

# Long and winding road for Brad

## B.C. boy Lukowich 'always wanted to play in Vancouver'

By Gordon McIntyre, The Province January 4, 2010

You've probably never tried flying to Vancouver from Cedar Park, Texas, via Austin-Winnipeg-Austin, with Dallas or Houston or Minneapolis thrown into the mix, plus a bus ride to San Antonio and back to start things off.

Trust us, it's an ordeal that would have made Steve Martin and John Candy appreciate their circumstances in Planes, Trains and Automobiles.

Only in Brad Lukowich's case, it was a case of buses, planes, airports, arenas and, finally Sunday afternoon, a hotel room in downtown Vancouver.

Dazed from the travel and uncertainty -- he could have been claimed by any of 29 other clubs when the Canucks recalled him on waivers, before clearing them at 9 a.m. Saturday -- the 33-year-old defenceman even had to check with a reporter, minutes after dropping his luggage down on Sunday afternoon, where and when the Canucks practice this morning.

"I flew to Winnipeg, flew to Austin, went home and gathered my stuff and flew here," Lukowich said. "I really haven't talked to anybody yet, I have no idea what's going on."

What's going on is Lukowich, who played his first NHL game in 1997-98, is back in The Show after putting in a solid first half on loan to Dallas's AHL farm club in Cedar Park.

Since opening gifts Christmas morning with his wife Cara and daughter Michaela, it's been a whirlwind for the newest Canuck, reclaimed from the Texas Stars to replace the injured Kevin Bieksa and the sulking Mathieu Schneider.

Lukowich was sent to Cedar Park, 40 kilometres north of Austin, for three reasons:

The Canucks couldn't squeeze his \$1.8-million salary under the cap; the Moose had too many veteran players; and the club wanted to accommodate the Texas ties of Lukowich, whom they'd picked up along with Christian Ehrhoff for two players who will probably never dress for an NHL game in a San Jose salary dump.

It was the second time he'd been part of a salary dump, going from Tampa Bay after winning the second Stanley Cup ring of his career with the Lightning to the Sharks along with Dan Boyle because the Bolts had cap problems of their own.

"I learned after the new CBA to take everything day to day," Lukowich said. "I went down and played hockey, that's what I do."

He was tied for the Texas Stars lead in assists with 15 when he got recalled.

And as much as he likes Texas, the Cranbrook native's roots are deepest in B.C.

"I always wanted to play in Vancouver," he said. "All the friends I grew up with live here, my family's in Victoria, I played junior in Kamloops, I still have a house in Cranbrook."

For now, Lukowich probably sits No. 7 on the depth chart, behind Aaron Rome, and he has no idea what the future holds.

But just to finally be a Vancouver Canuck, even if it's only a short-term opportunity, has been worth the journey.

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## **Turns out Biekسا news not all bad**

By Ben Kuzma, The Province January 4, 2010

In the search for silver linings following another freak injury and surgery that will keep Kevin Biekسا sidelined for at least three months, and possibly the remainder of this NHL season, the Vancouver Canucks defenceman can take some solace in the following:

The Province has learned that Biekسا suffered two severed tendons above his left ankle when cut by the skate of Coyotes forward Petr Prucha last Tuesday in Phoenix. Ligament tears would have been worse because there are five that support the fibula and tibia and recovery time can be considerably longer. Montreal defenceman Andrei Markov suffered a severed tendon of his left foot when cut by the skate of teammate Carey Price in the Canadiens' season opener and returned Dec. 18. He was expected to be sidelined until February.

Biekسا is also a fast healer. After suffering a lacerated calf when cut by the skate of Nashville forward Vernon Fiddler on Nov. 1, 2007 at GM Place, the blueliner returned Feb. 21, 2008; even though he was advised by his father, wife and agent to shut down his season. He missed 47 games instead of 68.

