

Photo courtesy of Ross F. Dettman/Chicago Wolves

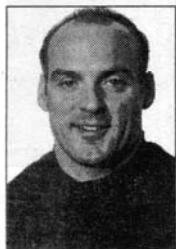
Chicago Wolves goaltender Wendell Young blocks a shot in January's IHL All-Star game. A veteran of 18 seasons, Young has been with the Wolves since their start and has been a player on six championship teams in four different hockey leagues.

Experience of Wolves goalie keeps team moving ahead

By Sal J. Barry

Webmaster

Wendell Young has been a professional goaltender since 1983, and has a



Wendell Young

pendant for winning championships. In his junior hockey days in the Ontario Hockey League, Young won the Memorial Cup. During the 1987-88 season, Wendell led the Hershey Bears of the American Hockey League to the Calder Cup. That season, he was also named the league's top goaltender as well as the playoff MVP.

All hockey players dream of—the Stanley Cup. As a member of the Pittsburgh Penguins, he won back-to-back championships in 1991 and 1992. And in 1998 and 2000, Young won the Turner Cup as a member of the Chicago Wolves. He is the only goaltender to win a championship in the OHL, AHL, IHL and NHL.

Young has played a staggering 284 games for the Wolves in the past six years. He is also one of two players to

be with the Wolves since their inception in 1994. Now in his 18th season of pro hockey, he still shows great poise, having started the majority of games this season. He posted three shutouts this year, and was named IHL Goaltender of the Week for two weeks in March.

Recently, I attended a charity dinner hosted by some of the Chicago Wolves. The dinner was at, Beni Hana, a top-notch Japanese restaurant, and I sat next to Young. He is an easygoing guy who drinks his beer from the bottle (not a glass), and yet is quite skillful with a set of chopsticks. A well-spoken individual who loves what he does, Young was all too happy to "talk hockey" with me that night.

Barry: Were you always a goalie?

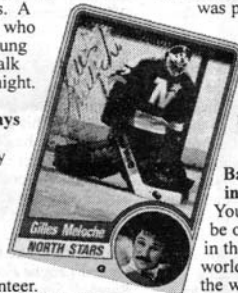
Young: All except my first year of organized hockey. At five years old, I was a defenseman. One day in the playoffs, our goalie didn't show, so our coach asked for a volunteer. All sixteen of my teammates volunteered, but I didn't. My coach picked me because he didn't want to choose one player over another, so he chose the only guy who didn't want to be goalie. We won that game 10-0. After that, I wanted to be a goalie and have been for the past 32 years.

Barry: Who were your heroes when

you were growing up?

Young: Bobby Orr was my favorite player. Growing up in Northeastern Canada, all my friends were Montreal Canadiens or Toronto Maple Leafs fans. But I was a big Boston Bruins fan.

Goalie-wise, my favorite was Gilles Meloche. He played a long time in the NHL (18 years), but was never on a good team. Ironically, he was my goalie coach in Pittsburgh. I told him one day that he was my hero, and he thought I was patronizing him. So I brought him a program from my days in Vancouver, and showed him my profile, which cited him as my hero. He couldn't believe it.



Barry: What is it like to play in the NHL?

Young: It was mind-blowing to be one of the top 40 or 45 goalies in the world...it's like a fantasy world to look up and play against the world's best players.

Barry: What would you say is the biggest difference between the NHL and the IHL?

Young: The NHL is more strategic and methodical. The players will wait and wait until they can make a safe play. In the NHL, everyone is afraid of making a mistake. No one wants to lose their job. In the IHL, players are more likely to

take chances and make mistakes.

Mistakes many times lead to goals, and a more wide-open game. This makes it more exciting. The fans want to see more open hockey.

Barry: Who was your toughest opponent?

Young: (Wayne) Gretzky...I hated playing against him. Also, (former Penguins teammate Mario) Lemieux in practice.

Barry: What about in the IHL?

Young: (Gilbert) Dionne from Cincinnati. He scores on me every game. Every game.

Barry: What was your favorite non-Championship moment in your hockey career?

Young: My first NHL game, for the sole reason that once you play one game, you can say you've played in the NHL. A hockey player's first goal is to play in the NHL. Then you know you've reached the top of your profession.

Barry: If you weren't a hockey player, what would you be doing?

Young: I would've studied law. It's intriguing. I love it.

UPCOMING Columbia Sports



Frisbee

Sat 4/21 & Sun 4/22
Sectionals (location TBA)

Saturday 4/28
@ Illinois State University



Baseball

Thursday 4/12
Northwestern, 6:00 p.m.

Saturday 4/21
Robert Morris, time TBA

Sunday 4/22
Marquette, 12 p.m.

Saturday 4/28
Wis-Eau Claire, 12:00 p.m.

Sunday 4/29
Loyola, 12:00 p.m.

