

FROM THE CALGARY FLAMES LOCKER ROOM

# Thorson carries torch for Flames

**G**us Thorson is enjoying his ninth year as the equipment manager for the Flames, after starting his career with the Canadian national team, where he worked for a decade. The 48-year old lives in Calgary, where he has made his home since 1970, and is married with three children. We caught up with Gus to chat about equipment in today's NHL:

**THN:** What are some of the big changes you've seen in equipment over your years with the Flames?

**GT:** Sticks for sure. My stick budget has more than tripled since I started. And with the composites, everybody has a hard shot now.

**THN:** Anyone left using wood?

**GT:** On our team, Adrian Aucoin still uses a wood stick. There're maybe a dozen and half guys using wood in the league. Sticks are so personal. Everybody has his own preference.

**THN:** Do you have certain players who are particular about their equipment?

**GT:** I think every guy is particular to a certain extent. A guy like Jarome Iginla, he likes a solid, stiff skate. He breaks down skates in a hurry. He likes his skates really sharp.

So we'll re-sharpen them after the first or second period.

Then there are some other guys who aren't as particular.

**THN:** When you get a new player from a trade or a call up, what's the process for



**Gus  
Thorson**  
Equipment  
Manager



determining their equipment needs?

**GT:** First thing we do is talk to the equipment manager from the old team. What was the player wearing, what's the skate hollow he's using, etc.

Then once the player comes in, we'll get him set up, talk to him and see if there's anything he wants to change.

**THN:** You're entering your ninth season in Calgary. How is this year's edition of the Flames different from others?

**GT:** It's too soon to tell, but I don't think there's a big difference. One thing I'll say is that we have a lot of new guys this year, six to eight new players on the team, a couple of young guys as backup goalies. When a third of your roster turns over, it can take time to gel.

**THN:** Do you have the new Blademaster Ultimate sharpening machine?

**GT:** Yeah, I do and I love it. I like the way it's configured so that it allows two guys to sharpen skates at the same time. During an intermission, one guy is not waiting for the other guy to be done.

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