

Brad Purdie

After recording 102 points in 92 Saskatchewan Junior Hockey League (SJHL) games, Purdie made the jump to the NCAA with the University of Maine, winning an NCAA title during the 1992/93 season. He would then go on to play 15 seasons of professional hockey in the IHL, ECHL and Europe, with stops in Germany and Switzerland. After retirement Purdie retired and joined the University of Manitoba Men's Hockey coaching staff. Purdie, who serves as head coach of the Rink Hockey Academy Winnipeg U15 Prep team, has a High Performance 1 coaching certificate and has worked with Hockey Manitoba and the Program of Excellence U16 on three separate occasions, most recently as the head coach of the 2015 team that took part at the 2015 Western Canada Bantam Challenge, capturing the silver medal. Purdie was also a part of the coaching staff that won Bronze at the 2015 Canada Winter Games.

JM: What is the thing you're most excited to do once COVID's kind of gone in Manitoba and you guys are kind of back to normal?

BP: Yes, just that, getting back to normal. Being able to go to a restaurant, hang out with people in the backyard, and have a few drinks on the patio. You know just where we were 18 months ago, just being able to go and not have to worry about "Do you have your mask?" or "How many people could be in this store?", you know, that sort of thing. So, just getting back to normal.

JM: What do you do away from the rink? I know it's usually not much of an off-season with recruiting and everything, but what do you do with your spare time in the summer?

BP: Yes, I got three daughters. They're 19, 16, and 14, so I mean, they're at different ages. They were involved in dance and gymnastics, all that stuff so, they're kind of different than a hockey parent would be. But you know, my oldest daughter, just kind of going through her on-the-job training for paramedics, she's been away from the house for a month now, and then the stuff that I do, I like to golf. You know the first time we got locked down, I started picking up some woodworking stuff, so I've been building some outdoor furniture and some cooler boxes, and that stuff, so it keeps me busy as a hobby so it's fun.

JM: What's your favorite genre of music? A couple of your favorite artists, and maybe the best concert you've ever been to.

BP: I'm a radio guy so I just pick through them all. I don't mind country. I seem to always gravitate back towards the country music. Good concerts; I went to Keith Urban; my daughter took me to Luke Combs; those were really good. A year ago, I went to see Aerosmith. Back in my playing days in Brooklyn, Indiana, I actually saw Mötley Crüe, so that was pretty cool. Yeah, I've been to a few, some good ones.

JM: Mötley Crüe was actually my first ever concert.

BP: My first ever concert was actually Iron Maiden when I was 12 years old. I went with my brothers so that was an eye-opening experience.

JM: Yes, I bet.

BP: Iron Maiden and Twisted Sister, so that was a good one.

JM: That was probably quite the show.

BP: Yeah.

JM: Favourite sport outside of hockey? I know you kind of touched on golf but not sure if that's your favorite.

BP: I kind of enjoy golf now. Growing up, I played baseball and football. I like to watch football. I like to throw the ball around, but golf would be my favorite thing to do outside of hockey.

JM: Do you have any favorite football or baseball teams?

BP: Not really, I'm more of just a football fan. I just like to watch the game. I like watching baseball, come playoffs, I tend to root for the underdogs. I don't have one particular team that I cheer for though.

JM: If you could have one superhero ability, what would it be and why?

BP: I would think time-travel, maybe, if that's a superhero power? I don't know. Either that or the ability to fly, I guess, to get somewhere quick. But, if the ability to time-travel is considered a superpower, then I would love to be able to go back in time. I'm kind of a fan of the Roman times, I guess, back in the Roman Empire. I like to watch movies, and documentaries about that sort of stuff. So that'll be cool to see how they built a city and if there was actually a Labyrinth, and you know all the marble and stuff that they showed to be in the movies so, that be something I'd like to do.

JM: I think that would be considered as superhero ability. That's actually something I have thought about too if I had to pick one. Just to go back and witness history and even if you just watch it like a movie, just to see it live would be pretty cool.

BP: That would be.

JM: Favourite athlete. Doesn't have to be hockey player.

BP: Again, I'm not a one type of player fan. I don't necessarily have a favorite athlete. I admire what Tiger Woods has been able to do, Michael Jordan, the greats of the game. You know the ability, the mental toughness those guys have to bring it every day at practice and at the game. The documentary of Michael Jordan was pretty cool, kind of seeing behind the scenes. But for a

favorite athlete, to be honest I don't really have one. A favorite player of mine was always Jarome Iginla, which is actually pretty cool now that he's in the league. Hopefully, we can get back to normal and be able to coach again. But he's in my top five favorite players of all time for sure.

JM: That's a good answer. You kind of touched on this a little bit with the three daughters but maybe just go into your family life, growing up what it was like, where you live now, where you grew up, if you got any pets, those kinds of things.

BP: Well, I was born and raised in Montreal, QC. Our family moved out to Vancouver, BC when I was 11 years old. And then we moved back to Montreal when I was 15. So, living in Vancouver's pretty cool. I actually got to play little league baseball out there and our team actually went to the Little League World Series in 1984, so that was pretty cool. And then we moved back to Montreal when I was 15 and I went to play junior. I live in Winnipeg, MB now. My wife is from Winnipeg. I met her when I was playing pro. We bought a house here in 2004 and have been a full-time resident here since 2004. As I said three daughters who are 19, 16 and 14. Just hit 20 years of marriage in June.

