

Men's volleyball star wears different shade of red

New Brunswick native
is one of Volleyball
Canada's Top 26

by Brad Conley

It was a great summer for Varsity Reds' volleyball player Davin St. Pierre as he made one of his dreams come true. St. Pierre was able to crack the line-up for the Canadian University men's volleyball team, and also earned a spot on the top 26 roster for the men's national team.

St. Pierre, a Dieppe, New Brunswick native, started playing volleyball in middle school, but claims he didn't get serious about it until he was in grade eleven.

"I didn't really realize I could go somewhere with volleyball until I was in grade eleven," he said. "I started to play well and really enjoyed myself. I was just starting to play club volleyball and realized how competitive it could get. My coach at the time, Wayne McConnell, showed me some of the possibilities

I could have through the sport, and I really started to take an interest in my future, and specifically my future in volleyball."

St. Pierre finished his high school volleyball career with the Moncton High Purple Knights, and was faced with some tough decisions.

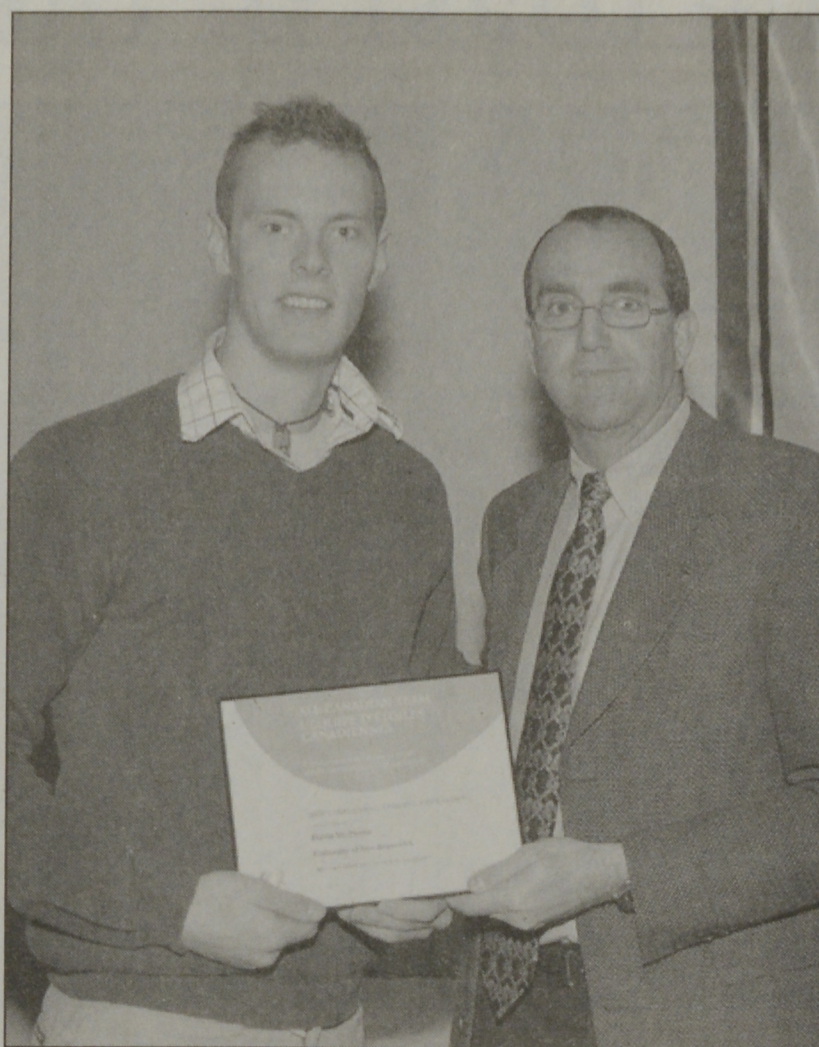
"Out of high school, I had quite a few options. I had offers from some universities out West, in Ontario, and even on the East Coast. I knew UNB would be my best choice, though."

St. Pierre said that UNB was his best option for a number of reasons, explaining that the volleyball team seemed to be steadily improving, and that he wanted to be able to come to a university and immediately contribute, rather than ride the bench for a few years and only begin to see floor time in his last few years of school.

The other thing that influenced St. Pierre's decision was academics. He said he wanted to make sure he would be getting both a good athletic and academic experience, and he thought UNB would be the best place to do this.

After his first year at UNB, St. Pierre was named to Team New Brunswick and competed at the Canada Summer Games in Regina, Saskatchewan.

St. Pierre said his time with Team New Brunswick was an eye-opener.



