



# PORTLAND WINTERHAWKS

## Booster Club

### **HAWKEY TALK - SEPTEMBER 2011-12**

#### **Presidents Message**

##### It's Hawkey Season again!!

As I enter my 4th year as President of the Booster Club, I am excited to see some of the changes we have made the past few years, come to fruition and more excited to see what the future holds for us.

The Portland Winterhawks Booster Club would like to extend its condolences to the families of Lokomotiv Yaroslavl of the Kontinental Hockey League for their loss in the tragic plane crash on September 7.

For those who were unaware from our post season newsletter, the Booster Club lost one of its own with the unexpected passing of Carl Savage on May 15, 2011. Carl had been volunteering with hockey as Game Night Hospitality staff dating back to the Buckaroos era. His sudden passing in May, has left a huge void in the Winterhawks entire family.

Carl's sister, Virginia and niece Marlo have graciously donated items from Carl's history in hockey to be used as a fundraiser to benefit junior hockey. When you stop by the Booster Club Table this season, look for "Carl's Table" and pick up a souvenir to benefit junior hockey.

There will be a few new changes to the Booster Club this season, many to do with events that we run. The pizza events have been reduced to 4 this year and will feature a different format. We will still have admission, door prize and 50/50 tickets, but will suspend the pizza raffle. Instead, we will have the players serving fans, an opportunity for autographs and pictures at those times, a small interview segment with each player and our usual photo auction (with much thanks to Bob Bechtold). The events will start earlier (6pm) to allow players an earlier arrival home.

There will be a couple other events with plans still in the works that will fill in for the missing pizza dates.

We will have the 3 Stars presentations at a few games,

#### Letter from the Editor

It is hard to believe we are back ready for the start to another season of WHL Hockey here in the Rose City. While the 2010-11 version of our beloved Hawks fell one series short of making the Memorial Cup Final, they did take us along on a magical ride that included a US Division Title, and a Western Conference Title as well. As the team looks to reload and get ready for another run at the elusive Memorial Cup, we too at Hawkey Talk are retooling. New this season will be contributions from Todd Vrooman, and Samantha Meese, along with rookie interviews, submissions from Coach Johnston and a few alumni, all should make for a fine year. In this issue we have an interview with Nic Petan, a piece by Hawk Alumni Kurtis Mucha and many more interesting articles.

As we head into the new season, we are also looking for you as fans and boosters to give us your questions, suggestions and opinions. Please submit any and all to [hawkeytalk@gmail.com](mailto:hawkeytalk@gmail.com). We would love to have a section devoted to you the reader and hockey fan.

Finally, if you haven't renewed your membership for the coming season, get to it. The Booster Club is looking for new members, new speakers and new activities. If you are a fan of hockey, become a booster member today. Have a great season as a fan of the Portland Winterhawks!

VISIT OUR WEBSITE  
<http://www.pwhbc.com>

## **Pizza Blast Update Shows**

Nothing has been scheduled at this time, but we will have more information on Player Appearances and Update Shows soon!

*Dates and Players Subject to Change, please check at the Booster Club Table for updates!*

### Hawkey Talk Publication Dates!

September 23rd  
October 15th  
November 12th  
December 31st  
January 24th  
February 24th  
Recap Issue in early April...

## **Players of the Month 2011 - 12**

2010-11 Fan Favorite - #28 Brendan Leipsic



**Remember to Vote for the 2011 - 2012 players!**

## **CONTACT INFORMATION**

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Facebook.com: - "Portland Winterhawks Booster Club"

**At All Home Games Staff Are Available at the Booster Club Table**

## **Booster Meetings**

Saturday, October 15th - Memorial Coliseum

Saturday, November 12th - Memorial Coliseum

Saturday, December 3rd - Rose Garden

Monday, January 16th - Rose Garden (Following the game)

Saturday, February 18th - Memorial Coliseum (Nominations Meeting)

Sunday, March 3rd - Memorial Coliseum (Elections Meeting)

## **2010 - 11 Board Members**

President - Stuart Kemp

Vice President - Andy Potter

Corporate Secretary - John Fisher

Treasurer - Debi Koberstein

Corresponding Secretary - Cathy Kemp

Sgt at Arms - Ron Spencer

Past President - Linda Donaldson

Council Member - Gina Acosta

Council Member - Mike Thurston

Council Member - Richard Thomas

Council Member - Elke Thomas

Council Member - Mary Ellen Brown

Council Member - Vacant

## **BUS TRIPS!**

The Booster Club is once again planning trips:

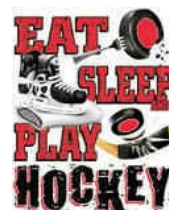
We have three exciting trips for 2011 - 2012

Nov 19th - Kent, WA, vs. Seattle

Jan 21st and 22nd - Spokane, WA, vs. Spokane

Mar 14th - 17th - Victoria, CA, 2 games vs. Victoria

Check at the Booster Club Table for more Detailed Information and Exceptional Pricing.



