

## FROM THE MINNESOTA WILD LOCKER ROOM

# Da Costa a Wild lifer

**V**eteran equipment manager Tony Da Costa is a "Day 1" member of the Minnesota Wild, joining the franchise for the 2000-01 inaugural season after nineteen years with the Winnipeg/Phoenix franchise. Da Costa, who is a Winnipeg native, now makes his home in Woodbury, Minn. with his wife, June, and two daughters, Summer and Rylee. We chatted with Da Costa.

**THN:** You've been with the Wild since it entered the NHL. What's different about this season than others?

**TD:** I think the pressure is different. There's a feeling that it's time. When we reached the conference final in 2003 against Anaheim, in just our third season, there was a sense we were ahead of schedule. Now the pressure is on, and you can feel it.

**THN:** Which teams have developed into the Wild's biggest rivals?

**TD:** I think Vancouver and Anaheim are probably the two biggest, though we've developed other big rivalries as well.

**THN:** In some ways, the Wild is considered a model franchise, at least in terms of how to build an organization from scratch. Why do you think that is?

**TD:** I really think it starts with upper management and

coaching. If you think about GM Doug Risebrough, coach Jacques Lemaire, assistant coach Mario Tremblay, they're all winners. There's an intensity there and they don't expect anything less than winning.

**THN:** Does your job change



**Tony  
Da Costa**  
Equipment  
Manager



when the playoffs arrive?

**TD:** No. In one way, it's easier, too, because you go to a city and you're in that city for several days, instead of going from city to city during the regular season. The only thing I do different for the playoffs is order a

new set of sweaters for everyone, just to start out fresh.

**THN:** As far as equipment, do any Wild players have any special requirements?

**TD:** The one thing that sticks out is that Marion Gaborik very seldom needs his skates sharpened. He can go for two weeks without it. I'll say to him, 'These blades are like butter knives,' and he'll say, 'No, no they're good!' He uses a flat hollow, but it's really amazing how much snow he can still spray without super sharp skates. Pavol Demitra and Petteri Nummelin also go without sharpening for a long time.

**THN:** Do you use the Blademaster Ultimate skate sharpening machine?

**TD:** Yes, I love it. I got one last year. The adjustable speed gives you a better finish and it's a lot quieter than the older machines.

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