

Former Hab Engblom has fond memories of the West Island



Mike Cohen

TAMPA — I am old enough to remember what a good defence-man Brian Engblom was for the Montreal Canadiens from 1977 to 1982, before then Managing Di-

rector Irving Grundman traded him to the Washington Capitals along with Rod Langway, Craig Laughlin and Doug Jarvis for Ryan Walter and Rick Green. It was the ultimate blockbuster transaction.

When I was fortunate enough to attend a recent Canadiens game in Tampa versus the Lightning at the beautiful Amalie Arena, I was

pleased to connect with Engblom. He is now in his third season as a television analyst for Lightning games on Sun Sport working alongside play by play man Rick Peckham,

Engblom has more than 20 years of NHL experience both as a player and a broadcaster with ESPN, ABC, NBC and TSN. One

his broadcast career highlights was working at the 2014 Winter Olympics in Sochi, Russia. A native of Winnipeg, he is a three-time Stanley Cup Champion as a player, skating in 659 career NHL games with the Canadiens, Capitals, Los Angeles Kings, Buffalo Sabres and Calgary Flames. He was drafted 22nd overall by Habs in the 1975 draft after playing collegiately at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Engblom lived in Dorval and Dollard des Ormeaux during his days with the Habs. "In those days almost all of the team lived on the West Island," Engblom shared with me. "For one thing, it was close to the airport. I was shocked when the trade hit. We had just purchased our home in Dollard, which was tough and I loved Montreal. It still has a special place in my heart."

After his playing career, Engblom said he found work in the real world. "It was not so much fun," he said. "I turned to broadcasting and I loved it immediately."

Joining the Lightning organization resulted in a dream job for Engblom. "This is a marvelous organization and what a great city to work in," he said. "It was a home run for me and I now live here year-round."

Attending a Habs-Lightning game in Tampa was definitely something on my bucket list, a happy coincidence that worked out during a winter vacation planned months before I even looked at the NHL schedule. I had a chance to see former

Canadiens first round draft choice Mikhail Sergachev in action. The standout defence-man was traded to the Lightning last summer for centre Jonathan Drouin. "Sergachev is a heck of a player," said Engblom. "I do not know how high his ceiling is; he gets better every game. He has great hands and two heavy shots; he is definitely one of those special players who plays a very bold game and has no fear at all."

BARTLETT THRIVES: I had a great chat during the second intermission with Pointe Claire resident John Bartlett, now the play by play man for Canadiens regional broadcasts on TSN. Of course he came here from Toronto in 2011 to call the plays on TSN Radio. He then moved to TV and Sportsnet for three seasons. When the Habs switched their regional deal back to TSN, he was fortunate to move into the same slot for them.

SERGIO ON THE MEND: Former Hab and West Island resident Sergio Momesso loves his job as color commentator for Habs radio broadcasts on TSN 690 alongside Dan Robertson. He also looks forward to the warm weather trips to Florida at Christmas. This year was not so much fun. "I am sick," he told me politely before I could try and shake his hand. "What a bummer to be sick on this trip." Sergio and Dan make a great team!

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