# V r o o m a n ' s V o i c e

**By Todd Vrooman, Radio Commentator and Broadcast Communications Manager for the Hawks. Catch him with Andy Kemper bringing you the best of Portland Winterhawks hockey on the radio...**

Welcome back to another season of Portland Winterhawks Hockey! What an amazing year the Hawks had last year, with two banners going to the rafters on opening night this year. 50 wins, a U.S. Division Championship, the Western Conference Title, the Hawks have grown leaps and bounds under the guidance of Coach and General Manager Mike Johnston and his staff. Portland can expect to see how the team continues to develop under their leadership for a while longer, as Johnston, his Assistant Coach and General Manager Travis Green, Assistant coach Kyle Gustafson, Strength and Conditioning Coach Rich Campbell, and Equipment Manager Rob Gagne all signed extensions to remain in Portland for the near future.

June saw the Hawks once again proud of a crop of players drafted into the NHL ranks. Sven Bartschi, the WHL's rookie scoring leader last year, was drafted in the first round by the Calgary Flames. Joe Morrow became the newest Pittsburgh Penguin in the first round, his strength and speed making the Penguins chomp at the bit to draft him. Ty Rattie joined Brett Ponich in the St. Louis Blues organization, and Tyler Wotherspoon joined Sven Bartschi in Calgary. Both those players were selected in the second round in 2011. With the draft, the Hawks have had 12 players drafted in the last two years combined, the most of any team in the world.

But now, a new season is upon us, and the Hawks are looking to build on the successes they've had over the last two seasons. The Hawks' roster is up in the air going into the 2011-12 WHL regular season, with 15 players on the current roster spending most of September in NHL Camps. With that, the Hawks will be looking towards youth once again to help the team in the early season, while the drafted and signed players try to crack into the pro ranks.

Leading the youngsters attempting to make a big impact is 2009 Bantam Draft first overall selection Derrick Pouliot. Pouliot, a 17 year old defenseman from Weyburn, Saskatchewan, impressed last year in his first full season in the WHL. Showing poise beyond his years, and slick offensive instincts, Pouliot accumulated 30 points in 2010-11. The last 16 year old defenseman with that offensive output in a Winterhawk jersey was Braydon Coburn in 2001-02, who had 33 points. Pouliot will be looking to take a similar career path as Coburn, who was drafted in the top 10 of the NHL draft, and Pouliot is in his draft year this season.

Brendan Leipsic entertained and enthralled the Winterhawks fans this past season, his intense and physical style despite his small frame bringing the crowd to its feet every game. The Hawks will need Leipsic to build upon his 33 point campaign last season, as the team will be missing out on some significant players from last year's team for at least the start of the season. He'll be helped out by 2010 first round bantam pick Nic Petan, a 16 year old from Delta, BC. Petan wowed during the Neely Cup this year, and started the preseason with Ty Rattie and Sven Bartschi on his wings. If Petan gets those linemates back from the NHL ranks, he has the talent and teammates to potentially be an impact top-6 forward as a 16 year old, a rare feat in Winterhawk history.

# Talking Hockey with Coach Mike Johnston



For those of you that had a chance to join us at the Winterhawks Skating Center for training camp I am sure you were as impressed as we were by the quality of games, the top young talent, and the play of our veteran players. I was initially concerned that the facility would be too small for 90 players, 150+ parents, our scouts and staff. It worked out well and I give a lot of credit to Ben Stadey who manages the facility and Doug Piper who made significant changes since we purchased the arena one year ago.

The Neely Cup was well played and won by Team Deadmarsh. Once again, I really like the format of our veteran players playing and practicing with our young guys right away. Some teams favor a rookie camp but I really believe you see a lot more by putting the whole group together in a competitive atmosphere. For the scouts it was a chance to evaluate all of our drafted, listed and invites against proven WHL players. Sure it was an eye opener for the young guys but when we had exit meetings with the 15 year old players and parents that was their favorite part of the camp – skating alongside NHL drafted players. Our veteran players did a great job throughout camp setting an example and standard for the younger guys without physically intimidating them.

