

Hokanson happy with chemistry

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Guard Nolan Hanson is also back in the UNBC lineup for his fourth year, two seasons after he blew out his ACL. The six-foot-one Hanson, a former College Heights Cougar, attempted a comeback last year but his knee didn't stand up to the test. Kyler Eckess, a second-year guard from Prince Rupert, is also on the UNBC roster.

Hokanson, a third-year player from North Vancouver, likes what he's seen so far from his T-wolves teammates.

"I think we have a lot of team chemistry, even though it's so early in the season," said Hokanson. "Everyone moves the ball unselfishly, and it doesn't matter who scores, as long as we are winning games. We had a good, hard preseason, and I think we are ready to get it started."

"If we can get a packed, loud crowd in (the NSC), I think it'll be a huge advantage for us. It can rattle the other team and really give us more energy. We are ready. We are going to come in firing on all cylinders."

Forward Austin Chandler, who played injured most of last season, had ankle surgery in the summer and although he's still listed on the UNBC website he won't be back for his fifth year this season. That will free up more court time for Vag-gelis Loukas, who set the pace as the T-wolves top rebounder last season, averaging 7.1 per game.

"We have a lot more depth to us and I think we'll be improved from last year – it's a very different-looking squad," said Jordan. "The preseason results were kind of mixed bag for us. We only played a couple U Sports teams and a bunch of (B.C.) college teams. We definitely don't get an easy start with Calgary, they're going to be one of the top teams in the conference this year and this is a good test to see where we are."

Game time for the men tonight is 8. Saturday's rematch starts at 7 p.m.

—see UNBC women's preview, page 11

Perepeluk staying put in P.G.

Ted CLARKE Citizen staff
tclarke@pgcitizen.ca

In the past six months, Reid Perepeluk has been the property of three hockey teams.

The unusual aspect of that scenario is he hasn't had to change his address.

The 17-year-old right winger found out this week he'll be skating in the B.C. Hockey League for the Prince George Spruce Kings, after starting the season in the Western Hockey League with the Prince George Cougars. In May, he played midget hockey in the Telus Cup national tournament for the Cariboo Cougars, who make their home in Prince George.

Now that he's a Spruce King, Perepeluk realizes how fortunate he is that he gets to play junior hockey in front of his friends and family on a team where he'll get more icetime without having to uproot his belongings to a billet home or change schools.

"I live at home with my mom and my sister and it's just exciting now to be able to play and not be scratched five games in a row," said Perepeluk. "I'm coming to a great Spruce Kings team that's 7-5 and we're looking at taking a long stretch in the playoffs and having a good season."

Perepeluk played the past two seasons in the B.C. Hockey Major Midget League for the midget Cats, helping them win the league championship last spring. In that time he proved himself a capable point producer with 15 goals and 37 assists for 52 points in 63 games over two seasons, along with 106 penalty minutes.

The Cougars selected him in the sixth round of the 2015 WHL bantam draft. In four games for them this season he was held without a point, picking up nine penalty minutes.

Perepeluk knows Spruce Kings winger Corey Cunningham from midget hockey and is well familiar with Kings trainer Rick Brown, who used to perform his first-aid wizardry with the Cariboo Cougars.

Perepeluk, who played his minor hockey in Yorkton, Sask., wants to eventually return to the WHL and likes the fact the Cougars are close by and will be able to monitor his progress.

"The main goal is to play in the WHL with the Cougars and maybe it's a bit of a step back coming to these guys but it's probably the best for my development," he said. "I'm just excited to jump on the ice Friday night in Chilliwack."

Kings head coach Adam Maglio



CITIZEN FILE PHOTO

Reid Perepeluk, the newest member of the Prince George Spruce Kings, suited up for the Cariboo Cougars during the 2017 Telus Cup national midget championship tournament. Here, he battles with Harrison Blaisdell of the Regina Pat Canadians.

Perepeluk played the past two seasons in the B.C. Hockey Major Midget League for the midget Cats, helping them win the league championship last spring.

says the addition of Perepeluk gives them an element of toughness and a net-front presence as a power forward.

"Reid fills a big hole, we've needed some physicality up front," said Maglio. "I really value the relationship with (the Cougars); we're able to reap some of the benefits of having some of their prospects in our system."

The Kings have also added 19-year-old defenceman Jay Keranen, a native of Brighton, Mich., who played in the North American Hockey League for the Topeka Roadrunners. The five-foot-11, 174-pound Keranen had two goals and eight assists in 49 games last year with Topeka and is expected to provide more offence from the blueline.

"He skates well and moves the puck well and he's pretty intelligent," said Maglio. "He's someone we can use on the power play."

The Kings (7-5-2-3, second in Mainland Division) begin another three-game trip tonight in Chilliwack, then visit Langley Saturday night and Surrey on Sunday afternoon.

The Kings had three tough games last weekend, posting 3-3 ties in Powell River and Alberni Valley before losing 5-2 in Nanaimo. Goalie Evan DeBrouwer played a big role in salvaging the two tie games.

