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Shevalier adjusting to life as an IHL Roadrunner

BY DOUG HARRISON
 The Acton Tanner

In a little over half a season, Jeff Shevalier has found that hockey life in the sultry south isn't much different from the chills of North Bay.

A rookie with the International Hockey League (IHL) Phoenix Roadrunners — the Los Angeles Kings' affiliate — Shevalier is seeing power play duty, scoring goals and getting injured.

Not much seems to have changed after two 100-point seasons in three Ontario Hockey League years with the Centennials.

About the only glaring differences so far this season are that most of his teammates are married

and the fact Shevalier isn't sure with each game where he'll be on the ice each night.

After being dispatched to the minors just prior to the NHL lock-out, the former Acton Sabre was told by Roadrunners coach Robbie Laird that he would know his role after 10 games of the 82-game IHL schedule. Despite excelling through the uncertainty — Shevalier had 14 goals and 23 assists for 37 points in his first 38 games — not much has changed.

"I still don't know (my role)," a baffled Shevalier said recently from his Paradise Valley apartment. "Some games I'm on the checking line and others the scoring line. It's weird.

"(He (Laird) never goes with the same lineups. I could be a goalie some game for all I know."

However, this shouldn't be mistaken for a disheartened Shevalier. How could the Erin resident be unhappy playing on the first power play unit, golfing year-round in the sizzling Arizona heat and being one step closer to wearing the black and silver of the parent club.

"I'm starting to pick up my game," Shevalier noted, adding he recently returned to the lineup after missing 10 games with an injured left hip flexor. "At the start of the year I would have 10 great games, slump for three or four and play another 10 good ones.

"And after I got hurt, I sat out

for three games and started to lose my confidence."

But it was quickly restored when he was paired with rookies Nick Vachon (son of former NHL goalie Rogie) and former OHL star Kevin Brown, whom he played against last year. The Kings, though, called Brown up two weeks ago.

"We were the best line for four games (before he was called up)," Shevalier said.

Shevalier doesn't expect a phone call from Kings general manager Sam McMaster anytime soon, unless the big club is hit with the flu or injury bug. The answer is

simple: The Kings have a number of 25 and 26-year-old players on one-way (NHL salary only) contracts.

However, a promotion for playoff time is not out of the question, Shevalier added.

But the former OHL All-Star isn't complaining. He's busy adapting to a longer season in the IHL and enjoying time on the links.

"The greens are faster (down south)," Shevalier chuckled. "I just do my job and not worry about anyone else. I've realized that (the other players) are just as good as me. I just want to play."

Lajeunesse, Chapman team to put Major Peewee Canes over .500

It was only fitting that the Halton Major Peewee hockey Hurricanes' top scorer — Acton's Dave Lajeunesse — put away the locals' top opponent in Burlington on the weekend with the last goal in a 3-2 win.

It was the culmination of a 12-point weekend for the Grade 8 St. Joseph's student who helped his squad nudge themselves three games over the .500 mark.

The league's two most physically dominating teams traded hits and goals before Lajeunesse collected the winner.

Lajeunesse, 13, opened the scoring against Burlington, which was riding a 12-game win streak heading into the contest, off a nice feed from Acton's Sandy Chapman.

Chapman then broke the tie on a pretty individual effort before Burlington fired the equalizer.

Lajeunesse also provided the winner in the Hurricanes 3-1 downing of Welland. Then he teamed to feed Chapman with the insurance marker.

The two best friends were the cornerstones to a 10-1 pounding of Streetsville to start the Canes' weekend.

Lajeunesse led the way with a hat-trick and five assists, while

Chapman, a Grade 8 McKenzie-Smith student, chipped in with two goals and an assist.



SPECTACULAR SAVE!

Acton Precision Millwrights Midget Sabres netminder Brian Denny stops this blast from a Tillsonburg opponent at the Community Centre on Sunday during Round 2 OMHA playoff action. Acton prevailed 3-2 to take a 2-0 lead in the series. (Eve Martin photo)

Lady Redmen ousted

BY DOUG HARRISON
 The Acton Tanner

It was like watching a de-clawed feline — a listless attack was a foregone conclusion.

While they pounced on their prey early, the Acton Redmen Senior girls' volleyball team was clearly outsized at the net against the host E.C. Drury Spartans and too often was pressed to scratch and claw their way back in a quarterfinal match last Wednesday in Milton.

What transpired for the Redmen — missing their two biggest cats in Jenny Goy (vacation) and Heather Trotter (work commitment) — was a quick exit from the Halton high school playoffs after the 6-15, 7-15 loss.

But in all fairness, the visitors in attendance didn't seem to be all there, coupling uncharacteristic futile serves with inconsistent sets in what was mostly an invisible Redmen attack.

It was simply a day of missed opportunities by the locals. Up 4-0 in Game 1, the Redmen watched as the Spartans scored seven unanswered points. The Redmen then proceeded to flub two serves and two more later with the Spartans holding a 12-5 advantage.

The Redmen's anemic serving continued through Game 2, but it was magnified by a communication breakdown which resulted in mixed up defensive assignments, balls falling between players and soft tips landing in a vacated middle court.

"We just didn't pass serve," said disappointed Redmen coach Bob McKay, who exhausted his bench with substitutions in a failed attempt to discover an effective unit. "I huddled with the girls before the game knowing Jenny and Heather wouldn't be with us. I told them to reduce errors on our side of the net.

"But then I watch as six of (Drury's) first seven points in Game 1 were unforced errors.

"With Goy and Trotter," McKay went on, "we can do more offensively. The last time we played them, they couldn't stop Goy. When we serve, they usually are there to block for the point. Today we had maybe two instances when that happened."

McKay made it clear the season wasn't lost with the playoff defeat. With seven rookies and four returning Seniors, McKay was pleased with a fifth-place (of 11 teams) regular season.



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