Heading into the Everett Tournament we decided to split up our veteran group and play them in only one game. This provided new players with a chance to gain experience and be evaluated, while playing quality minutes. We would have liked to play 3 games but unfortunately the Windsor Spitfires from the OHL decided in July that they couldn't participate. The Tri-City game showed clearly that both teams will have a lot of skill and from the look of their rookies I believe they might be an early favorite in our division. The Spokane game which we lost 5-1 was very competitive but their experience took over in the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of the game. We only had 10 veterans while they had 17 in their line-up. When looking at preseason scores I always check the number of experienced players on both rosters to accurately evaluate what the score indicates. I do believe Spokane will be good but not as talented as last year. The only veterans who didn't play in Everett were Aronson, Leipsic, Carruth, Ponich, Niederreiter and Johansen.

For us as coaches this is a challenging time of the year. We basically have two weeks to prepare the team in all technical and tactical areas before a record 15 players leave for NHL training camps. We are proud of this number and the opportunity for each player to live their dreams but at the same time we accept the challenge of working with a small group and then playing the waiting game to see who we will get back. Seven of our players are already signed to NHL contracts including; Ponich, Gabriel, Aronson, Johansen, Niederreiter, Morrow and Bartschi.

## President's Message Continued

we will of course, send out an email to remind all when these are. Our meeting dates are now in place and will be posted elsewhere in this issue.

The biggest news for us this year is the variety of fan trips. We have spread them over the season and will allow payments to be spread over time leading up to a cutoff date for each trip to allow for as many people who wish to make the trip. We have Seattle planned for Saturday, November 19, Spokane for a doubleheader Saturday, January 21 and Sunday, January 22 with a one night hotel stay and the big one, Victoria, British Columbia, Canada for 4 days and 3 nights, Wednesday, March 14 to Saturday, March 17. All details are available at home games and we will hope to have the information on the website as soon as possible.

Look for the always popular Game Night Contests at the Booster Club table, new buttons and soon photos of your favorite Hawks players!

Though it will be formally announced at the first meeting of the Booster Club on Saturday, October 15, we will be announcing a rate increase for membership next season. The PWHBC is the only group to now carry hefty insurance for fan trips and other miscellaneous activities for which we were not previously protected and as such, we need to locate the capital necessary to continue our efforts of fund-raising for the Education Fund and other local charities. This season, we will be hoping for higher than usual sales and donations, but realize this will not be able to be counted on year in and year out. Should you have any questions, please ask us at the Booster Club Table or send us an email. I believe we offer the best value of any Booster Club and will continue to look for additional revenue sources.

On behalf of the Portland Winterhawks Booster Club, Thank You for joining us this season and we look forward to seeing you at our meetings and events.

Stuart Kemp  
PWHBC President

## Talking Hockey with Coach Mike Johnston Continued

Of the group heading away we anticipate losing Ponich, Gabriel, Aronson, Johansen and Niederreiter. If we get one of those players back it will be a big boost to the team. Conversely, if we lose any of the other 10 players attending camp it will be a big blow to the team. Time will tell ... and we might be waiting until late Oct like last year with Niederreiter.

Some of the exciting young players you should be aware of include Petan (16), DeLeo (16), Burke (16), Viveiros (16), Leier (17), Smith (17) and Baker (18). Each season we attempt to add 3 sixteen year old players to our team in order to balance the age groups and make sure we have young talent ready to be impact players as 17 year olds. This year we felt we had 4 players in that group ready to play. Petan played games as a 15 year old and won the National Under 16 Championship in Canada last February. DeLeo and Burke spent some time with our team throughout the playoffs and we expect both to have an impact this year. The last 16 year old is Lane Viveiros who many of you might be wondering how a player from Austria was eligible for the draft last year. Lane's dad was a great player for Prince Albert in the 80's and then moved to Austria to coach while maintaining residence in Edmonton. He wanted his son to play in the WHL so last April applied to be eligible for the Bantam Draft and not the import draft. The league ruled that he had maintained residency in western Canada and therefore even though he was a year older he would be eligible for the May draft. We researched his development overseas and had decided before the draft that he was a player we were going to try to acquire in the later rounds. I predict he will turn out to be a great 9<sup>th</sup> round pick.

Enjoy the start to the season!

