

FROM THE QUINNIPIAC BOBCATS LOCKER ROOM

From college to the pros and back

Equipment managers prove their worth in the pros, playing an important role in helping players perform at their best. In the college ranks, a different world of smaller budgets and tasks that cross into multiple disciplines, the function is critical. Sal Lombardi, head equipment manager of the ECAC Quinnipiac Bobcats, gives us a sense of what life is like in the NCAA.

THN: How did you get started in the business?

Lombardi: It was 1974 and I was in high school in Providence, RI. Lou Lamoriello was head coach and he invited me to help out with the college team. I was there from 1974 to 1982. After graduating from Rhode Island College, I went to New Haven, the AHL affiliate of the Los Angeles Kings. In 1983, I joined the New York Rangers and then the Kings for close to nine years, until the season following their Stanley Cup final appearance in 1994. I then went to the Las Vegas Thunder of the IHL and to the Charlotte Checkers where I won my first championship in 1995-96. In 2000, I went back to Providence until August 2006, when I came to Quinnipiac.

THN: What's it like working with college athletes?

Lombardi: My experience in

the NHL helps with the younger kids. They know I have a certain level of expertise, so they're constantly picking my brain.

THN: How important a role do people in your position play on teams?

Lombardi: We play a major role,



**SAL
LOMBARDI**
EQUIPMENT
MANAGER

whether as equipment manager for the athletic department or just the hockey team. It's very time consuming and we have to keep a lot of people happy.

THN: Who are some of the people who left an impression on you?

Lombardi: Wayne Gretzky

and Dave Taylor top the list. I was young and those guys helped me out a lot. When my parents passed away, Wayne was there and helped me at a time when things didn't look so good. Barry Melrose was the first coach who told me I had to worry about "Sal the person" before "Sal the equipment guy."

THN: What are some of the challenges of working in the college ranks?

Lombardi: We have to get creative because budgets are so tight. We have to have good relationships with suppliers so we get the best deals possible - for everything.

THN: What skate sharpening machine are you using?

Lombardi: I have the new Blademaster Custom Radius machine. It's absolutely awesome. It's the only machine - portable or stationary - that I've ever used.

THE CHOICE OF PROFESSIONALS

BLADEMASTER

Introducing the
World's Most
Advanced Skate
Sharpening
System Ever!