Davin St. Pierre, a starter with the UNB Varsity Reds Men's volleyball team, represented Canada at the Universiade in Bangkok this past summer

"The training schedule was tough, like real tough. It was such a short period of time for a team to get together, so we had to work extremely hard," St. Pierre said of the camp leading up to the games.

"Once we arrived in Regina, it was a totally new experience. The Games exposed me to a higher level of play. It allowed me to gauge my skills against a showcase of Canadian talent, which was really neat. Up to that point, it was the biggest tournament I had ever played in."

This would not be the last time St. Pierre played a high caliber of volleyball, of course, as he is now recognized as one of the top 26 men's volleyball players in the country.

"It was an honour to be picked in the top 26. What happened was that I was invited to a training camp. I started the week off slowly, but did extremely well on my physical testing, and just keep rolling from there," St. Pierre explained.

"From there, I was kept on a practice roster, and was used on the men's National 'B' team. Some of the guys were lucky enough to play for the 'A' squad as well."

This wasn't the only big thing that happened for St. Pierre this summer though, as he traveled to Bangkok to represent Canada in the Summer Universiade.

"I was asked to travel and play with the National University team. I was really wondering if my sum-

mer could get any better!" St. Pierre said, clearly still excited from his summer.

"We had a strong team as well. We did well in our first two tournaments in the Dominican Republic and India, so when we arrived in Bangkok, we knew what we had to do. We finished second in the tournament, and we deserved it, which was a great feeling."

The distinctions for St. Pierre did not stop after his time overseas. He was recently named Volleyball New Brunswick's Male Athlete of the Year.

Now that he is back in Fredericton, St. Pierre has been able to finish what he started last year with the Varsity Reds.

"We cracked the top ten last year, and were in it for a couple weeks this year as well. There is no doubt in my mind that we can get back into the top ten, and even move way up in the rankings. We have an extremely promising season in front of us; now all we need to do is bear down and work hard, and things should come together."

Despite all the time he puts into playing volleyball, St. Pierre recognizes that he is at an academic institution, and that he needs to continue to put time aside for his schoolwork. At the end of it all, he hopes to be a teacher but above all, he hopes to keep playing volleyball.

Bodybuilding Championships display top NB athletes

by Mitchell Bernard

The 2007 New Brunswick Bodybuilding and Figure Championships were held at The Playhouse this past Saturday.

Garry Bartlett, President of the New Brunswick Physique and Figure Association, kicked off the night by welcoming everyone to the ceremonies.

"For this year, we have added the 'Classic Physique' category for the first time. In this division, the athlete is judged on shape, muscularity, and balance. Muscle size is not as important as it is in the 'Men's Open' competition. Each athlete has to qualify by meeting a special height-weight ratio," announced Bartlett before the beginning

of the competition. "Interest in this new category [Classic Physique] has been keen, as

demonstrated by the amount of entries we have tonight," noted Bartlett.

The new category allows for bodybuilders who want to achieve a nice, symmetrical and proportional physique,

to compete in the show. The 'Classic' title refers to the way bodybuilding once looked in the 1970s and 1980s, before the introduction of performance-enhancing drugs. Competitors such as Frank Zane, a former world champion of bodybuilding, would achieve near perfect proportions and maintained a sleek appearance.

In a bodybuilding championship, there is a pre-judging the morning of the competition. This gives the judges a chance to see the competitors before the show, without the cheering of the crowd. In the evening show, athletes are brought out one by one to perform their routine. After all entries have performed, the top three competitors are called back up to the stage. The judges will ask them to perform the mandatory eight poses for comparison: front double biceps, front lat spread, rear double biceps, rear lat spread, abdominals and thighs, side chest, side triceps, and a most muscular pose.

After the competitors have performed the mandatory poses, the judges will grant the athletes a 30 second pose-down to make one last impression. At times during the night, the pose-down became aggressive, with some bodybuilders stepping in front of others to block the judges from viewing their opponents. After the pose-down is complete, the top three athletes are announced in order. For the Senior Men's division, the winners of all categories are

brought back onto the stage at the end of the night to crown an overall champion.

Senior Men's classes range from lightweight to heavyweight. Also included is a class for Masters (over 40 years of age) and Junior Men. The Junior Men's champion was the only competitor of his class. The 21-year-old performed his routine before the crowd to open the night. The first big surprise of the night came in the Women's Open division.

A 78-year-old woman was competing alongside 23-year-olds. She didn't make the top three, but the crowd gave her a warm reception for her effort.

