

An Interview with a Bear

Darren Paterson, Sports Editor

At the Blue vs. White prospects game I was able to catch up with bear-pawed Canucks defenseman Johnathan Aitken, to ask him a few questions. Despite catching him after what seemed like an unpleasant telephone conversation, I still managed to get in a few goodies.

As an 8th overall draft pick by Boston in '96 expectations were high from the beginning of Aitken's NHL career. However he had seen little time in the actual big leagues until last year with Chicago. When I asked him about this he opted to comment that his "game has changed more than anything," while mentioning that his time spent in Boston was unproductive in that way. Of course, this is ironic because his main concern in Boston was that they opted to play him on the wing instead of on defense. And I say that's ironic because of the fact that he took a few shifts on wing during the prospects game. However, I failed to mention this irony to the towering and fearsome Aitken.

I did ask him about fighting people other than myself though, as I posed the question, "What should every fan know about fighting on skates?" His reply? "Keep your balance and don't get hit." Good advice. Simple, but good.

And more importantly, I asked him, "What words of comfort do you have for all us poor college nerds who cry ourselves to sleep each night because we don't get paid to play a game like you?" To which I received

my best quote of the night, "Count your lucky stars that you don't have to put up with all the politics and bullshit." Of course, this wasn't too comforting considering that we all put up with our own politics and BS all the time. Not to mention the fact that, as hockey fans, we actually do have to put up with the exact same crap as him. But hey, I'll let him off the hook for three reasons. One, he was gracious enough to do an interview with this snot-nosed Sports Editor. Two, he's an NHL tough guy that could beat the crap out of me. And three, he said bullshit in an interview.

Then came the lightning round. Ten multiple-choice questions and a kitten attached to an electrified steel plate. It went down like this:

Who would you rather fight in their prime, Gino Odjick or Bob Probert?

J.A.: Probert.

Prime for prime: Gretzky or Lemieux?

J.A.: Gretzky.

Who would win in a hockey fight? Bob Goodenow or Gary Bettman?

J.A.: Goodenow, definitely.

Who has the better shot? Al Macinnis or Brett Hull? (This one had him thinking.)

J.A.: Al Macinnis.

Better short player: Theoren Fleury or Cliff Ronning?

J.A.: Fleury, when he's high.

Which is the better team? 1972 Team Canada or 2004 Team Canada? (Another thinker.)

J.A.: 2004.

Better movie: "Slapshot" or "Miracle"?

J.A.: *Slapshot*, easily.

Best Canuck: Trevor Linden or Stan Smyl?

J.A.: Smyl, because he had a good long run. Linden's still going so you can't count him yet.

Gatorade or Powerade?

J.A.: Powerade.

Best college newspaper: The Other Press or The Other Press?

J.A.: The Other Press.

Well, that's about it, my first poorly written professional interview. I'd like to take one last moment to throw out props to those who helped me stumble through this: Colin Miley, Grant Kennedy, and Johnathan Aitken. Thanks guys. I promise I'll do better next time.



Aitken (#40) checks a player from team White