# The Face-Off Spot

**Next stop, NHL: The Winterhawks make the most of their summer vacations**

**By Samantha Meese**



**Here, there and everywhere:** Welcome to my new column and many thanks to the Booster Club for the chance to contribute regularly with more fun kibbles and bits about the Portland Winterhawks. It is my humblest of opinions that one can never have too many hockey hobbies. In fact, I find that occupying one's free time with hockey at all times is really best. Because it means more time for chatting with players and finding out what they have been up to this summer:

**No rest for the wickedly talented future NHL Stars:** No matter where they went or what they did this summer, all of the players' plans included working out and/or training. Here's what a few of them had to say about what else they did:

**First prize for best vacation plans:** Sven made four separate trips back home in between the combine, draft and development camp. On one of them he went to Turkey with his mom. On that: "amazing." But I'm equally impressed by this: Sven's family is clearly first in his heart. In talking with him about his vacation, I got the sense that his traveling companion was just as, if not more important to him than where he went.

**Honk if you love bad drivers:** Taylor Peters -- when he wasn't blogging about driving in Portland (apparently, all this time he's been putting on the brakes for people who cut him off in traffic by moving into his lane without signaling. Why, I don't know. I haven't braked for those wankers since I was his age), ruminating on joggers in tube socks, dissecting the highly complicated plots of current horror movies, or engaging in a little friendly battle with the neighborhood geese -- was off to Minnesota at the invitation of the Wild. He liked playing alongside the players from the WHL who are usually the opponents, but alas he didn't get much of a vacation after that. Didn't seem to bother him, though, as he hasn't had one in five years. Look for more leadership on the ice and more adventures in driving and blogging this season (<http://taylorinportland.wordpress.com>).

**Second prize for best vacation:** He's not even 18, and already Derrick Pouliot has traveled to Europe -- where Team Canada won the gold medal at the Memorial of Ivan Hlinka Tournament -- and put his considerable hockey talents on display for NHL bigwigs at the NHL's Research and Development Camp. But before he went halfway around the world, he went home. The first part of Derrick's summer was spent with family and friends. Then it was back to all hockey, all the time.

**Two for one special:** Ty Rattie didn't just go the draft to get picked 32<sup>nd</sup> overall by the St. Louis Blues, he also made it his summer vacation. He took along his three best friends and family for the ride and took in the sights in the days prior to the draft. And yes, Brett Ponich sent him a congratulatory text message after he was selected straight away on day two.

**So Winnipeg's cold in winter, so what?:** To hear Brendan Leipsic tell it, Winnipeg is THE vacation destination that everyone should go to. In addition to training and working out, he spent time on the lake in his hometown and hanging out with family and friends. If he could get picked in the 2012 draft by any team, it would of course be the Winnipeg Jets. I say we do our part to make this happen by quietly reciting "Brendan Leipsic: Winnipeg Jets" to ourselves at least once per day.

**As for the upcoming season:** The boys know what they need to do this season, but what about fans? The third period of Game 2 of the WHL Championship Series showed that fans are not mere bystanders to a game: we can affect its outcome. Here are my goals for affecting a better outcome in all games and supporting the team this season. Feel free to join me.

Continued on Page 8

## Catching up with...

Goalie Kurtis Mucha had a busy summer, but did take a minute to start a company and write us a short piece on what he has been up to since he left Portland and ultimately the WHL.

Greetings Winter Hawk fans from the beautiful great white north!

I hope your off season was as good as mine which consisted of tons of fishing, a little bit of travelling and a ton more of fishing!

Congrats to you guys and the Hawks for a very successful season last year. Getting a taste of being that close and losing must be tough, but I'm sure Mike will have the boys ready to go and get back to the finals again.

Between hockey, school and starting up my own business the last 12 months have definitely been a roller coaster ride for me. I'm currently enrolled in Sciences at the University of Alberta located in Edmonton and am having a great time exploring a bunch of different science classes. School was a challenge last year going back to University especially since I graduated high school in 2007. At the same time I really enjoyed the school aspect and getting to pick some really interesting classes that I truly liked. So far this year my classes have been much of the same, albeit a little more difficult but still interesting nonetheless.

