

Ice hockey – Pacha demands commitment



Action from last season at Murrayfield.

Picture by Ian Coyle

Spend a short time with Dundee Stars' coach Omar Pacha and you will understand the word commitment.

The talkative and approachable Canadian desperately wants success for his low-budget Tayside team.

To achieve his targets he will demand 100 per cent effort from his hand-picked squad.

That is in every game and on every shift.

It was obvious after chatting midweek post-challenge that he was not 100 per cent happy with the performance of his men.

One simple phrase summed up his mood. He said: "We were not the hardest working team."

Stars, incidentally, won 3-2 despite that situation prevailing and they are still as the coach says: "Work in progress."

But Pacha will demand extra when Dundee square-up to arch rivals Fife Flyers in the inaugural Scottish Elite Cup semi-final at Murrayfield today (2pm face-off).

The match-up continues an intense rivalry between the clubs who are only a short distance apart geographically.

Pacha wants a huge distance between the work rate of his side and that of Flyers coach Todd Dutiaume's side.

The Tayside team's coach could be boosted by the inclusion of talented imported forwards Patrick Lee and Marc-Olivier Mimar.

Calgary-born Lee is a raw talent. He's 22 and has just spent the last three seasons in college hockey in North America.

Right-wing Mimar from Rosemere is 25 years old. He's spent the last five seasons with the University of Quebec-Trois-Rivieres posting good numbers.

Their arrival has been delayed by red-tape but Pacha has been in touch and they have been in training, on and off the ice. They know what is expected of them.

Not icing is experienced former Nottingham Panthers right-wing or centre, Toronto-born Chris Lawrence.

The 30-year-old former National Hockey League draft pick by Tampa Bay Lightning has enjoyed two spells in the Lacey City and has also iced for British clubs Coventry Blaze and Sheffield Steelers.

The 6ft 4in forward arrived in Britain after an extensive career in the rough-tough North American leagues. He is expected to be a leader.

Today's tie is bound to increase the pulse rates of the club's passionate fans and Pacha wants to see that energy mirrored on the ice by his squad.

The former Manchester Storm playcaller, who also doubles as Dundee's general manager, is excited by what lies ahead. He wants to give fans something to cheer and keep them coming to watch his young and energetic team.

Stars carry a few bumps and bruises from the challenge double-header with Edinburgh Capitals into the tie at Murrayfield but Pacha wants to be in Sunday's final (6.30pm), not the third and fourth-place play-off (3pm). Both games at Murrayfield.

The other semi-final features Edinburgh v Braehead Clan (face-off 5.30pm) and tickets are still available.

One thing to watch are the diversions around Murrayfield because of flood prevention work so look out for the signs.