JM: Any pets?

BP: No pets. I would like to get a dog, kids always want a dog but have to get that okay from the boss, but she's not there yet.

JM: You kind of mentioned you went to the Little League World Series, right? Where was that when you went? What was that experience like?

BP: It was then Williamsport, PA where it's hosted every year. It's changed since I've played. We went as the Canadian team down to Williamsport and then at that time there was only 8 teams in the tournament, and I think there up to 16 teams now. So, there was four American teams, there was Canada, there was a team from Europe, a team from South America and a team from far east South Korea. What was cool about that tournament was it was the first time there was ever a girl playing. She was playing for the team from Europe so that was pretty cool.

JM: That must have been quite the experience.

BP: It was good, I mean at the time when you're 12 years old you don't really realize sort of the magnitude of it. My dad was one of the coaches and he knew the history and all the stuff. We were just kids' kind of having fun and stuff. It was pretty cool when you think back on it, it was a pretty big honour.

JM: Definitely. This is a question everyone's kind of struggled a little bit with but would you rather have a personal full-time chef, personal full-time driver, or personal full-time housemaid?

BP: If I had to choose one, I would probably say personal housemaid to clean house. I like to keep the house clean with three daughters and four ladies in the house that's not always the easiest but I'd say a personal housekeeper I guess.

JM: I think that's kind of what everyone is picking so for that or the chef. How did you get involved in your current role?

BP: So, I finished playing hockey in 2011 and then when I came back to be a resident here full time, Rink Training Center started just as a skills center, right. They had a smaller ice surface and were just kind of doing a lot of skill work. Actually, I brought my resume in thinking maybe there's an opportunity for me there and never really heard anything back from them at the time. They were just getting started so I started actually coaching at the University of Manitoba with Mike Sirant who has actually had been there for a long time. So, I coached there for four seasons. And actually, through my daughters' dance school, Brad Rice, two of his daughters danced with two my daughters so we got to know their family. When they started throwing this academy idea around together Brad and I and Ryan Cyr met one day and they told me their ideas and I was completely on board. That was in 2015 or 2016, something like that. I was coaching at that time at the University Manitoba. I was coaching and had done some stuff with Hockey Manitoba and had worked with Brad's son. I was starting to become a little bit known around the coaching and hockey world here. Not being from here but that's the way I kind of got my foot in the door on the coaching side. And when they approached me, I was all in and it's been great ever since.

JM: What about the CSSHL model do you like in particular?

BP: Well, I just think the whole student-athlete, school comes first is so important. The similar schedule that we have. I assume most schools are like that with the school during the day and hockey in the afternoon. Giving the families and kids time off at night. For us, we don't practice at night, we don't practice on weekends when we're not playing. It's a busy schedule but also, I am a fan of the time management part, preparing kids who are going up to junior or going up to college. Getting your studies done, getting your hockey stuff done. Making sure you also spend time with yourself to be kids. That the whole kind of 9 to 5 type of work day is great for me anyway and my family and I'm sure a lot of coaches appreciate it. When talking to families, they appreciate it too. Kids aren't going to school, rushing home, chocking down a meal, then driving all over the province to venues for hockey. It's just a consistent schedule which is nice. We know our schedule in June, we'll know our schedule for the whole year type of things. It's nice to be able to plan, families to plan, it's a convenient busy schedule but it's nice that it's consistent.

JM: What's the best piece of advice you got in life or something that's kind of stuck with you, and again it doesn't have to be hockey-related?

BP: My dad was always the guy that told me to show up and do your best. Right, like if you are going to believe in yourself, believe in your abilities. Especially the age that we have these kids at, there's always kids that are bigger and stronger at thirteen and when you become sixteen, you're the same size, same abilities and that type of thing so just trust in yourself, trust in your

abilities. Stay the course with things and I think a lot of people get into the "I need to get to junior fast" and they kind of try to think they can do that at sixteen and then they kind of burnout and they just don't make it. So, trust the process, trust yourself and don't be afraid to ask for advice. If you're not sure of something, ask somebody because there's somebody that's been down that road before.

JM: That's a good answer. I like that. Now I got the last one here. Your favorite or funniest or most unique hockey memory. Maybe something that just stands out for whatever reason.

BP: Well, for me a pretty cool hockey experience was 1999. I was playing in Austria during the big Y2K scare was on and everybody thought the world was going to end. And I was fortunate enough to be chosen to play for Team Canada in the Spengler Cup. At midnight, it was myself and my fiancée at that time, now my wife, sitting in the hotel they had a team dinner for us and it was myself and her, Tom Renney and his family, the assistant coach. We just kind of sat there and the clock struck 12, nothing blew up, nothing. Time just kept going on. Actually, it was a very calm moment so it's pretty cool. Tom Renney obviously does a lot of good things for Hockey Canada but it's just a cool memory I won't forget.