

May eager to layer up for Winter Classic

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When Brad May was approached to see if he would like to be on the Toronto Maple Leafs' roster that will play the Detroit Red Wings as part of the National Hockey League's Winter Classic Alumni Showdown on the Comerica Park outdoor ice surface in Detroit, he didn't have to be coerced.

In fact, the 42-year-old former NHL veteran who grew up and played a portion of his minor hockey in Markham and Stouffville, was more than eager to be a part of the festivities leading up to the anticipated big rivalry game between the Maple Leafs and Red Wings at Michigan Stadium in Ann Arbor Jan. 1.

Especially since he's familiar with what transpires in these outdoor events, having taken to the Frontier Field frozen surface in Rochester, N.Y. recently as a member of the Buffalo Sabres' alumni when they played the Rochester Americans' alumni in a friendly.

Two years ago, May graced the old Ivor Wynne Stadium makeshift



Former NHL player and Stouffville native Brad May part of alumni team at Jan. 1 outdoor game.

rink in Hamilton as a member of the Toronto Maple Leafs alumni when they played the Montreal Canadiens' alumni as a lead up to an American Hockey League game between the Toronto Marlies and Hamilton Bulldogs.

Playing in these games is a great

way to renew acquaintances with players May has played alongside with and against — and meet players from a different era.

"Those games are a ton of fun," the former first round draft pick of the Buffalo Sabres in the 1990 NHL entry draft, said. "You go out there,

have fun and then have a few drinks afterwards."

Along with being a participant in the festivities, May is looking forward to watching the regularly scheduled Jan. 1 tilt that is expected to house the largest NHL crowd of over 100,000 onlookers at Michigan Stadium.

To that, May was quick to credit the NHL's marketing department.

"It'll be amazing. It's a celebration of hockey," he said in anticipation of the big event. "For the NHL this is one of the greatest things they've done."

May was originally to have played last year before the NHL lockout forced a postponement of those New Year's Day festivities.

But with the game rescheduled to the following year once the NHL lockout concluded and no changes were made to last year's original alumni format, May remained a part of the festivities when the lineups were officially released recently.

Having toiled with the Maple Leafs for latter part of the 2008-09 season and the Red Wings in his final NHL campaign the following

year, May could also have been a part of either roster.

But citing his work as a hockey analyst for Sportsnet in Toronto and with the network owned by Rogers, who in turn own a part of the Maple Leafs, May felt his allegiance would best be served playing for the blue and white.

"It'll be a fun couple of days and to get back and see the guys, some of whom I've played with and against," he said.

May is quite familiar with what the players will have to don to battle the elements.

Along with wearing their regular equipment, May said the players will likely utilize long underwear and a turtleneck.

Should Mother Nature throw an unexpected curve by having the thermometer plummet well below the freezing mark, which May doesn't anticipate with the game played in Detroit, he said they could also elect to wear balaclavas.

"It will depend on how cold it gets," he said. "Hopefully it will be around the freezing mark. You hope it doesn't get too cold."

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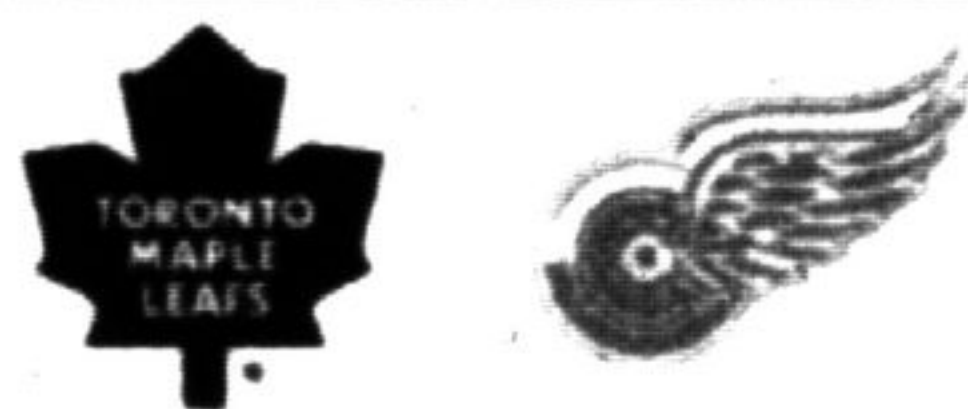
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