Last season with my hockey team, the Golden Bears, was one of my most enjoyable seasons of my career to date. It's no secret that I wasn't much of a winner on the ice in my time in Portland so to make it all the way to the National final in Canada was an unbelievable experience and one I will never forget. Unfortunately I lost to my former teammate Kyle Bailey and a very strong UNB team. My team finished first place in Canada West (the WHL for my league) last season and went undefeated in the playoffs all the way to the National final so I had the luxury of experiencing a lot of success. So far this year we had a great recruiting class and are still awaiting 3 players to return from NHL camps. We are currently 4-0 on the season with 2 more games this upcoming weekend. My team's expectations are nothing short of getting back to the National final again and coming out on top this season. Something that is a very reachable goal and I'm looking forward to the journey once again this season.

During last year on top of managing school and playing hockey I started up my own internet business. For all you Facebooker's out there it's basically Facebook for Athletes, and specifically right now for hockey players, parents, fans, coaches and scouts. Without going into too much detail it's a very unique site, one that I'm very proud to have worked so hard on for so many sleepless nights. I launched the site mid August and since then have received nothing but positive feedback. So far there have been multiple NHL agents and scouts, WHL and other junior leagues scouts and coaches signed up on the site as well. With hockey season just starting up now I'm hoping the site will gain more traction as the year progresses. If you haven't already feel free to check out the site at [www.mvpvault.com](http://www.mvpvault.com) and I would greatly appreciate any feedback, positive or negative!

Well, I hope you enjoyed this quick update from one of your ex-players that truly misses Portland with all my heart and I wish nothing but great things for you fans in this upcoming season. Until next time take care, stay healthy and cheer loud.

PS I hope there is something planned for Carl Savage on opening night because he was one of the nicest people I met in my time in Portland and always brought a smile to my face no matter the score of the game. RIP Carl this guy sure misses you.

Kurtis Mucha



Kurtis in 2007, at Stark Street Pizza after auctioning off a player portrait clock.

### The Face-Off Spot Continued...

1. I will not cover my eyes when Mac comes dangerously far out of the crease.
2. I will restrain from making faces, covering my eyes, pulling on my hair and rolling my eyes at every little thing they do (or not).
3. I will make noise. Every time they score, every time they make a great play, every time Mac makes a great save (in or out of the crease), and every time Sven blocks a shot by jumping face first right in front of it. Every great move deserves great applause.
4. I will limit my use of sentences that start with the phrase "what the heck...?" to three per game, not my usual three or more per period. Unless they put those refs who officiated Game 2 of the 2011 WHL Championship Series in charge. Then all bets are off.
5. On weekends with back to back games, I will only eat the barbecue nachos on one night instead of two or three. A fit and healthy fan is a better fan.
6. There's no getting around it anymore. If you love hockey, you must love golf. So, as part of my commitment to the team, I have avowed to acknowledge that golf is in fact a sport, and not an excuse to wear mismatched clothing in public. Not sure about actually learning to play golf, but a journey of 1000 miles begins with a single step into seriously ugly pants.
7. I will remember that no matter how many mistakes they make, no matter how many bad penalties they take, that the boys want to win. Every game! They want to be better, more professional players, and do what it takes to be ready for the NHL on every level. But they are teenagers and young men after all, and we were all young once and we had to learn to grow up too.

P.S. When I asked the boys about their goals for this season, all of them responded with the same answer: to win the WHL Championship and/or the Memorial Cup. I mean, really, will anything else do after last year? I think not. Game on.

### Vrooman's Voice Continued

Things are obviously still up in the air for the Winterhawks with the uncertainty of the roster and which players will come back from the professional ranks. However, with a preseason ranking of number 3 in the CHL and number 1 in the WHL, the team will have a target on their back every time they play this season. The returning of a strong defensive corps, and the starting goaltender Mac Carruth, means the defensive game looks to be solid and ready for the upcoming season. If players like Seth Swenson and Taylor Peters can take a step forward offensively, and the Hawks can return some offensive leaders from last season such as Ty Rattie and Sven Bartschi, they should have enough scoring as well. The Hawks will raise two banners to the rafters this year, and the expectations are that they should have a chance to raise one or two more. Portland has returned to the world-class junior franchise that we all have hoped it could be, and I for one can't wait to see the progress this team makes in the upcoming season!

