



Press Round-Up - JUN.02.08

Vancouver Canucks

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CANWEST NEWS SERVICE

Thousands bid adieu to Bourdon

By Bal Brach

Vancouver Canucks defenceman Luc Bourdon, killed in a motorcycle accident last week, was remembered Monday as a shy, but courageous and well-liked man who inspired friends, teammates and spectators.

Thousands of friends, family, fans and peers filled a hockey rink in Shippagan, N.B., to pay their final respects the budding NHL star, who died in his hometown last Thursday when his motorcycle collided with an oncoming transport truck.

In Vancouver, more than \$12,000 had been donated to Canucks Place as of Monday morning, thanks in part to an online campaign encouraging fans to donate \$28 in honour of Bourdon, who wore No. 28.

And Candice McFarlane and Tommy Deranja -- who won Bourdon's game-worn jersey after the Canucks' final game of the season on "sweater off my back" night -- gave the jersey back to the Canucks, so they could give it to Bourdon's mother. She draped the jersey over the casket at the service.

Bourdon's girlfriend, Charlene Ward, wept as she read a poem written for her boyfriend. "Each time I have to say goodbye and see you go, I want to close my eyes and say it ain't so. But I know we're going to see each other again because it's only the beginning of your journey that will never end," she said.

"When you're not there I'm not going to hide it. I miss you so much you just can't imagine. I think of you day and night."

Ward sobbed as she continued, "Every moment we spend together I want them to last forever. I want to share my life with you ... you're the one and losing you is my biggest fear."

In another eulogy, Bourdon, 21, was described as a courageous, tenacious, yet simple man.

"You went down your dream road and you never stopped dreaming," added another speaker in French. "For that and more we thank you."

"To the Vancouver Canucks, thank you for believing in Luc. When you selected him, part of the town of Shippagan became fans [of the Vancouver Canucks]."

The tributes continued as Bourdon was described as a diamond. "All together we made the diamond shine and glow."

Bourdon's casket was draped with his jersey and white roses.

Vancouver Canucks vice-president and assistant general manager Steve Tambellini described a shy rookie who, through bonding activities with the team, "stole the show."

Bourdon was described as a person who cared about his adopted community of Vancouver, and made an effort to fit in.

"People chanted his name when he touched the puck," said Tambellini. "We've never had that."

Tambellini ended by saying: "For Luc, it gives us great comfort to know that forever he will be a Vancouver Canuck."

Vancouver Canucks captain Markus Naslund said in a statement read by Tambellini that Bourdon will be "forever missed in the locker-room at GM place."

Naslund said that while Bourdon had made many strides as a player with the NHL team, he grew more as a person.

Representatives from Team Canada and the NHL, along with Vancouver Canucks players, staff, coaches and management, attended the funeral.

In lieu of flowers, the Bourdon family asks that donations be made in Bourdon's name to IWK Health Centre Foundation or the Association du Hockey Mineur de la Peninsule Acadienne-Division est (AHMPA). More

THE PROVINCE

2,000 turn out to mourn Luc Bourdon

By Jason Botchford

He couldn't be gone.

Luc Bourdon's soft, loving voice and his imperfect guitar strumming echoed through his hometown hockey rink yesterday.

He was singing a lovesick song that he wrote for his girlfriend, his high-school sweetheart Charlene Ward, the one he was going to marry, you just wait.

He couldn't be gone, not Bourdon, the Acadian star who carried with him the hearts, minds and dreams of this remote fishing village.

But there, before more than 2,000 of his family, friends, teammates, coaches and admirers, was the cold, hard, tragic truth -- his coffin, draped with the last Canucks jersey he wore, and a stuffed toy monkey.

Ward, who watched in horror last Thursday as Bourdon, 21, died in a motorcycle accident just in front of her car, had gently put the monkey on his coffin in a moment of tenderness that ripped out the insides of anyone who saw it.

It was the monkey, the one which is holding a heart, which she gave Bourdon, to keep him warm and her memory close when he was so many kilometres away, living his dream, her dream, Shippagan's dream -- the NHL dream.

