

FROM THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA GOLDEN BEARS LOCKER ROOM

Bears' equipment man also goalie

Graham Fleming leads a hectic life. The 23-year-old serves both as the equipment manager of powerhouse University of Alberta, defending champs of Canadian university hockey, and as the Golden Bears' third-string goalie. So far, the Vernon, B.C.-native has dressed for five games this season, and takes practice with the players. All this, and he's a student too, in the third year of a secondary education degree at the school. THN chatted with Fleming:

THN: What are your responsibilities with the Bears?

GF: I take care of everything on the equipment side: gloves, helmets, sticks etc. I also sharpen everyone's skates every day.

THN: How did you get the job?

GF: I approached the team at the beginning of the season. I had experience sharpening skates – I worked in a sporting goods store in B.C. – and I played hockey in the BCHL with the Powell River Kings, and one year at Grant MacEwan College here in Edmonton. I love hockey, and this job gives me a chance to be around the game. Plus, the Bears are one of the premier teams in Canadian university hockey, and everything is easier when you're with a winning program.

THN: How do you manage to both take part in practice and

do your equipment duties?

GF: I show up early at the rink and get all the skate sharpening and equipment things done. That gives me time to get into practice and give the guys some work.



**GRAHAM
FLEMING**
EQUIPMENT
MANAGER

THN: The times when you suited up as the backup this year, who took care of your equipment duties?

GF: Well, our trainer stepped in and helped out, and the guys were accommodating too. I'd grab a stick if a guy needed

it. One time, when we were playing at the University of British Columbia, a guy lost an edge and needed his skate sharpened. So there I was, in full goalie gear, sharpening his skates in the hallway outside the room. The coaches were laughing – it was different.

THN: What are your plans once you finish school?

GF: I'd like to teach high school, and I'd like to coach hockey.

THN: Do you use a Blademaster skate sharpening machine?

GF: Yeah, we have a portable and a regular machine. They're great. Even though I hadn't sharpened skates for a few years, it was easy to remember how to do it. It's a very straightforward process, and you get a good edge every time.

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