

Shelley has high hopes for Tigers

BY EUGENIA BAYADA

"I think Dal is a good turn in my hockey career."

So says Jody Shelley, captain of the Halifax Mooseheads last season, local sports hero and Darrell Young's most hyped new recruit to the hockey Tigers. However, Shelley is not new to Dalhousie. The 21-year old from Yarmouth has been attending Dal part-time throughout his time with the Mooseheads and is now entering his fourth year. He is currently in the process of switching from a BA to a BComm.

Tigers head coach Young was instrumental in helping him settle in Halifax when he first moved here.

"I've been with Dal since I moved to Halifax to train for the first summer of training camp when the Mooseheads first started," explains Shelley, "and I came to Dal and asked Darrell what I should do and you know, he said 'there's ice-time here if you want it, and there's a guy here that you can live with' and that was actually Brian King who was playing on the team back then. [Darrell] kind of just took care of me and I thought that this was the place to go. It's a good place for education and it's a great bunch of guys."

However, Tiger fans will have to wait a short while before Shelley makes his game debut with the team. He is recovering from surgery to repair ligament damage in his knee yet is quite optimistic about his hockey future and seems quite impatient to get back in the game.

"I just started skating last week and this is a big step towards recovery," he says. "It's been fourteen weeks since surgery and I probably hadn't skated for about a month before that so it's been a while since I've been on the ice..."

"The surgery's been successful and everything's been going well but it's going to take time. I've seen other players with it and they've come back one hundred per cent to the game, so I hope that in a few months I'll be back to top notch, but it's going to take a while for sure."

Shelley agrees that his time with the Tigers is almost like extended physio. His pro options have been put on hold for a while yet he doesn't "look at it as a step down. I look at it as kind of a layover period for a while and [a chance] to get some bonuses out of here."

"He's working with [assistant coach] Kim Houston right now and Dr. Bill Stanish and his physiotherapist," adds Young. "They say six to eight weeks [before Shelley can play] which means basically anywhere from the first of November to the middle of November. If you asked Jody he'd probably tell you tomorrow... He's excited about playing and contributing."

Shelley is one of five former Mooseheads expected to play for Dal this year, prompting John MacNeil of *The Daily News* to comment in late July that the QMJHL team were "forming an alumni club at Dalhousie University". Tiger veterans Jan Melicherik, Dave Carson and Neil Savary are expected to return to the line-up, while Derrick Pyke (most recently played for the Drummondville Voltigeurs) is also expected to join the team. Having

such a number of former teammates move to the same team is bound to prove advantageous for coach Young.

"It's always great when you know who you're playing with and you know the type of players and the type of guys that they are," notes Shelley. "I think that it's going to help [significantly]. You've got four forwards and we all know each other and, if we play together, then you get quicker and things are already established in that sense. It helps but it's not a huge factor."



Shelley has high hopes for the Tigers during the upcoming season.

"I hope to get a CIAU championship, get a big fat ring..." he says, half-joking. He adds, "You know, I'm looking to have fun. It's a great bunch of guys and it's a good program and Dal takes pride in their program. The whole Dal varsity — all the sports — is a great system and I'm glad to be a part of it and I'm proud to be a part of it and I just hope to have a lot of fun and meet a lot of people."

Shelley is certainly ambitious yet, despite the hype, is surprisingly modest about his hockey future. Several teams have expressed

interest in signing him, provided he makes a full recovery, but he's not saying who, despite much publicity and speculation over the summer.

"There's a few teams that are talking but there's always teams that are talking," he says, "and I don't want to say anything 'cause it could jinx them..."

"There are teams that are interested but nothing that's too exciting right now. Hopefully by Christmas or the end of the season there will be something there. The way I look at it now is [that] I have a year to get ready for training camp and, competing at this high level, the CIAU, which is a fast game, it's a different game, I can work on a lot of my skills."

"People are aware of his reputation," notes Young. "You know, he's a better player than people give him credit for."

"Our style of hockey in the AUAA will [make him] technically a much better player, a much improved player [and]," Young jokes, "improve on his skills that he acquired playing junior..."

"Jody is a great player that demands a great deal of respect," he adds. "He's a physical presence and he can control the boards and he's a player that will keep everybody honest, not just the opposing team but our team also... Everything in life is psychological and basically mental and I think that other teams realize that he has a physical presence that is intimidating to begin with."

The one thing that is apparent though is that, although Shelley is optimistic, he is more realistic.

"I look at hockey as a bonus," he says. "I never expected to try out for the Rangers two years ago, I never expected to go to Portland last year

and try out, but it happened and it was a total bonus. I don't sit there and dream about it because I don't think that's the way to pursue it. I think that if you're good enough, you're going to play in the NHL and you're not going to be overlooked. Nobody's overlooked if they're good enough so I'm just going to keep working hard and if it happens, it happens and if not, hopefully I'll get my college degree and go from there."

"Right now he's the most recognizable name in sport in Halifax and the local area," concludes Young. "There's not an athlete in pro or amateur that has the same kind of appeal or charisma that Jody has. You know, with working the hockey schools, the children were excited to see him the first morning but so were the parents... [H]e's a very popular figure and I believe that he can bring people to our arena."

Young may be right and Shelley could be the Tigers' ticket to kick-starting waning 'Tiger pride'. Either way, it should be an interesting season.

Upcoming events

Sept. 20 Dalhousie Varsity SUBWAY™ Day. For every foot-long sub purchased 10 am-10 pm, \$1 will be donated to Dalhousie Varsity Athletics. Participating locations are Spring Garden Road and corner of Quinpool and Robie.

Men's Soccer

Sept. 20 SFX @ Dal 3 pm
Sept. 21 ACA @ Dal 3 pm

Women's Soccer

Sept. 20 SFX @ Dal 1pm
Sept. 21 ACA @ Dal 1pm

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Sept. 27 @ SFX Open

Swimming

Sept. 28 Intra Squad Meet

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Wednesdays (5:30 - 6:30 pm)
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The fine print: The Halifax-JKA is a non-profit, university-based karate club operating at Dalhousie since 1979. Our Chief Instructor is Tony Tam, a Halifax lawyer. Sensei Tam, who holds a fifth-degree black belt, has been teaching Shotokan for 24 years. Our club was recently featured in articles in The Mail Star and Dalhousie alumni magazine. For more information, contact Richard Levangie at 425-2304. E-mail: Gankaku NS@aol.com

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