The Open division is the only bodybuilding division for women. Most compete in the Figure division. There are four divisions of Figures for the ladies. These include

Masters, Short, Medium, and Tall division. In the Figures championship, ladies are judged on maintaining a low body fat, an athletic appearance, moderate muscularity, and

poise/gracefulness. The ladies take the stage for two rounds. After each lady has been called to the stage, the judges will ask them to meet at centre stage. From there, they will be asked to make quarter turns for comparison purposes. When all ladies have performed twice, the judges make their decisions and the top three are brought back out on stage. The top three are

then placed in order and the winner crowned.

Similar to the Men's Bodybuilding, the winners of all categories in the Figure competition are brought back out to centre stage and the end of the show to compete for the overall Figure title. The finale of the night was the Senior Men's Overall Championship. It was a close call for the judges and the pose down did not make things

any easier. The most minor flaw of an athlete can be portrayed in a pose down next to other athletes. The Senior Men's Overall winner was Andrew Kupkee of Saint John, N.B.

Andrew also won the title in the Men's Masters division and in the Men's Light Heavyweight division.

All athletes of the competition worked very hard to obtain the physique they displayed. Long hours in the gym and strict dieting are not easy and Joe Grondin, Master of Ceremonies, asked for everyone to applaud in support of the athletes.

Bodybuilding is a growing sport here in New Brunswick. Bartlett encouraged everyone to sign up at the gym Monday morning, and begin a lifetime of health. "I cannot stress how important your health is," noted Bartlett, a former bodybuilder himself.

The 2007 Atlantic Classic Bodybuilding and Figure Championships will be held April 26, 2008 in Moncton, New Brunswick.

The northern exploits of the NFL

VIEW FROM THE SIDELINES

by Tony von Richter

Are the Toronto Bills within reach?

For years now, there have been rumours of a National Football League team moving to Toronto to become the league's first international franchise. Now, the possibility of an NFL team north of the border seems more likely than ever before with the Buffalo Bills looking to play pre-season and regular season games at the Rogers Centre from 2008 until 2012.

It's not a certainty that the games would occur, but they have support in Toronto (in the forms of Larry Tanenbaum, Chairman of Maple Leaf Sports and Entertainment, and Ted Rogers, owner of Rogers Communications, the Blue Jays, and the Rogers Centre) and the NFL is expected to approve the plan as they already played a regular season game between the Miami Dolphins and the New York Giants in London's Wembley Stadium a few weeks ago.

The only hurdle at this point comes from getting the approval from the state of New York and Erie County, that both have the ability to veto home games being elsewhere as part of the team's lease agreement that expires in 2012.

So it seems that it's just a matter of time before regular season NFL action is played north of the 49th parallel, and a permanent slate of games could be on the horizon as the current owner of the Bills, Ralph Wilson, has stated that the team is to be sold to the highest bidder upon his death.

Last year the Tannebaum-Rogers group announced plans to aggressively pursue an NFL franchise, stating that

they were awaiting word on expansion plans. Now there are rumours that the group is trying to recruit Edmonton billionaire David Katz, who has tried to buy the Edmonton Oilers more than once in the past, to help finance a purchase should a franchise become available.

Looks like all the pieces are falling into place then. It's only a few games a year until the Bills are free from their lease, and with a family planning on selling to the highest bidder, it seems almost inevitable that the Bills will end up in Toronto.

As far as the NFL and the city of Toronto are concerned, I don't see how a franchise setting up shop could be considered anything but a positive as Toronto will be represented in the four major North American sports and the NFL and their advertisers will have a new market in which they can promote.

Whether or not a Toronto NFL team is good for the CFL and the Argonauts is a bit more complicated, however.

At first glance, having another team promoting high quality football can't be a good thing for the Argos as they could easily lose fans to an NFL franchise.

While the Argos could lose some fans to a local NFL team, I don't think they'd lose a significant amount

and they might even gain a few fans, as the attention that an NFL team would garner could create a new legion of football fans that will follow the Argos as well.

I think that a Toronto-based NFL team would actually be good for the CFL, because an NFL

team can increase the amount of people following football in Canada and some of them would begin to follow the CFL as well, thus growing the league's fan base.

So an NFL team landing in Toronto seems to be a positive situation for everyone involved: the league and their partners get a new market to promote, the city gets a new marquee attraction for tourists, and both the NFL and CFL can expand the number of people following their sport.

A Canadian NFL team is still a couple of years off though, so for now my football fandom will consist of pulling for the double blue this weekend and then hopefully watching the Argos hoist another Grey Cup in a few weeks.

Because while we may be on the verge of having Canada represented in the NFL, the CFL is, and always will be, Canada's very own.

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