Biekسا has another year left on his contract at a \$3.5 million US salary cap hit. He was rewarded with a three-year, \$11.25 million extension after 42 points in the 2006-07 season. It also takes his name out of trade-deadline speculation.

Biekسا may be another sacrificial lamb for protective Kevlar socks to become more of a mainstay than a curiosity among players. Cam Ward, Teemu Selanne, Robert Lang and Joe Corvo also sustained serious cuts from skate blades in the last two seasons.

"Whether it's general managers or the league office or from the Players' Association, we need to be a lot more cognizant of this issue," said Kurt Overhardt, the agent for Bieksa and Ryan Kesler. "We've got a great game, but it's a quicker game and guys are dealing with razor blades on the ice. Skates have to be so sharp and perfect and anything we can do to protect the player from disasters like this is critical.

"One of the big issues for the players is the integrity of the game and the safety of the players."

Intelligent Apparel of Montreal is marketing its Tactics Armoured Hockey Socks with a pledge to provide 360-degree cut protection. The product has a Kevlar lining that is knit inside a sports-mesh polyester outer shell to make the sock cut resistant. Kevlar was used in the early 1970s as a replacement for steel in racing tires and is usually spun into ropes or fabric sheets and can also be used as an ingredient in composite material components.

Asked if a Kevlar sock would have prevented Bieksa's latest injury, Overhardt wouldn't speculate.

"I have no idea," he said. "It [injury] is tragic. It's ridiculous."

While Bieksa, 28, has no idea when he'll return to the lineup, his best bet is to heal properly and watch how the dominoes fall on the back end. There's the Mathieu Schneider fiasco. The disgruntled blueliner has reported to the Manitoba Moose after being waived by the Canucks, who couldn't find a trading partner. And Brad Lukowich cleared re-entry waivers and will join the club at practice today, so there's still plenty of drama to play out. Bieksa has played a role in it, too.

After scoring in the season opener, he then went 39 games without a goal before being hurt. His ice time was also being curtailed and his penalty kill time was vanishing.

OF NOTE: There has been no talk of a contract extension for Kesler, 25, who has 36 points and is on pace for a career season in the final year of a deal that's paying the centre \$1.75 million. "There's nothing going on," said Overhardt.

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## Henrik really racking up points

By Jim Jamieson, The Province January 4, 2010

When you ask Henrik Sedin about his sudden goal-scoring prowess, he can be as slippery as he is around the opposition's net.

The older, taller twin brother claims he really isn't shooting much more this year, just taking better percentage shots. The second part is true, the former not so much.

In fact, Henrik, who's averaged 111 shots a season over his career and, to be fair, took 143 last year, is on a 170-shot pace this time around.

That's translated into more goals, a lot more goals.

Henrik, who averaged 13 goals a season and 16 in the last four seasons since the lockout, is on pace for 37 this year. He has 19 already.

Those goals are what's turning a good season into a great one offensively for Henrik, who led the NHL in scoring for a few hours on Saturday after collecting two assists in the Canucks' 3-1 win in Dallas. San Jose's Joe Thornton had two assists in Edmonton later in the day to reclaim the lead. But just as impressively, Henrik is all alone at the top of the league in even-strength points, with 39; five more than Thornton and Alex Ovechkin heading into Sunday.

It's safe to say that's the loftiest spot occupied by any Canuck non-goalie since Markus Naslund led the NHL scoring race right up to the last agonizing day of the season before being overtaken by Peter Forsberg.

With 36 assists in 42 games, Henrik is on pace for 70, one fewer than the club record 71 he established two seasons ago.

It's ironic that it's the goals that are propelling Henrik into the NHL's stratosphere. For most of his first eight seasons with the Canucks, it was considered conventional wisdom that Henrik would pass and brother Daniel will shoot. This was to Henrik's detriment at times, because on occasion he was guilty of letting a prime scoring chance slip by waiting for the pass to open up.

Not any more. If opposition goalies had a book on Henrik they're furiously rewriting it.

