

Mark Mackay – A Winnipeggers Hockey Odyssey

During a short visit to Las Vegas this summer, former St. Boniface Saints owner and Hockey Manitoba Executive Ralph Borger had a nice surprise when Mark Mackay spotted him. Mackay, who was born in Brandon, started playing for Borger's Saints organization at the age of 10.

After junior with the Saints, Mackay joined the U of M Bisons where his teammates included future NHLer Mike Ridley, Nashville Predators coach Barry Trotz and Montreal Canadiens scout Vaughn Karpan.

He then played the 1984-85 season for the Moose Jaw Warriors of the WHL with Mike Keane and Theo Fleury. His 66 goals and 74 assists earned him rookie-of-the-year honors as a 20-year old.

Mackay's hockey odyssey next took him to Germany. During his 17 seasons in Europe, Mackay played for Germany in six world championships and the Olympics in 1998 and 2002.

Mackay told T&C that his most memorable experience along with the Olympics was the 1996 World Cup when Germany lost to Canada in the quarter-finals. He had just got his German passport after 10 years in the country, which allowed him to play. He said his memories of Borger will "always be his constant support for his beloved Saints and his passion and energy for the game of hockey in Winnipeg".

He has fond memories of the 1985 Canadian champion Winnipeg Grasshoppers ball hockey team where his linemates were his brother Shane and Kerry Goulet, both members of the Canadian Ball Hockey Association Hall of Fame. "We played with great people and the success we experienced was also very valuable to my future in the game," Mackay said.

Today Mackay works as a player agent based in Calgary for CAA, the agency that handles Sidney Crosby and Evgeni Malkin. His son Matt was traded to the Vancouver Giants in June after playing the past two seasons in the WHL with Moose Jaw and Medicine Hat.

Written by Ted (Dutch) Holland and T. Kent Morgan – Toast & Coffee – The Lance - 2010