

SPORTS BOARD

SPORTS, GAMING, HORSERACING

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SPORTLIGHT

By R.L. Greene

NEW YORK—Tony McKegney is that rare breed—a Black who has excelled in the National Hockey League.

A forward for the St. Louis Blues, McKegney is enjoying his best year this season, scoring 40 goals. On Jan. 23, he had a hat trick—three goals in a single game—to lead the Blues to a 5-3 victory over the Quebec Nordiques.

Like Grant Fuhr, the NHL's top goaltender who also is Black, McKegney grew up in a white family in Canada.

"I was the second to be adopted," McKegney says of the family in Sarnia, Ontario, who adopted him before he was a year old. "My parents had three children of their own, and they adopted three children. My dad felt . . . he

could do something for the amount of kids that were homeless or without parents per se."

Lowry McKegney, now a retired chemist, and Cathy McKegney, reached out in an unusual way. All three of their adopted boys are Black.

"It seemed very normal to me, and no one in our neighborhood or city really treated us any different," McKegney says of growing up in a racially-mixed family. "But I think sports probably helped a lot, because we were known as athletes and so forth. People had a certain amount of respect for us athletically."

"I remember the dedication that my parents put into it when we were younger, driving us to rinks at seven in the morning. We had a hockey rink, actually, in our back yard that my parents

made each year."

When he was 20 and playing junior hockey for Kingston in the Ontario Hockey Association, the Buffalo Sabres selected him on the second round of the 1978 NHL draft.

He has since played for five NHL teams: Buffalo, Quebec, Minnesota, New York and St. Louis. Until this year, his highest-scoring season was 1980-81 when he had 37 goals. This season the Blues have been hit hard by injuries. Yet McKegney has helped lead the team into the playoffs.

"I think his biggest value to our club has been his ability to score," St. Louis coach Jacques Martin says. "I don't have any theory why Tony has played with so many teams. Sometimes what has been said in the past is that once he's estab-

lished, he doesn't produce as much. The key is for him to keep working."

This is the 30-year-old McKegney's 10th NHL season, and by far the best.

"The funny thing is that I'm starting to enjoy the game more than I ever have," McKegney says. "Obviously, I know I'm on the 'back nine,' if you want to compare it to golf. I'd like to make the best of the last couple of years."

The father of two young boys, McKegney wants his sons to be able to remember their father playing in the NHL. He also is aware of his role-model responsibilities as one of only five Blacks currently playing in the league. And he's quick to point out that Fuhr, the Edmonton Oilers' standout, is the best of that small, elite group.

"I guess you could say the guy that's done the best is probably Grant Fuhr," McKegney says. "He's had the most success. I take my hat off to Grant. He's been an All-Star. He's won Stanley Cups."

Other Blacks in the NHL are forward Dirk Graham of the Minnesota North Stars, and goaltender Eldon "Pokey" Reddick and forward Ray Neufeld of the Winnipeg Jets.

"I pride myself in being maybe the first Black player to play consistently in the league," McKegney said. "There were a few others who were sort of up and down (between the NHL and the minor leagues)."

McKegney has remained in the NHL largely because of his skating skills, his durability and his steadiness. Only once has he played in fewer than 60 of the regular season's 80 games. Two years ago, when he scored 15 goals and had 25 assists, was the only season he scored fewer than 23 goals or finished with less than 45 points. He has had three 30-goal seasons.

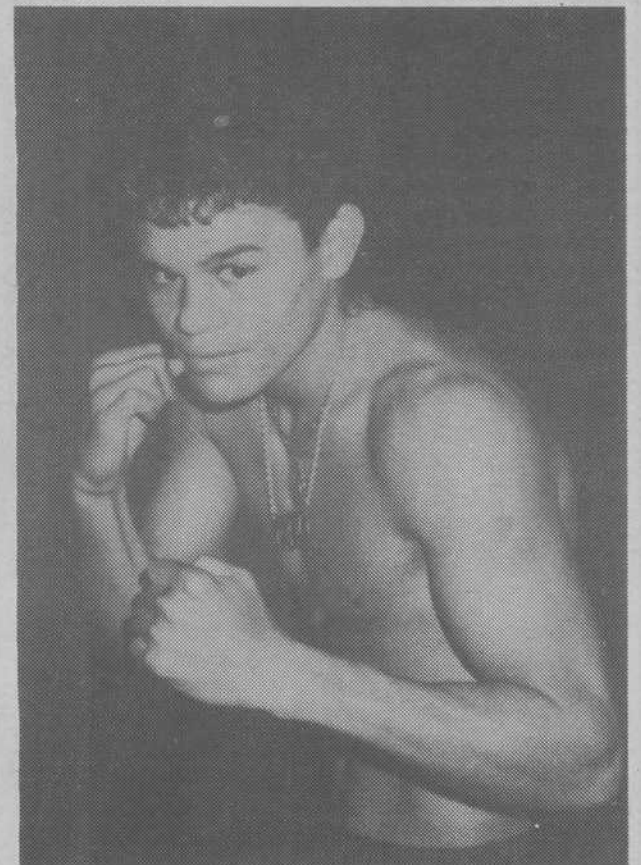
Today, McKegney is at the top of his profession, leading the St. Louis Blues into the Stanley Cup playoffs.

WORLD-RANKED PEDROZA HEADLINES MONTHLY BOXING AT SHOWBOAT MAY 21

World-ranked and undefeated slugger Engels Pedroza faces David "Dynamite" Taylor of Atlanta in the 10-round main event on the monthly "Boxing at the Boat" card Saturday, May 21, at the Showboat Hotel, Casino, Country Club and Bowling Center.

Tickets, priced at \$12 for general admission and \$20 for ringside reserved, are on sale from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday through Friday at the Showboat Sports Pavilion Ticket Office.

Pedroza, who has stopped 13 opponents in the first round, is coming off a sec-



Pedroza

Pedroza, originally from Venezuela but now living in Long Beach, Calif., has a record of 18-0 — all wins coming by knockout — and is ranked in the junior welterweight division by all three sanctioning organizations. The World Boxing Association has the 21-year-old sensation rated No. 6, the International Boxing Federation has him ranked No. 7 and the World Boxing Council has him placed No. 10.

Also on the nationally televised card promoted by the Showboat will be five more bouts, four featuring Las Vegans.

The card starts at 7 p.m. with doors to the Showboat Sports Pavilion opening at 6.

ond-round knockout of veteran Sammy Young April 23 at the Showboat.

Taylor, who has a record of 15-8-2 with six knockouts, also is coming off a knockout, a first-round stoppage of Genaro Leone Feb. 6 in Paris.

Taylor, who also has fought and won in England, dropped a close 10-round decision to WBC lightweight champion Jose Luis Ramirez, April 19, 1987, in Marseilles. Since then Taylor has won three out of four fights.

Also appearing on the card assembled by matchmaker Mel Greb are Las Vegans Akeem Anifowoshe, Ray Thompson, Otis Pimpleton and Jeff Mayweather.

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