

SPORTS

Visit insidehalton.com for more coverage

OLYMPICS

Olympics a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity for Goloubef

HERB GARBUIT

hgarbutt@burlingtonpost.com

Peter and Laura Goloubef's son is 28 years old. He's married and he and his wife are expecting their first child in April. It's been almost a decade since he moved out of their Oakville home.

And yet they haven't got around to repainting his room. They've thought about it, but each time they do they see the writing on the wall.

"It's kind of hidden away in a corner," Peter says, "I guess he didn't want us to get mad that he wrote on the wall."

But there they are, the words Cody Goloubef scrawled on his bedroom wall as a kid: Make it to the NHL!

And he did.

For the past six seasons, the six-foot-one defenceman, who played for the Milton IceHawks in 2005-06, split his time between the NHL and the American Hockey League, playing 129 games with the Columbus Blue Jackets and the Colorado Avalanche. He wants to play more.

That's what made his decision this summer even tougher. Goloubef was offered a two-way (NHL/

AHL) contract with the Calgary Flames' affiliate, the Stockton Heat. But with the NHL announcing it would not be sending players to the Olympics, Goloubef saw the chance to do something he never thought possible.

With any player on a two-way contract ineligible for the Olympics, Goloubef signed a one-way AHL deal with Stockton, meaning he could not to be called up to the NHL. He was putting his childhood dream on hold for a chance at something that offered no guarantees.

Goloubef was informed by Hockey Canada that he was on the long list of players being considered for Canada's Olympic team in September. It had already started the process of evaluating players a month earlier and would continue to do so over the course of five tournaments.

The second-round pick of Columbus in the 2008 NHL draft wouldn't get his chance to pull on the Canadian jersey until last month's Spengler Cup. But he'd already made an impression with his play in Stockton.

In addition to solid defensive play, he was also en-

joying a career offensive season. His 14 points in 29 games put him on pace for a career best since turning pro, and with six goals, he was just one shy of his career high.

At the Spengler Cup, Goloubef scored the winning goal in a 5-2 semifinal win and Canada went on to blank the Swiss national team 3-0 in the championship game. Goloubef and his Canadian teammates received their gold medals under the wooden roof of Vaillant Arena, which brought back memories of the old Oakville Arena where he played as a kid.

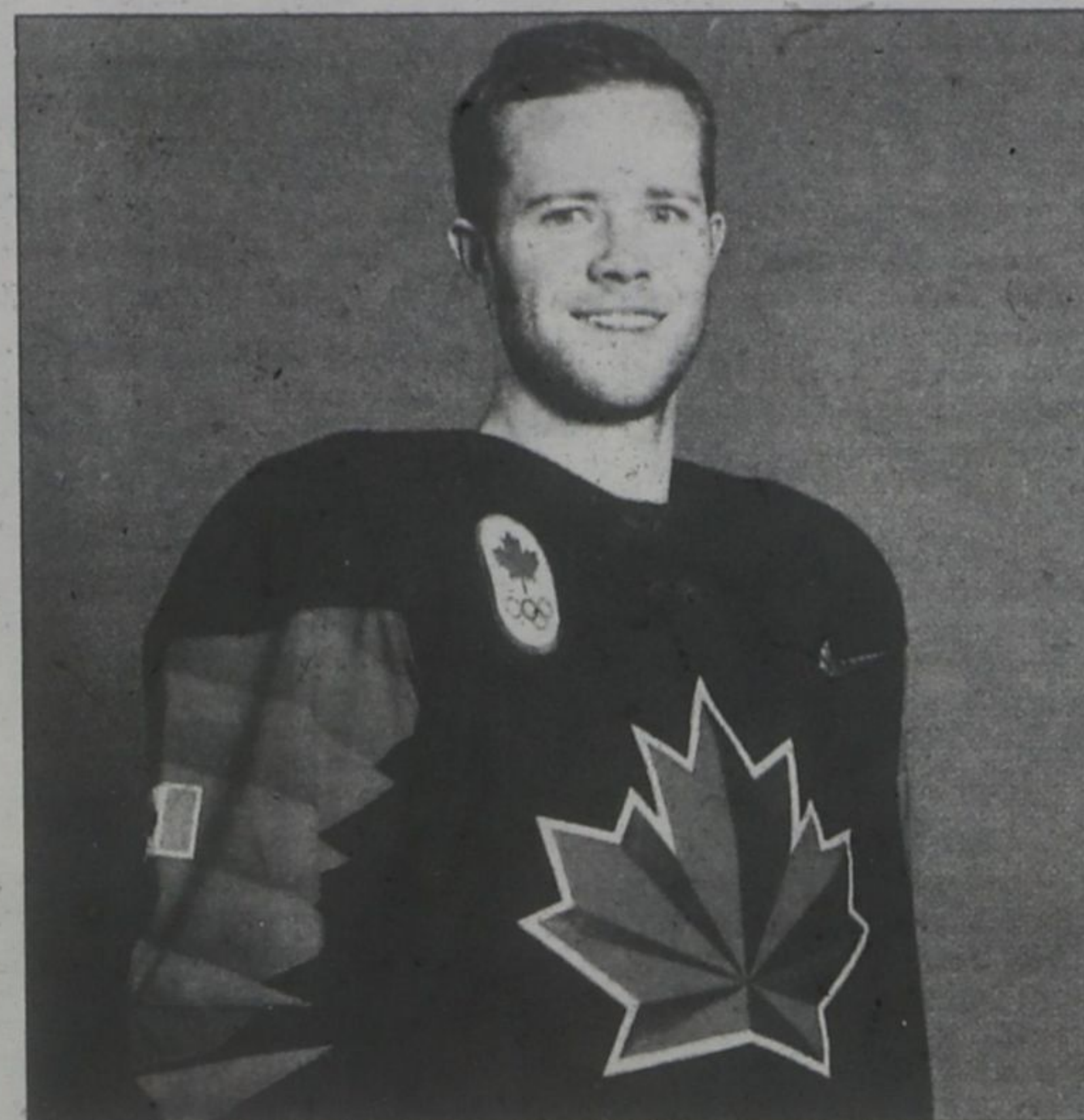
"If the season had ended there, I would have thought that was unbelievable," Goloubef said. "Christmas time in the mountains. The event was incredible and the hockey was great."