"If you look at the shots, it's up a little bit but I'm not shooting that much more," says Henrik. "Both Burr [line-mate Alex Burrows] and Danny cycle the puck so well that it's easy for me to get open and be in better positions. My mindset has changed a little bit, too. I've been in good areas before where I haven't shot the puck, but I think that comes with confidence."

It could be that Daniel's absence for 18 games just after the start of the season with a fractured bone in his foot forced Henrik to change his style somewhat and not depend so much on the classic Sedin cycle game. Although he struggled at times in Danny's absence, he still managed to put up points.

But since Daniel returned on Nov. 22 against Chicago, the run has been nothing less than remarkable. In the 20 games since Daniel's return, Henrik has 5-24-29. Daniel is no slouch, either, with 11-15-26. Danny, himself, is on a pace that would get him to 103 points if he were to play an 82-game season.

Who's feeding off whom, you'll never get the Sedins to tell. Says Daniel: "He's comfortable taking that extra second to hold the puck to get the guys open. It's fun to see and fun to play with him. You make plays you maybe didn't do before."

Adds Henrik: "To miss that much time and come back and only have one or two periods where there was a little rust, he's been awesome. Without him, I wouldn't be where I am."

It's not as though Henrik and Daniel have suddenly emerged as world-class players. We've seen their seeming telepathy and surgical stick skills for a few years. It's the machine-like consistency this season that is so impressive. In the last 16 games, Henrik has been held off the scoresheet just once.

"Henrik is so smart out there and he competes so hard," says Burrows. "People don't know how hard he works. At his age, at 29 he wants to take it to the next level and he wants to win a Stanley Cup."

Henrik says there's no magic formula. It's just hard work and getting better by increments.

"It's a progress over a lot of years," he says. "It's not like it's been over one summer. We always said we wanted to get better every year. We've worked extremely hard. We're confident, but you get confidence from hard work and from knowing you're prepared. It doesn't matter if you're in an office or it's hockey, if you're well prepared you're going to do a good job and you're going to be confident."

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## Please, just don't tease

By Ed Willes, The Province January 4, 2010

It's a new year and a new decade but we still have the same old Monday morning musings and meditations on the world of sports. Isn't it reassuring to know some things never change?

-The Canucks have now passed the midway point of their season and the same question is being asked about them that's been asked for most of the last 10 years: Is this a legitimate Stanley Cup contender or simply a pretender?

On the surface it would seem to be the same-old, same-old for this team. They're a playoff squad. They have a nice collection of talent. But you can also name at least five other NHL teams -- Chicago, San Jose, Pittsburgh, Washington and, yes, Detroit -- who are clearly superior in manpower and a couple of more -- Boston and Calgary -- who are at least their equal.

That means you can expect, at best, a first-round playoff win before the Canucks vaporize again. Right?

So why does there seem to be something a little different about this edition?

For starters, Henrik Sedin has morphed into something this franchise has never had: a bona fide No.-1 centre. Ryan Kesler gives them a classic second-line centre and the emergence of Mason Raymond has created a second-scoring line. They also have a pretty good goalie or so we're told.

Are their warts? Don't be daft. The blue line is still a huge question mark and it's incumbent on GM Mike Gillis to upgrade the third-line centre spot.

But it just appears that this Canucks' team has more intangibles in place than their predecessors. They've got a home-stand coming up against Columbus, Phoenix, Calgary and Nashville and this is where good teams establish themselves. We'll now soon enough if this Canucks' team has the goods or we're being fooled. Again.

-The NHL passed its midway point on Saturday, which means its time to pass out some first-half hardware.

MVP: Ryan Miller. Runners-up: Henrik Sedin, Duncan Keith.

Granted, the East is watered down this season but Miller has still carried a so-so Sabres' team to second overall in the Conference.

Henrik is mentioned above. Now that he's scoring goals, he's as good an all-round centre as there is in the West.

