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## Craig adjusts to pro v-ball life in Germany

BY DOUG HARRISON  
The Acton Tanner

She's a winner. A leader on the court wherever she goes. The consummate competitor, never one to let herself or her teammates down.

But Susan Craig, a standout with Acton High and five-year member of the York Yeowomen varsity volleyball squad, had her patience tested eight months ago when she opted to play with TV Wetzler, a professional German outfit near Frankfurt.

Upon her arrival, Craig was immediately whisked away to practice, worked into the team's system — while having no command of the language or feel for her teammates' tendencies — and advised by coach Ralf Schnorr to become the foreign saviour.

"How can you be a leader when you don't know the language?" asked Craig on Thursday. "It confused me more than it flattered me.

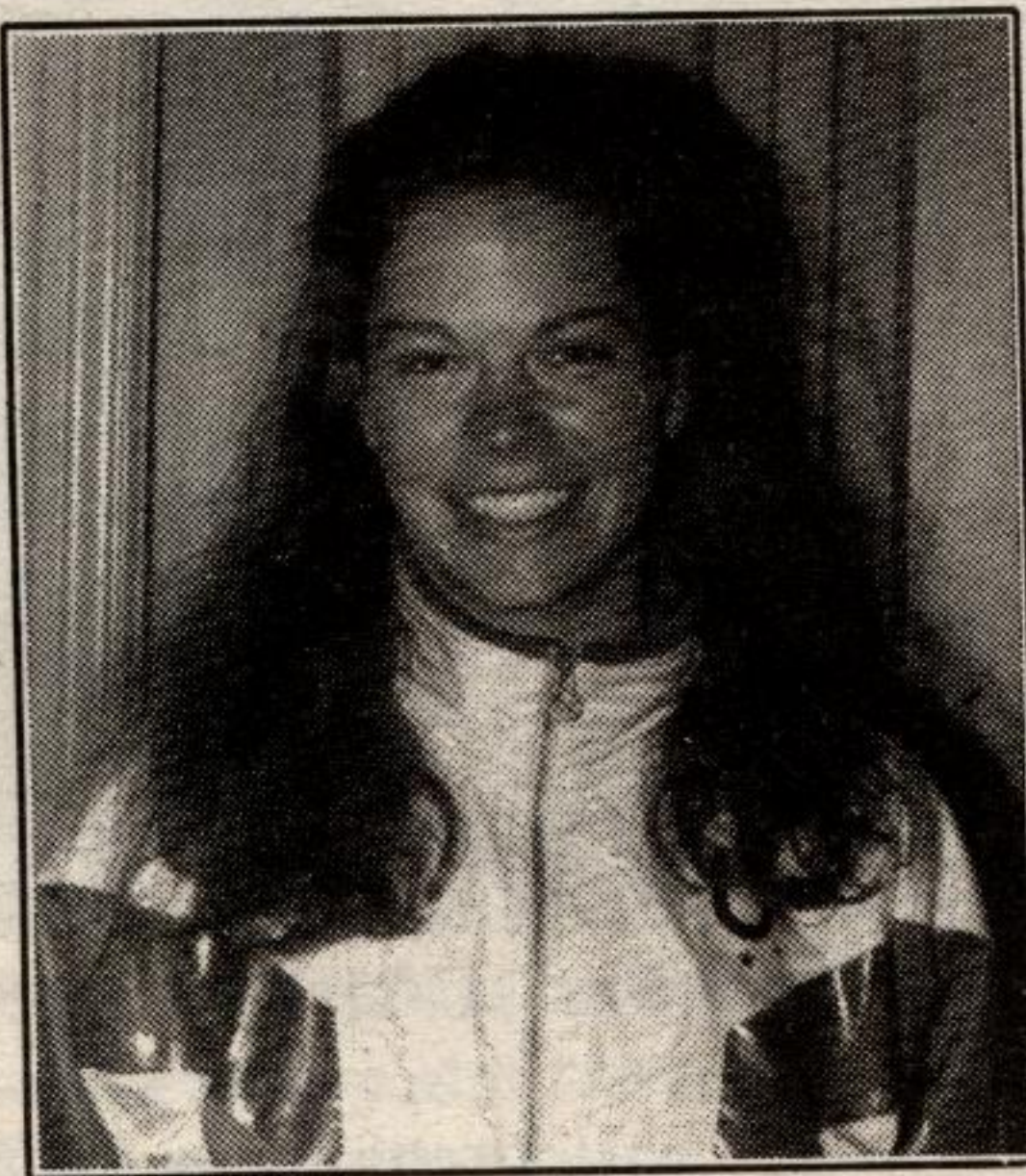
To have that thrown at you in your first year ...

"They (the coaching staff) wanted me to do everything and I wasn't comfortable with that. That's not good for a team sport."

At first, the 24-year-old setter-power hitter found difficulty with the language barrier and the fact her teammates, who spoke broken English, switched to their native tongue when they were upset. She said the club and the people were nice, but added it was hard when the team wasn't winning.

"I'm not fluent but I can get

by," laughed Craig, an Acton High graduate who studied German three hours a day, four days a week for four months.



SUSAN CRAIG

Craig, who won four Ontario University championships playing with the Yeowomen in her five years, was asked to convert TV Wetzler into a championship caliber unit instantly, if not for a game two days

after her arrival.

It got to the point where Craig almost packed her bags as quickly as she dropped them in order to get to the first practice.

"I'm not one to give up, though.