## **Booster Member Birthdays!**

### **September 2011**

Mary Basombrid <> Delpha Bennett <> Quillon Bowman <> Eric Brown <> Lisa Burger <> Sam Capsouto <> Haylea Cardwell <> Sarah Carman <> Bradley Clark <> Leonard Drummond <> Emmelynn Ducret-Shiley <> Pat Edwards <> Bret Harper <> Dave Heinrich <> Dave Hoenecke <> Susannah Hotovec <> Amanda Howson <> Anna Kopt <> Jay Lazzaro <> Mike Meza <> Wayne Powell <> Jordan Salyers <> Heath Strude <> Jamie Tow <> Tanya Tow <> Dick Vrooman <> Roberta Vrooman <> Megan Waletich <> Grant Welch

# Rookie Profile - Nic Petan

## Rookie Profile: Nic Petan By Samatha Meese

Like I said, it's really best to fill one's free time with nothing but hockey. That's why I've agreed to do the rookie profiles this season in addition to the new column. I'm trying something a little different from the usual Q&A format that will include your questions for our newbie's. First up is Nic Petan, 16-year-old Center from Delta, BC.

**The math:** He played for the Winterhawks in three games as a 15-year-old last season, earning his first career point with an assist in his WHL debut on Dec. 18 at Seattle. But he spent most of last season with the Greater Vancouver Canadians of the BC Major Midget League, where he posted a team-high 49 points (19 goals, 30 assists) in 35 games. He was Portland's first round pick, 16<sup>th</sup> overall, of the 2010 WHL Bantam Draft.\*

He shoots left, he plays Center and his birthday is March 22, 1995.

\*Source: [Winterhawks.com/roster](http://Winterhawks.com/roster)

**My take:** Nic's very friendly, easy to talk with and very mature for his age. Like all the Winterhawks, he puts his linemates and teammates first, and from what I could see in practice, he loves to score and make pretty plays. He also shares their work ethic: I interviewed him after a Friday practice, where he was one of the last players off the ice. Therefore, I am hereby officially nominating Nic as one of my favorite new players on the roster.

### What do you think of Portland so far?

It's amazing. I'm loving it down here. It's great on and off the ice.

### What has been the biggest change, challenge, or difference in transitioning from the BC League to the WHL?

Everything is bigger, faster and stronger. So I just keep my feet moving all the time and use my speed.

### What do you think of Sunset High School? What are you studying in school?

It's bigger than my old school and academically it's good. I'm one year up in English (12<sup>th</sup> grade).

### Now that you are here in Portland, what are your goals for this season?

I want to help out the team and make my linemates look better, and be a good playmaker.

### What was it like growing up in Delta, BC? Ever run into Taylor Peters back home?

It was good. I never had a backyard pond like a lot of the guys, but I practiced on pavement. My brother played minor hockey with Taylor and I'd seen him play before.

### Do you go back home in the off season? And if so, what types of things do you do for fun in the off season?

Yes. I mostly play other sports, mainly soccer, football and golf.

### What about your family, can you tell us a bit about them?

I have one brother who's 19. He plays in the BCHL. My mom owns her own barbershop and my dad owns his own restaurant called La Notte.



## Rookie Profile Continued

**Now for the goofy stuff... what is your favorite cartoon growing up? (Note: he didn't have a favorite cartoon, so we went for favorite TV show instead)**

Friends.

**What is the most embarrassing song on your iPod?**

Taylor Swift, "Love Story."

**What was the last movie you saw, and how would you rate it?**

Planet of the Apes was good, but it was unrealistic at the end.

**After your playing days are over, would you rather coach or become a ref (or something else)?**

Coach.

**Who was your favorite player growing up, who did you want to be?**

Growing up it was Joe Sakic and today it's Sidney Crosby.

**Do you have your driver's license yet? If so, what do you think of driving in Portland?**

I have what's called an "L" in Canada, so Taylor Leier drives me around.

*Note:* An "L" is similar to a learner's permit, and Nic expects to earn his full license next year.

**You've played on a few different lines so far. Is there one that's your favorite or that you think worked best?**

I've played with Seth Swenson and Joey Baker, and Sven Bartschi and Ty Rattie. They were both good and we had good chemistry on both.

**What's the one thing you would tell kids playing hockey, on what it takes to get to the WHL? What would you tell them it takes to get to the next level?**

Always have a good work ethic and never give up. A lot of practice helps. I've always worked hard, and that's what brought me to this level.

**You asked, he answered:**

I solicited questions from fellow fans on Twitter and here's what Nic had to say in response to your questions:

**What role do you see yourself playing for the club in the next two years?**

I hope to be a playmaker and a goal scorer... someone who can set up my linemates and make them look good.

**Do you see taking on a leadership role as a goal for yourself?**

Definitely...in a few years' time.

So there you go. If his pre-season play, work ethic in practice and professionalism in interviews are any indication, Nic will do all these things and more. Tune in Portland, because this one's a keeper.