But it was about to get better.

Goloubef grew up listening to his great uncle Dick Duff telling stories of the NHL and the Original Six era. That made the NHL seem a little more attainable.

The Olympics?

As long as Goloubef can remember, they've featured NHL players (he was two the last time a team of



Hockey Canada photo

Former Milton IceHawks player Cody Goloubef signed a one-way American Hockey League contract in the summer to remain eligible for the Olympics. It paid off when he was named to the Canadian men's Olympic hockey team.

non-NHL players competed).

Goloubef has played on the world stage before, helping Canada win world junior gold in 2009. But even from that dominant team that went undefeated in the tournament, only three players have suited up for Canada in the Olympics.

"Maybe as a young kid you dream of it, but as you get older, you realize it's the elite of the elite. Only a few guys get to do that. It's more of a fantasy to believe you'll play in the Olympics."

Nine days after the Spengler Cup, Goloubef got a call, "one I'll remember for a long time." It was gen-

eral manager Sean Burke and the rest of the Canadian management team telling him he would be playing for Canada in Pyeongchang, South Korea.

"It's bigger than just one team. Just being able to be a part of Hockey Canada and Team Canada as a whole and rooting on multiple sports, it's going to be a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," he said.

Though there won't be any Crosbys or McDavid's in Canada's lineup, Goloubef said hockey fans will be pleasantly surprised by the skill level on the Canadian team, not to mention their hunger to win.

It's quite possible Canada's team in 2022 will again be stocked with the top NHL players. Goloubef and his teammates know this might be their only shot.

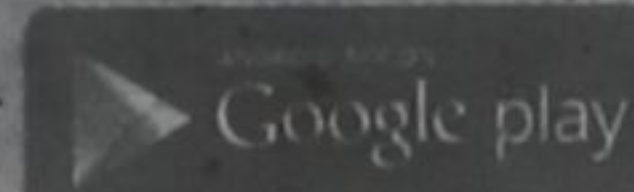
"We have a chance for a gold medal," he said.

That is all the incentive they need to bring their best on the world stage. It's enough to put his dreams on hold for a year.

"For me, it was the right decision. The opportunity I'm getting now is so rare," Goloubef said. "It's not just hockey. The Olympics are something a select few get to experience. It was a bit of a gamble, but it paid off."

save.ca
Your Smart Shopping App

- View flyers from your local retailers
- Create custom shopping lists
- Earn cash back on groceries
- Get the best price, always!



Getting a severance package? Know your options.



Brett J Strano, CFP®, FMA, CIWM
Financial Advisor

330 Bronte Street South
Suite 217
Milton, ON L9T 7X1
905-864-9969



Carlee MacQueen
Financial Advisor

310 Main Street East
Suite 103
Milton, ON L9T 1P4
905-864-6959

www.edwardjones.com
Member - Canadian Investor Protection Fund

Edward Jones
MAKING SENSE OF INVESTING