Plus, I signed a contract committing myself to a year of playing. I contemplated (quitting), but I was never serious about it or showed any actions to hint at it."

But after Christmas, TV Wetzler lost only two games, both to the top and second-place teams. Craig said a different attitude and atmosphere surrounded the club.

Craig's opportunity to play in Europe came at the end of August when she was cut from the Canadian national team after four months of training. It turned out to be a blessing in disguise.

"The travel schedule wasn't great and we didn't qualify for the World championships, so I thought the opportunity to play in Germany was better," she said. "I don't think I had a chance. I think the coach had pre-conceived notions of who would make the team."

Over the summer, Craig will relax, tend to a job in Toronto and

go over her volleyball options.

She could tryout for the national team, but thinks she wouldn't make it. She could play on a women's club team. While it would be competitive, Craig wouldn't be paid. Or she could play pro beach volleyball, since it's become an Olympic sport.

However, the tournaments are played in Toronto, Vancouver and Edmonton. And since Craig would have to pay her own way, it isn't something she's prepared to do.

Craig was even offered a player-coach position with TV Wetzler for next season, but likely won't accept. The deal was contingent on her returning for training camp three weeks after coming home.

"After all the problems I had in the beginning, it was rather flattering," Craig said of the offer. "But I have a great family and friends here. If I didn't have that, I would probably go back, because I quite enjoyed Germany."

## Shevalier signs 3-year deal with Los Angeles Kings

BY DOUG HARRISON  
The Acton Tanner

While the North Bay Centennials didn't capture the recent Memorial Cup hockey tourney and endure the red carpet treatment that follows, Jeff Shevalier is still a King.

That's because the third-year right-winger of the 1994 Ontario Hockey League (OHL) champion Cents officially became one on Thursday night — signing a three-year deal worth a reported \$1.075 million (U.S.) in base salary with the National Hockey League Los Angeles Kings.

The two-way deal, the first hammered out by newly hired Kings general manager Sam McMaster, is for two years plus an option.

If he meets the required number of games with the Kings in all three years, the 20-year-old Shevalier will earn \$275,000 in his first year and \$375,000 and \$425,000 in each of the next two years. Financial details were also worked out if Shevalier plays the bulk of any one season with the



JEFF SHEVALIER

Phoenix Roadrunners, the Kings' International Hockey League affiliate.

Along with incentive bonuses, the NHL deal includes a signing bonus "well over \$100,000," says Roger Shevalier, Jeff's father.

"Mom's taking care of the business matters," laughed Shevalier on Friday, a few hours after his agent Howard Gourewitz finalized the pact. "She'll probably give me a couple of thousand to go blow. I'm going to buy some new golf clubs, since I'll be doing a lot of golfing (in either California or Arizona). I want to get a new stereo system for my car, too.

"I was right with the rest of the guys — in terms of points — who signed big contracts. If they (the Kings) didn't sign me someone else would have. Whatever my agent likes, I like."

However, it's what Kings management liked that will put the Acton Sabre product in a black and silver jersey. Shevalier, the Kings' fifth-round (111th overall)

selection in the 1992 NHL Entry Draft, figures his versatility has become attractive.

"I think they liked the fact I'm an all-around player," said Shevalier. "I played on the third line this year and the second line in my first year. They know I can play every position."

Shevalier, who potted 52 goals this year, including 11 on the power play and nine game-winners, says he doesn't have a preference for either left or right wing or centre.

"Anywhere they put me, I'll play," the 1994 OHL All-Star right-winger said. Shevalier credited Centennial coach Bert Templeton for stressing defence, helping the 6-foot, 185-pounder to become a more complete player from being a pure offensive threat.

The key this off-season, Shevalier said, is to get in peak condition for training camp in September. The Erin resident has battled wrist injuries during his two previous tryouts.

Step one is to rest a separated acromioclavicular joint in his right shoulder suffered in Game 6 of the OHL final in Detroit against the Junior Red Wings.

## Bonnell advances to OFSAA

There was no raining on Amanda Bonnell's parade on Thursday.

The Grade 10 runner crossed the line first in both the 300-metre and 400-metre hurdle events at the Regional championships at a wet McMaster University in Hamilton.

Her 61.3 second finish in the 400m event was six-tenths of a second ahead of the runner-up. She clocked 48.4 in the 300m.

"She's a (Guelph) club athlete and although she would have liked better times, she was right in there in both races," says Acton High coach Anne Andrews. "She's big, well coordinated and a good athlete."

Bonnell advances to the Ontario Federation of School Athletic Associations (OFSAA) championships at Centennial

Stadium in Kitchener this Friday and Saturday. She will race the 400m on Friday and the 300m the next day.

"The 300m will be her best," Andrews says. "She could be considered a darkhorse with her strength and height."

Meanwhile, the Redmen golf foursome of Dave Moore, Dave Dolliver, Devon Ambrose and Kevin Tribe all broke 100 in Carlisle last Monday.

Moore headed the group with a 45 front nine en route to an 86. Tribe shaved four strokes off his front nine 48 to end at 92.

Ambrose sparkled to begin the day with a 41, but ran into trouble on the last nine holes, scoring 53 for a round of 94. Dolliver finished the day with a 96 that included 45 back nine.

## Thompson hero for IGA

The rain held off long enough at Prospect Park last Wednesday to allow the Acton IGA Girls' softball team to trim another Acton squad 20-19.

Stephanie Thompson grabbed the game-winning RBI when she slugged a home-run. Natalie Dawkins added a dinger.

Acton IGA played in Glen Williams last night (Tuesday).

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