Keith, for his part, has quietly enjoyed a monster season in Chicago. He plays a shutdown role on the best team in the Conference. He's also second among defencemen in scoring.

Biggest story: The topsy-turvy nature of the Western Conference. Put it this way. You could have made a lot of money in Vegas betting Colorado, Phoenix, Nashville and Los Angeles would be holding down playoff spots after the first half. It's also created a compelling coach-of-the-year race among Joe Sacco, Dave Tippett, Barry Trotz and Terry Murray.

Biggest upcoming story: Watch out for the Red Wings. They're starting to get healthy and still have the most complete team in the West. They'll be around in April and, if they're not, it throws the Conference wide open.

-Anyone notice the similarities between the American Olympic team and Canada's? They're both deep. They're both fast. And you see older lineups at Pixar movies.

The blue line features Erik and Jack Johnson and Ryan Suter, who are all 25 or under. Up front it's the same story where 10 of their 13 forwards are 25 or under, including Paul Stastny, Phil Kessel, Patrick Kane, Ryan Kesler, Bobby Ryan, Zach Parise, Dustin Brown, David Backes, Ryan Callahan and Joe Pavelski. Throw in Miller between the pipes, this will be Canada's toughest competition for the gold.

-We'll stick with our preseason pick, the Vikings, to win the Super Bowl. Top to bottom, they're the best team in the NFL.

# Canucks catching travel bug

## Red-hot team develops an itch for the road after its most successful trip since November 2008

By Iain Macintyre, Vancouver Sun January 4, 2010

It was a decisive week by a purposeful team -- seven days that have framed the Vancouver Canucks' season and redefined their team.

It wasn't just that Vancouver's 3-1 win Saturday against the Dallas Stars allowed the Canucks to complete a difficult four-game road trip with three wins and a shootout loss.

Or that the Canucks found different ways to win, blowing out the Calgary Flames 5-1 last Sunday, coming from three goals down to beat the St. Louis Blues 4-3 in overtime on Thursday, then hanging on in Dallas to protect a lead.

The most impressive thing is that the Canucks' best week of the season, and their most successful road trip since November 2008, came amid startling developments that could have undermined the team and caused focus to waver.

A few hours apart last week -- Tuesday in Phoenix where the Canucks rallied late before losing 3-2 in a shootout against the white-hot Coyotes -- Vancouver jettisoned malcontent defenceman Mathieu Schneider, then lost key blue-liner Kevin Bieksa to a devastating leg injury.

Taken cumulatively, losing those players under those circumstances should have been a blow to the defence and the organization.

Even if Canuck players support the idea of evicting the unhappy Schneider -- and they do -- the unusual and at least a little embarrassing move was highly combustible. It could have become a sideshow.

Pile on to that pyre the loss of Bieksa and how serious injuries such as his can shake confidence and, if followed quickly by a loss or two, cause at least a whiff of panic in the dressing room.

But in one of his finest moments as the Canucks' coach, Alain Vigneault emphatically stated that he would not have Schneider back and that Bieksa's injury changed nothing. The Canucks had made their decision, were better without Schneider, and would win anyway.

Then they rallied from 3-0 to beat the Blues, then handled a Stars' team that had won four of five home games.

The Canucks are 9-2-1 in their last 12 games, are genuinely eight games over .500 and within one good weekend of first place in the Northwest Division. They open a four-game homestand Tuesday against the Columbus Blue Jackets.

"I don't think confidence was ever a problem because I've been here four years now and we've always had pretty good success on the road," goalie and captain Roberto Luongo said Saturday. "But we definitely have that confidence now we can come into any building and win. And not just the same way all the time.

"Last game, we had to come back in the third period. [Saturday], we had to hold the fort. It's nice to know we can win in different ways."

The Canucks, who have had two potent scoring lines most of the season, finally got their third line going on the trip as Kyle Wellwood, Steve Bernier and Tanner Glass were noticeable each game.

