Toronto.

"At my age and to win this award, it's a tremendous feeling," the St. Louis Blues' captain told reporters. "At this time in my career, it's quite a thrill."

There was another Belleville connection at the NHL awards. Brett Hull, son of Point Anne native Bobby Hull, won the Lady Byng trophy for most gentlemanly player.

Meagher, a centre with the Blues, had eight goals and 17 assists in 76 games this season. He received 105 of the 286 votes cast in his award category, edging out Montreal Canadiens' centre Guy Carbonneau (100 points) and Esa Tikkanen of Edmonton Oilers (81 points).

Most of the award winners, including Meagher, were chosen by the Professional Hockey Writers Association.

Meagher, who underwent surgery five weeks ago for a knee injury, said he hopes to be back in the game by November. He's been told by doctors it could take six to eight months before he can return.

"They told me it's going to take a while," he said in an interview.



RICK MEAGHER

"I'm still impatient. I want to get going faster than I should. But it's getting there."

Planning to do plenty of hard work this summer to get his knee back in shape (he was injured during the playoffs when St. Louis was eliminated by Chicago Blackhawks), Meagher hopes to play hockey for at least another one to two years. But if things don't work out, he said he'll be happy with his 13 years in professional hockey.

"We'll see how this thing heals. I've had a good career, whatever way it goes."

Meagher began his professional career in 1977 after signing as a free agent with Montreal Canadiens out of Boston University.

After three seasons with the Habs' farm team in Halifax, N.S., Meagher was traded to Hartford Whalers in 1980 and in the 1981-82 season he enjoyed his most productive season scoring 24 goals and adding 19 assists for 43 points for the Whalers.

In 1982 he was traded to New Jersey Devils and three seasons later went on to St. Louis where he has spent the past five seasons. He was named Blues' captain this past season.

As well as winning the Selke Award Wednesday, Meagher is the Blues' nominee as the NHL Man of the Year. Each NHL team nominates a player for the award, won in 1989 by retired Calgary Flames' captain Lanny McDonald.

Meagher also presides over the highly successful Rick Meagher Benefit Golf Tournament, which will hold its third annual event Friday and Saturday, July 6-7. In two years, the tournament has raised almost \$35,000 for crippled children in the Quinte area.

Meagher's parents, Al and Doreen Meagher, attended the NHL awards in Toronto along with Rick's sister, Janet Baragar and her husband Eric.

Father Al said his son has always shown winning ability at hockey.

"He gave us a lot of pleasure watching him," Al said. "We still enjoy watching him play."

Meagher paid tribute to his parents in his acceptance speech saying, "they were always there for me" even though there were nine kids in the family.

(Other NHL awards presented. Story on Page 13.)

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