

Ice hockey – Hat-trick hero Schultz now seeing Stars



IAN Schultz has experienced the highs in ice hockey after being drafted by a leading National Hockey League side.

The 26-year-old was selected in round three of the 2008 draft, 87th overall, by St Louis Blues but, since then, his career has taken him through five leagues, including the ECHL (East Coast Hockey League) and the AHL (American Hockey League).

And he's played on nine teams including San Francisco Bulls, Hamilton Bulldogs, Iowa Wild, Utah Grizzlies and Allen Americans.

The 6ft 2in right-wing is currently on another high, having bagged his first hat-trick in British ice hockey in Sunday's come-from-behind victory over arch rivals Fife Flyers at Murrayfield.

It's also his first treble since he became a professional player and he revealed: "I've had one other hat-trick in junior hockey, but none in professional league before so this was special."

The victory was also important for the team and the Calgary-born forward hopes it provides a platform for an extended run of wins to lift Capitals up the table.

This weekend, the Murrayfield squad entertain Dundee Stars on Saturday (6pm) and travel to Tayside for the return on Sunday (6.30pm).

And Schultz said: "This weekend is indeed huge for us, not only in the standings but to build positives as a team.

"We are starting to establish an identity as a team and we need to keep going in the right direction."

Despite Capitals lowly league position, Schultz said there is a positive atmosphere in the dressing-room.

He added: "Everybody is happy with a big, 6-3 win over such a

huge rival (Fife) but we have to focus on our starts to the games next weekend as we weren't very good against Braehead where we were three goals down on Saturday inside six minutes (before battling back to go down 3-2) or Fife where they were 2-0 down in just over two minutes.

"I believe we are getting better every week as a team and we are establishing ourselves more and more around the league.

"We are heading in the right direction and it should be a fun season to play and watch."

The player admitted he had a slow start because of a nagging injury but he battled through and he has now collected six goals and three assists from 17 games in the Elite League.

And he said: "I would like to get up to at least 20 goals and be a point per game guy and I've been on a bit of a hot streak lately so fingers crossed I can keep that going."

He's also noted a change from what he is used to in the rough-rough North American leagues and he revealed: "The main difference is the speed in which things happen on the ice.

"You have a lot more space in most rinks here so you have more time to make plays or decisions."

Off-ice, the 6ft 2in player is enjoying life in Scotland's Capital and he said: "Edinburgh is an amazing city and we have a great group of guys on the team."