Maglio said his team outshot and outplayed the Clippers in Nanaimo but wasn't sharp mentally, which led to costly turnovers.

"They capitalized on their chances and we didn't," said Maglio.

"Our team is in very good shape and I thought we dictated a lot of the play. Evan had probably our best goaltending performance of the year on Friday in Powell River, and when he came in (to replace Brad Cooper) against Alberni it changed the momentum a bit and

it gave the guys a bit of confidence.

"I didn't want to use him in three of the three but he ended up playing in Alberni. Sunday against his old team he was good, it was the rest of us in front of him that needed to do a better job with eliminating the turnovers and chances we gave. We are one of the youngest teams in the league and there's going to be ups and downs, but we have a good group."

Kings forward Jarod Hovde is looking forward to the end of what will be an eight-game, three-week stretch of road games leading up to their return to Rolling Mix Concrete Arena for games Nov. 3-4 against Langley.

"Our next few games we really have to buckle down as a team and get those extra points we need on the road," said Hovde. "We've been struggling on the road lately and our goal this weekend is to come out with six points. It will be a really tough weekend."

"We've juggled our lineup a bit but nothing much has really changed. We want to play very fast through the neutral zone and the o-zone and be very structured as well."

Doan takes NHL job

NEW YORK (CP) — Former Arizona Coyotes captain Shane Doan has joined the NHL's hockey operations department, the league announced Friday.

Doan will work with senior executive vice-president of hockey operations Colin Campbell. The league said in a statement that Doan will "work closely with hockey executives on the club level and be involved with the competition committee."

"We are thrilled to welcome Shane, whose vast experience and in-depth knowledge of the game will be invaluable to the league office," Campbell said. "We look forward to calling upon his two decades of playing experience – particularly his incomparable understanding of the game as it is being played today."

Doan, who played in the NHL from 1995-96 through 2016-17, announced his retirement as an active player on Aug. 30. His 1,540 regular-season games played are tied with John Bucyk for 14th place on the League's all-time list.

Selected seventh overall in the 1995 NHL draft, Doan spent his entire NHL career with the Winnipeg Jets/Arizona Coyotes franchise.

Cats left with Mikhalchuk as lone European

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"I think when he came here, the style of the Eastern Conference was different from the Western Conference," said Harkins. "It was closer-checking, faster, bigger guys, harder to play on our side and I think he tried to adjust as best he could. It was important what he contributed last year to help us with a banner."

"He started off playing well at training camp and I don't know what translated to playing the way he was playing the last week or two but obviously it was something we couldn't control over here. He's a big-bodied guy with skill, who can skate, and we're going to miss that. But now it's an opportunity for another player to step up."

Popugaev's departure leaves the Cougars with just one import, 18-year-old winger Vladislav Mikhalchuk, a native of Belarus. WHL teams are allowed just two imports and Harkins said the team will look around to see which players are available to potentially take Popugaev's place. One of them could be Radovan Bondra.



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— Cougars GM Todd Harkins

"There are players who played in the league last year who could come back if they're not under a pro contract in Europe or on waivers if somebody drops somebody, or through a trade," said Harkins.

"I wouldn't even rule out Bondra coming back."

Bondra, a 20-year-old Chicago Blackhawks draft pick in 2015 who put up 32 goals and 63 points last year in a season split between the Cougars and Vancouver Giants, signed a pro contract with the Hawks this summer and was at first assigned to their AHL affiliate in Rockford. He's now in the ECHL and has played two games for the Indy Fuel.

"We haven't talked to Chicago but I'm sure after all this maybe

they'll contact us," said Harkins.

"But we're not going to go and try to grab a player if he's a pro hockey player – that's not our style. But we will look at the option if Chicago decides they want to send him to us."

If that happens and the Cougars bring Bondra back, he would also take up a 20-year-old slot, which would mean the Cougars would have to trade one of their three overagers – forwards O'Brien, Aaron Boyd or Jared Bethune – to make room for him.

The Cougars are now on the road, preparing for games against the Vancouver Giants tonight in Langley and a date with the Kelowna Rockets Saturday in Kelowna.

Oilers down Stars

The Canadian Press

EDMONTON — Ryan Nugent-Hopkins scored a pair of goals as the Edmonton Oilers finally found their offensive touch, defeating the Dallas Stars 5-4 on Thursday.

Connor McDavid, Patrick Maroon and Matt Benning also scored for the Oilers (3-5-1), who came into the game with the fewest goals scored in the NHL so far this season, with 15 through their first eight games. Jamie Benn struck twice for the Stars (5-5-0).

Alexander Radulov and Esa Lindell also scored for as Dallas dropped back-to-back games.

Edmonton started the scoring midway through the opening period as Ryan Strome came out of the penalty box and sent McDavid on a partial breakaway, scoring his fifth of the season up high on Stars goalie Ben Bishop.

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