It's an intriguing mix of under-and overachievers, finesse and physical players, but it worked.

Wellwood had two goals and an assist, which may not sound like a lot until you consider he exceeded the total offensive output from his last nine games and his first 19.

And Wellwood could have had more points were it not for his birth defect, coming into the world without the shooting chromosome. Twice against the Stars, he was in spectacular shooting positions but forced passes to nobody.

"I only try to shoot if I know I can score," he said. "I've been a scorer before and it wasn't because I had a great shot. I try to pass my way in close.

"I've felt better on the ice, handling the puck. The main focus for us is keeping the puck in their end and playing solid defensively. If we are able to score goals, it seems to change the dynamic of our team."

"I think everybody is contributing to the team's success: all four lines, all six Ds," winger Alex Burrows said. "Special teams are a big part of the game, too. Our PK has improved a lot."

In the last 11 games, the Canucks have killed 37 of 41 disadvantages for a success rate of 90.24 per cent.

Vigneault said the goalie has been better, too.

Luongo made 31 saves on Saturday, including a breathtaking back-door robbery of Mike Modano during a third-period stretch that saw the Canucks outshot 11-1.

"I think I've had better saves than that," Luongo said when asked if it was his best of the season. "I actually didn't see him. It was kind of a desperation move on my part. I didn't see the puck or the shot, but was able to get it with my skate. This was a really important trip."



Ryan Kesler and Daniel Sedin scored for Vancouver, Loui Eriksson for Dallas. Burrows had an empty-net goal.

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NEXT GAME

Tuesday

vs Columbus Blue Jackets

7 p.m.

at GM Place

Net -hd/Team

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## **Schneider heeds Moose call just in time to collect \$250,000**

### **Disgruntled defenceman will earn bonus cheque in Manitoba after Vigneault sends 40-year-old packing**

By Iain Macintyre, Vancouver Sun Columnist January 4, 2010

Even just going where he is told, Mathieu Schneider is creating another problem for the Vancouver Canucks. He also stands to collect a \$250,000 US bonus payment on Jan. 15.

The 40-year-old defenceman, who cleared waivers Wednesday after leaving the National Hockey League team, reported Sunday to the Canucks' minor-league affiliate in Winnipeg. The re-assignment of Schneider, whom the Canucks were unable to trade or place with another organization, puts the Manitoba Moose one veteran over the American Hockey League limit of five and coach Scott Arniel will have to sit out a player to make room for the defenceman.

But by reporting, Schneider continues to collect his NHL base salary of \$1.55 million, which includes a \$1 million signing bonus divided over four payments.

Schneider received the first \$250,000 instalment in September. The second payment is due Jan. 15. His actual salary is \$550,000 US, but the NHL requires signing bonuses to be included as salary.

The American has made \$44 million since his debut for the Montreal Canadiens in 1988.

The Canucks and Schneider split last week over irreconcilable differences stemming from his unhappiness about a limited role in Vancouver and the adverse effect this disenchantment had on his attitude.

Even after losing Kevin Bieksa to a possibly-season-ending leg injury the day Schneider was waived, Canuck coach Alain Vigneault is emphatic that he won't take back the defenceman.

It's classic addition by subtraction. The Canucks feel they are better without Schneider.

But how might Schneider's attitude impact the Moose and younger players trying to improve and make the NHL?

"You just hope people have the integrity to be stand-up people," Canuck assistant general manager Laurence Gilman said Sunday. "My sense is he's reporting because he still wants to play hockey. He has made enough money in his career. He's not going to go there just to collect a \$250,000 signing bonus."

The Canucks were probably hoping Schneider would simply retire. GM Mike Gillis, Schneider's former agent, helped make his client wealthy and was the main proponent behind the veteran's free-agent signing last summer. Schneider, who made \$5.75 million last season, agreed Aug. 28 to a one-year deal with the Canucks.