It was the monkey he was singing about in that sweetly touching song to her that was played at his funeral.

"Baby, when I go to sleep at night, I hold that little monkey, I hold him tight," Bourdon crooned. "There's only one thing that I could never do. It's to live my life without you."

But Ward is without Bourdon now. We all are.

She swallowed her tears long enough to read a poem Bourdon had written her, one he carried with him wherever he went.

In front of her, Bourdon's mom, Suzanne Boucher, cupped her head with her hands in deep sorrow. Around her, tears silently streamed from many of the mourners who came to this arena-turned-chapel in Shippagan for Bourdon's funeral.

They were all surrounded by memories of Bourdon. There were photos, his guitar, and the jersey that Bourdon gave to a fan after the Canucks' last game, the jersey-off-your-back night. The fan was determined to get it to Bourdon's family. He gave it to the team and the Canucks brass brought it with them to Shippagan.

People in the hockey community travelled from across the country to be at the funeral. Along with people from the NHL Players Association, Hockey Canada, Bourdon's teammates from Moncton, Val-d'Or, and the Manitoba Moose came to Shippagan. So did the Moose management team and many Canucks, including head coach Alain Vigneault, general manager Mike Gillis, Ryan Kesler, Alex Burrows, Taylor Pyatt, Jeff Cowan, Kevin Bieksa and Curtis Sanford.

Markus Naslund sent a note, which was read by Steve Tambellini, the Canucks' assistant general manager.

Tambellini gave a moving eulogy.

"Speaking to the people on the plane, people in hotels, people in restaurants, we found out they all knew Luc," Tambellini said.

"Things I remember about Luc: Draft day, and how excited our scouts were as we had a chance to take Luc Bourdon. Watching Luc walk up to the stage and the look he had when he put on that jersey.

"He was so hungry not to be [just] a good player but a great player . . . and the first time he stepped on the ice at GM Place, in Vancouver, people chanted his name when he touched the puck. We'd never had that. How can you not love a player who plays with the passion he did?" he said.

"For Luc, it gives us great comfort to know that forever he will be a Vancouver Canuck." More

THE PROVINCE

No-touch icing left untouched by NHL execs

By Tony Gallagher

Vancouver Canucks general manager Mike Gillis missed his first GMs meeting here, having attended the funeral for Luc Bourdon instead, so he will have to wait until the Board of Governors meeting in June to make his NHL debut at one of these turnouts.

Chief among the topics was the rule on no-touch icing, though it was not changed.

Change did occur in another area -- a reduction in the American Hockey League schedule to get away from three games in three nights and the occasions on which teams play four in five nights.

"The feeling was that three games in three nights created a situation when the third game was a write-off and a possible cause of greater injury risk," said Laurence Gilman, the Canucks director of hockey administration, who attended for Vancouver.

AHL owners will see a corresponding reduction in affiliation fees to compensate them for lost ticket revenue.

On no-touch icing, the GMs don't want the rule changed, but don't want contact between players racing to be the first to reach the puck. The recommendation going forward to the competition committee is that officials watch for initiated contact in such situations and assess a penalty, although whether that will be a minor penalty or some lesser setback remains to be seen.

It is expected that all players on the competition committee will be in lockstep in their desire to get rid of the rule as it stands and have play whistled as soon as the puck crosses the goal line.

There have been experiments in the CHL and the USHL on various ways to change the rule on icing, but the NHL hasn't been wildly accepting of any of these efforts.

Meanwhile, Anaheim GM Brian Burke explained that his wife Jennifer's departure from the CBC was a result of the network asking her to spend four days in Vancouver as opposed to three.

"It was tough enough trying to do three days a week, with the kids, but four was a non-starter, so she resigned," said Burke.

The latest rumour about Burke is that he will finish in Anaheim at the end of the upcoming season, then become president and/or GM in Las Vegas under owner Jerry Bruckheimer and spend the 2009-10 season getting ready to help either the expansion team or a team moving to Vegas get started.

But a Ron Wilson hiring as coach in Toronto is also completely consistent with Burke appearing in Toronto in the near future. More