

# THE FREE PRESS SPORTS

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PHONE 564-0005

## The Thursday PLAYBOOK

### ► PG Top Dog is tops nationally

2000 was the year that PG let the dogs out - and then watched them come back with national accolades. Seven dogs belonging to members of PG's Top Dog agility, obedience and flyball association were ranked amongst the top 100 dogs by the Agility Association of Canada.

Piper, a Shetland sheepdog owned by Kim Collins, was the highest-ranked Prince George dog, coming in fourth on the national list. Bryn, a border collie also owned by Kim Collins, was ranked sixth.

Ziggy, Mica and Flare, all border collies owned by Kay Whitehead of Quesnel, were also in the top 100. Mary Zacharatos' collie Skye was ranked 44th and Mackie, a collie owned by Sue MacDonald, was 66th. The Top Dog association's next event is their annual indoor winter trial, February 24 and 25 at Fiddler's Grove Equestrian Centre.

### ► Pee Wees win on the road

The Five Seasons Sports Pee Wee Minor Cougars shook the dust off their boots from another road trip over the weekend, returning with a 2-1 record. The pee wee Cats defeated Kamloops 7-4, then handed over a loss the following day 8-2. The same day they faced 100-Mile House, sending them off in a close 4-3 win. The minor pee wees play next this weekend at a tournament in Fort St. John.

### ► Trade winds warm up WHL

Trading action is starting to heat up in the WHL as the league's January 16 trade deadline approaches. Prince George minor hockey product, 16-year-old Paul Brown was traded from the Regina Pats, where he was last year's first-round draft pick, to the Kamloops Blazers as part of a deal that included two other Pats, including former Cougars defenceman Shon Jones-Parry.

Another PG Minor Hockey product, forward Tyler Scofield, had his rights traded to the Portland Winter Hawks from the PA Raiders in exchange for 18-year-old defenceman James DeMone. The 16-year-old is currently playing with the Vernon Vipers of the BCHL.

Rights to PG Major Midget Cougars defenceman Aaron Agnew were dropped by the Seattle Thunderbirds.

## The terrible Two's

The wide-eyed wonder of being a rookie is gone, replaced by the reality of fighting for a spot in a highly competitive hockey league. Mistakes are not as easily forgiven by coaches or fellow players and although you aren't expected to fill as large a role as older vets there is that persistent, nagging subconscious voice saying, "Alright kid, you've had a season to get used to things, now let's see what you can do."

Cougars forwards Dan Baum and Chris Falloon both know that little voice. As players who have made the transition from Cougar rookies to Cougar semi-vets they're experiencing the blessing-and-curse nature of being a second-year player.

On the blessing side the days of carrying equipment and bags around for other players or cleaning the bus after long road-trips are gone. They've paid their freshmen dues. But with acceptance comes responsibility.

"There's more expected. They aren't accepting of big mistakes like they are when you're a 16-year-old," says centre Dan Baum.

"Last year we just tried to come into the league and learn a lot from the older guys like Bouck and Betts and Hunter. This year you come back and try to take what you learned last year and apply what you can and show some of the younger guys what you went through and be a bit more a leader," adds Falloon.

So far the on-ice performance of the two newly-minted vets has followed their team. While the Cats were slumping early in the season, so were Baum and Falloon. But as the Cats began to surge ahead before Christmas, so did their two-year players.

That's good news for Falloon and Baum. As they pass out of the rookie-stage, thoughts of the NHL draft begin to intrude, adding a whole new dimension of pressure.

"It's in the back of your mind obviously, but you try not to think about it. You try to go out and have a good game



Dan Baum is getting more physical his second season in the WHL.

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and if there's a scout out there in the stands..." says Falloon, trailing off then giving a little shrug. "You try not to let it affect you in the game."

The mid-aged players also act as a conduit between the rookies and the veterans on the team. Although they have the experience of a year with the team under their belt, they still have to struggle to balance hockey and high school, like the younger players on the team.

"The guys who are still at school are a

little closer because we're there in the same situation as they are," says Falloon, adding that in his first season, younger players like defenceman Dan Hamhuis helped him adjust to his new life in the WHL. "Your first year at school you feel a bit like you're lost and all alone. So we try to take some of the younger guys under our wing and show them how it goes around the school and the city and get them into the practice and playing routine."



## Spruce Kings host the Cowichan Valley Capitals 7:30 Friday Night at the Prince George Coliseum

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