

OHL grad takes his game to the professional ranks

Reid signs two-way contract with AHL Penguins

By Steve LeBlanc
CANADIAN CHAMPION STAFF

Elgin Reid has gotten a taste of pro hockey, and is now ready for a full-course serving.

That officially began yesterday in Pennsylvania, where the 21-year-old defenceman started training camp with the American Hockey League's (AHL) Wilkes-Barre/Scranton Penguins.

Milton's longest-serving OHLer in recent memory — having highlighted a five-year, 300-plus game tenure with a trip to the 2005 Memorial Cup in London — recently signed a two-way deal with Wilkes-Barre/Scranton and its East Coast Hockey League (ECHL) affiliate, the Wheeling Nailers.

Needless to say, he's excited about what lies ahead.

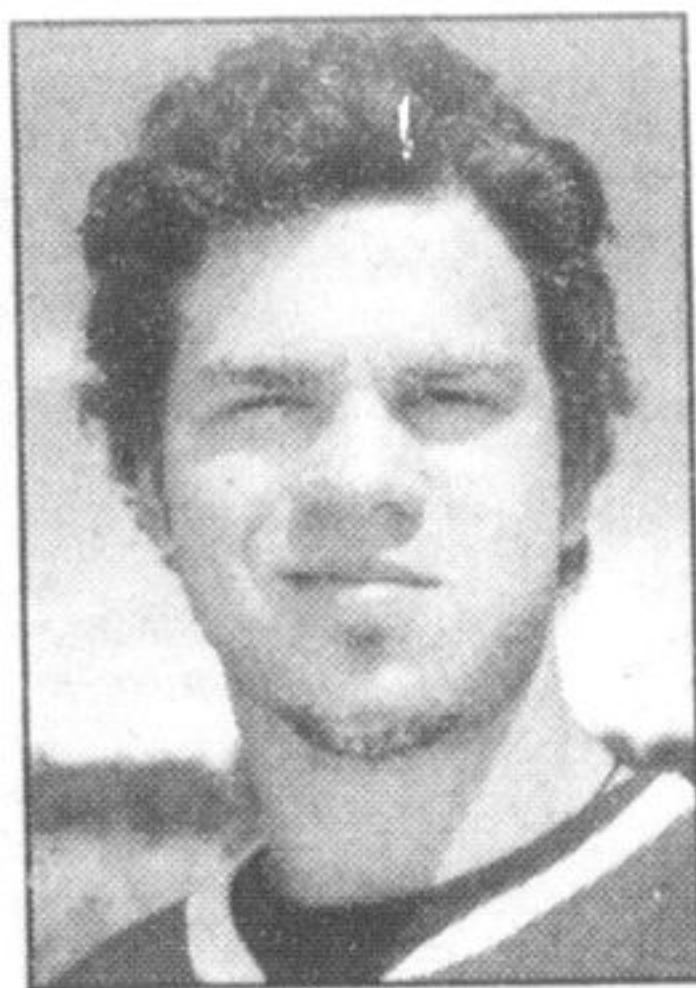
"It's a great organization and I'm really

looking forward to the season," said the six-foot, 180-pounder. "I had some other offers, but it came down to who seemed most interested. Hey, you go where you're most wanted."

Reid's jump to the pros comes a year later than initially expected. Around this time last summer he was all set to join Texas' Rio Grand Valley in the Central Hockey League when the Windsor Spitfires came looking for an average defenceman.

The opportunity to anchor a work-in-progress blueline and showcase 'all' of his on-ice assets — after being used primarily as an enforcer during a three-and-a-half-year run with the Ottawa 67s — was just too attractive to pass up.

And the rugged defenceman certainly justified the three draft picks dealt away to acquire him, recording eight goals and 34



Elgin Reid

assists over 54 games last season.

That strong finish in the 'O' no doubt put him on the radar of a lot more scouts — and subsequently opened the door to the opportunity he's about to pursue.

"Oh for sure it raised my profile. Going back and playing with Windsor was the best decision I could have made," said Reid. "Beyond the tragedy with Mickey (Renaud), it was such a great year. I really got to prove I can be a mobile, puck-moving defenceman."

Building on his productive conclusion to Major-Junior play, the local blueliner had a brief but impressive run with the ECHL's Elmira Jackals this past spring.

Seeing plenty of ice time — with call-ups to the AHL Milwaukee Admirals thinning

out Elmira's defence — Reid recorded three goals and two assists in the last five regular season games and added a pair of assists in a four-game first-round loss (best-of-five) to the Reading Royals

Said Reid, "That was a great experience. By the end I was on the first-line powerplay and it really gave me a chance to see what the league's all about."

With the Penguins' organization loaded with young talent and Wilkes-Barre/Scranton fresh off a run to the Calder Cup finals, the OHL grad knows he'll be hard-pressed to see much time in the AHL this season.

He need look no further than fellow Milton blueliner Jon Gleed to see just how much bouncing around between leagues can go with the early stages of one's pro career.

"Yeah it'll be tough. I've just got to work hard and fit into a role."

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