**BLUE-LINE SHUFFLE:** Vigneault said defenceman Aaron Rome, who went to sixth from eighth on the depth chart in one day, retains his new status after Brad Lukowich cleared re-entry waivers on Saturday. Lukowich, a 10-year veteran whose \$1.8-million paycheque as a depth player didn't fit the Canucks' salary cap when the season began, joins the team for practice today in Vancouver.

Rome logged 16:09 of ice time in Saturday's 3-1 win in Dallas, nearly six minutes more than he played Thursday upon his return to the lineup in St. Louis.

"No doubt when you're playing, you do feel more part of things," Rome, 26, said. "I felt better than the last game. You try to stay ready as much as you can. But when you're not playing, it's tougher for sure. When you go in, you just want to keep it simple and make easy plays and I felt like I've done that."

The Canucks expect they'll know in about a week how long Bieksa will be out. He underwent surgery Thursday to repair muscle and tendon carved open by a skate blade last Tuesday in Phoenix. A similarly freak injury two years ago cost Bieksa 47 games.

**HAMMERIN' HANK:** Henrik Sedin's two assists in Dallas lifted him into a tie for the NHL scoring lead until Joe Thornton picked up two points in the San Jose Sharks' 4-1 win Saturday night against the Edmonton Oilers.

With 55 points in 42 games, Sedin is on pace for 107 points -- 35 above his career best. Brother and linemate Daniel Sedin is on pace for 80 points despite missing 18 games with a foot injury last fall.

"I can't put a finger on it," Henrik said. "As I've said before, it's progress, I think, over a lot of years. It's not like it was just over a summer or two. We've always said we want to get better every summer because [training is] when you get better. I think we worked extremely hard together. We're confident when we step on the ice."

Daniel is so confident, he now sets up Canuck goals by opposition players. He banked Saturday's winner off Dallas defenceman Trevor Daley, one game after sparking Vancouver's three-goal comeback in St. Louis with a billiard shot off the Blues' Roman Polak.

"It's just pure luck," Daniel said. "I can't say that it's anything else. I wish I could. Just luck."

Sedin's turnover late in the second period preceded Canuck Christian Ehrhoff's delay-of-game penalty, which led to the Stars' game-tying goal by Loui Eriksson.

"It was very fortunate for him that he scored that go-ahead goal," Vigneault smiled. "He would have had one upset coach at him."

He probably did, anyway, during the second intermission.

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## **Ex-Moose realizes dream with NHL callup**

By [KEN WIEBE](#), QMI AGENCY

The road was long, but it was well worth the wait for Maxime Fortunus.

Earlier this month, the former Manitoba Moose blue-liner realized a lifelong dream when he suited up for his first NHL game as a member of the Dallas Stars.

Prior to puck drop for the tilt against the Detroit Red Wings on Dec. 19, Fortunus took a moment to soak it in.

"It was unbelievable," said Fortunus, who had five goals and nine points in 31 games for the Texas Stars this season going into last night's game against the Moose. "Right after the anthem and before the face-off, if you could see me on camera you could see me smiling and laughing. I was telling myself that 'I'm here. I made it here.' That's going to stay in my mind for a bit. Having a good first shift made all the butterflies go away."

Fortunus appeared in five games with Dallas before he was re-assigned to the AHL.

'CONFIDENCE'

"I played a lot of minutes and at the end of games too, when it was tight," said Fortunus, who felt he had the best NHL training camp of his career in the fall. "They showed a lot of confidence in my game and that makes you a little stronger on the ice. I knew I wanted to make it so bad and I had a chance to make it. When I got the call, I was ready for it."

It was a long road from the Louisiana IceGators of the ECHL. Fortunus was identified by Moose GM Craig Heisinger as the top defencemen in the ECHL in 2005, but quickly graduated from a depth player into a key contributor.

