

Modest Owen says communication is key to success

Shane Owen will again be pivotal as Flyers entertain Guildford Flames in the Premier Sports Elite League on Saturday (face-off 19.15) looking for their first Elite League win of the season so far, and their first home victory this term.

Ontario-born Owen (pictured against Belfast Giants by *Al Goold*) said: "We need to take the positives from every game and every weekend and it is still early in the season.

"Of course, there are things to improve on, but we keep taking the positives and we move on, continuing towards our goal.

"The defencemen have been awesome. We have a great group back there and I am very confident in them doing their job and that makes my job easier.

"The key is to keep communicating and to do the best we can."

The former East Coast Hockey League and American Hockey League star added: "Communication on and off the ice is so important and if we communicate well on the ice it makes the game a whole lot easier.

"The guys this year are strong physically and that also makes a difference. Guys are scared to go to the net when you have a couple of big guys bearing down on you.

"I'm 6ft 1in, 6ft 2in on a good day, and I try to cover as much of the net as possible. If I am in a good position and set and square I believe it is difficult for guys to score.

"Speed across the crease is also important so is agility and I work on my speed and flexibility every day."

Flyers are still developing as a unit, he said, and Owen, who has now iced in more than 160 games for Fife, added: "We have a lot of guys here for the first time, guys playing in Europe for the first time and the whole team is pretty much brand new. When you get a new team of 20 guys it takes time to gel.

"It is a slow process, but we have to continue to work and continue to get better every day."

Momentum, he said, is key. He added: "If need to focus on ourselves, one game at a time, and continue to build."

Their next opponents, Guildford, have two danger men up-front, Canadian Ian McNulty, who is fifth in the individual statistics, and American marksman Peter Crinella who is seven places lower.

Owen is aware of the two men and added: "I definitely keep an eye out for those guys. You must be aware of them on the ice, but there are other guys in the team who are capable of putting the puck in the net.

"We must be focused, focused on the next shift and I must be focused on myself. My job is stopping the puck."

Owen, who has also played in Poland and Sweden, spent season 2019/2020 at Belfast Giants and knows how difficult it is for opposing teams at The Fife Ice Arena.

The Canadian-born stopper said: "I think it is one of the toughest rinks to come to. Fans are right on top of you. It is amazing when this crowd gets going and we give them something to cheer about."

So far, Fife have not won at home this season and victory over Guildford would earn Flyers their first league points of the season and that would certainly give supporters something to cheer.

