STUDNICKA RETURNS TO GENERALS BETTER FOR BEING WITH BRUINS

CENTRE PLAYS WITH BRAD MARCHAND, DAVID PASTRNAK IN CHINA EXHIBITION GAME

BRIAN MCNAIR
bmcnair@
durhamregion.com

OSHAWA - As difficult as it may be to imagine, especially after watching Sunday's 7-5 win for the Oshawa Generals, Jack Studnicka has seen a significant downgrade in his linemates in the last couple of weeks.

This is in no way intended as criticism of Serron Noel and Allan McShane, who along with Studnicka combined for nine points Sunday and should form one of the most dangerous lines in the Ontario Hockey League (OHL) this season.

Rather, it's a testament to what Studnicka was able to experience while nearly making the Boston Bruins out of training camp this season.

Studnicka, a second-round pick of the Bruins in 2017, filled in for an injured Patrice Bergeron for a couple of exhibition games, including one in China, where he centred Brad Marchand and David Pastrnak, two of the best wingers in the world.

"It was awesome, they're fast, you've got to keep up with them," Studnicka said Sunday. "I think of myself as fast, but it really helped me to kind of be fast 24-7 and keep moving because those two are obviously two of the most skilled wingers in the game, but they're also two of the hardest workers."

While disappointed he didn't quite make the grade with the Bruins this fall, Studnicka has returned as captain of the Generals with the right mindset and plenty more experience to share with his teammates.

Taken under his wings by Bergeron at his first train camp last year - both are second-round picks of the team who pride themselves on being responsible, two-way centres - Studnicka hopes to offer the same sort of leadership to his younger teammates in Oshawa.

"He's an older guy, but you wouldn't know it. He interacts with all the young guys due to his leadership, and it's something I want to bring back to our room," he said of Bergeron. "A lot of guys that get caught in my situation are going to hang their head and kind of walk through juniors, but I'm going in with my head held high here and I'm going to do everything I can to help the team succeed."

Greg Walters, who has led the Generals to a 2-2-0-0 record through his first four games as head coach, certainly welcomed Studnicka back with open arms - even if he wasn't at his best the first two games while still adjusting to eastern time and the disappointment of being sent down.

"As you can see, his skill set is off the charts," Walters said after Studnicka's two-goal, four-point night in Sunday's home opener against North Bay. "He's a great leader, a true professional in the way he acts in the dressing room and in practice. We haven't seen the best of Jack Studnicka yet."

Coming off a 72-point campaign in his third junior season a year ago, the 19-year-old Tecumseh native hopes to build even more on those numbers, develop a better all-around game, get stronger, and perhaps represent Canada at the world junior hockey championships.

But, personal goals are secondary, he insisted.

"My main focus here is on an OHL championship and later on a Memorial Cup," he said.

The Generals have two road games over Thanksgiving weekend, Friday in Hamilton and Saturday in Owen Sound, before returning home to face Peterborough Oct. 12 and Hamilton Oct. 14.

Sabrina Byrnes/Metroland

Oshawa Generals' captain Jack Studnicka had two goals and two assists in a home-opening 7-5 win over the North Bay Battalion Sunday, Sept. 30 at the Tribute Communities Centre.

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>
> — Jack Studnicka

BIO

JACK STUDNICKA #23
Position: Centre
Shoots: Right
Height: 6-foot-2
Weight: 179 pounds
Birthdate: Feb 18, 1999
Hometown: Tecumseh, ON
Draft:
NHL - BOS (2017) Round: 2 (#53)
OHL - OSH (2015) Round: 1 (#21)

TIGER WOODS' COMEBACK A REMARKABLE ACHIEVEMENT OF BODY AND MIND

COLUMNIST DOUG SMITH SAYS CHAMPION MINDSET RESPONSIBLE FOR RETURN TO STARDOM

DR DOUGLAS SMITH
Column

Never give up!

Most recently, a good example of that is the Tiger Woods comeback story. Nearly everyone had written off Tiger Woods as finished and a has-been champion.

His recovery from divorce, losing his mentor, coach, father and best friend, his fans, sponsors and the media has been nothing short of a miracle. He lost his health, confidence and trust in ever returning to golf.

How did he make it back to being a champion once again after all the damage he had endured with his personal life, his health and his family? His journey back to stardom took seven long years. It was no easy fix, that's for sure.

Yes, we can credit all the surgeries he had to endure, but was that the secret? I think that was part of the story. But the real credit, I believe, goes to his champion mindset.

His return shows what you can do when you believe in yourself and are determined to give it everything you've got. He knew everyone thought he didn't have a chance to make it back to the big time.

It shows what almost any athlete can do with the courage, mental fortitude and willingness to put every ounce of energy into developing detailed plans of getting back on top of your game.

Fighting back, crawling back one step at a time is the mark of a true champion. There is no time for giving up or feeling sorry for yourself. There is no room for surrender. It takes a special mindset and attitude to keep going and believing you can beat the demons of failure, disgrace and shame.

All elite athletes have had their share of ups and downs in their sport. That is natural and realistic.

No one can be on top of their game all the time.

It takes a very special grit to make a comeback from physical, mental and life injuries.

All champions know that they didn't get to the top alone, and when they fall from stardom they know that to get back on top they will need a new team and a new approach to make it back.

So, just know that Tiger is no different from you or me. We are all going to have obstacles to deal with in sport and life.

The ones who survive tragedy, trauma and failure are the ones who have the guts to reach out and find a professional who knows what it takes to get back up on the horse and knows how to motivate us to beat what appears to be impossible odds.

Dr. Douglas Smith is a licensed psychologist in Ontario specializing in sport psychology since 1985. Contact him at 905-430-3538 or drdoug@promind.ca; website www.promind.ca