"It was great, just looking back at all the work I've put in over the years," said Fortunus, 26. "It didn't happen by itself. I put in a lot of work, but there's a lot of people I have to thank too, especially people from the Manitoba Moose. They were there for me and they gave me my chance to show myself and show what I can do. I'm thankful for that."

"It's been a long run, but it's not over yet."

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## **Moose earn valuable points**

By [KIRK PENTON](#), QMI AGENCY

The Manitoba Moose are the AHL's shootout kings, and the secret to their success is a couch potato's dream.

They hardly do a gosh darn thing.

"You know what? We do less. We never practise it," Moose backup netminder Daren Machesney said after Saturday's 5-4 shootout win over the Texas Stars. "In Hershey we did it before every game. This team, we don't do any of it. And I don't mind it, because the more and more you do shootouts it's kind of like you get in bad habits."

"You want to do a little bit, but you don't want to do a lot because guys start getting shifty and doing certain moves that don't work. Then it's all in their head. Because shootouts are all in your head. I like what we're doing. Hopefully we stick with it."

### 'BIG DEAL'

The Moose are 6-0 in shootouts this season with 11 goals in 26 attempts and a stingy four goals against on 29 shots for the opposition. The Grand Rapids Griffins, with a 4-1 mark in the penalty shot contest, would have to be considered the league's second best.

While one might say "big deal" to the fact the Moose are good at a glorified skills competition, the bottom line is this year's squad needs every point it can get. The third-place Moose (21-14-4-0) are seven points up on the fifth-place Abbotsford Heat, who have one game in hand. Thanks to the shootout, they have snared six bonus points.

"Every time we go into a shootout we feel like we have a really good chance to win the game," said Moose forward Guillaume Desbiens.

Desbiens said the Moose have done plenty of informal work on their breakaways.

"At the end of practices we play a lot of games just for fun," he said. "There's a lot of breakaways involved, and I guess guys have been practising quite a bit and it's been working out.

"And our goalies have been unbelievable. They're hard to score on in practice, so they're just carrying that into games."

Head coach Scott Arniel sticks to a plan when it comes to his shootout order.

"I always want (Mike Keane) second or third, somewhere around there," Arniel said. "You don't want to lose one of your top guys, because sometimes your fourth guys and fifth guys never get to shoot.

"So I want to make sure that some of the guys that I think are some of the top people -- (Michael) Grabner being one of them -- I try to get them early."

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HOT SHOOTIN'

AHL's top shootout teams

W-L

Manitoba 6-0

Peoria 5-3

Grand Rapids 4-1

Bridgeport 4-2

Toronto 4-2

Providence 3-0

Shooters

Marco Rosa 3-5

Mike Keane 2-6

Eric Walsky 1-1

Guillaume Desbiens 1-2

Marty Murray 1-2

Matt Pettinger 1-2

Michael Grabner 1-2

Sergei Shirokov 1-5

Matt Pope 0-1

Stoppers

GA Att.

Cory Schneider 3 19

Daren Machesney 1 10

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## **Canucks find game on road**

By HOSEA CHEUNG, QMI AGENCY

With nine more home games before the 14-game road horror show starting Jan. 30, the Canucks picked the right time to find their groove.

Not only has the team won nine of their last 12, they have moved three points ahead of the ninth-place Detroit Red Wings into the seventh spot in the West. Also on the radar are the division-leading Colorado Avalanche, who are three points ahead and have played one more game.

While most of the recent success can be credited to the impressive performances by the Sedin twins -- a combined 50 points in the last 16 games -- it's the supporting act that has stepped up their game.

Roberto Luongo has rebounded from his slow start with a strong December, going 10-3-1 with a 1.92 GAA and .932 save percentage.

The offensive help has also been there with Ryan Kesler (12 points in 16), Mason Raymond (13 in 16) and Alex Burrows (12 in 16) all contributing.

Meanwhile, Pavol Demitra could return to the lineup as soon as next week.

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