

Lund plays integral role in Aeros' WHA title bid

By NICK VOINIS
Staff Sports Writer

HOUSTON, Tex. "We'll have to take the series one game at a time," said Houston Aero center Larry Lund of the team's World Hockey Association title defense against the Quebec Nordiques.

"Quebec has an excellent team," he said. "One thing nice about this series is you have the two teams with the best records in the league. That's the way it should be."

"Our defensemen are very mobile, they shouldn't have much trouble (against Quebec's speed)," Lund said. "We'll have to check pretty close, but we play our best hockey then. Both clubs are capable of playing a physical series."

Saturday night the Aeros constantly kept the Nordiques against the boards, not allowing the visitors across the red line (center ice) thus making goaltender Ron Grahames' job much easier. Four first period goals allowed the Aeros to cruise to a 6-2 victory in the opener.

The six-foot, 190-pound Lund is the only player in the World Hockey Association to wear a No. 13 jersey. He has been bearing that number in all of his six years in professional hockey. The Canadian has been playing since his early teens in leagues very similar to American Little League baseball.

Lund has been playing on the same line with Andre Hinse and Frank Hughes since Hinse came to Houston at the beginning of last season; they had previously played together in Phoenix of the Western Hockey League before coming to Houston. The "Go-Go Line" has been one of the Aeros' most productive and consistent threesomes of all time.

Before this season, Lund ranked sixth among WHA career assist leaders with 98 (two seasons — 152 games). He added 75 more assists this season along with 33 goals for 108 total points to qualify as the team's leading scorer. He totaled 86 points last season — good enough to be the Aeros' second leading scorer behind Gordie Howe.

Lund, who played on the last two Western Division All-Star teams said he never thought he'd end up playing on the same team with the immortal Howe. "Five years ago it seemed an impossibility," he said.

"He's such a great person it's hard to define him," Lund said of Howe. "There hasn't been his equal and there probably won't ever be. The thing that makes him such a good hockey player is he can do everything. He has strength and attitude."

"I was impressed with their (Howe's) father-son relationship. The boys have a good attitude and their family is so close. So many times this doesn't happen," Lund added. "I'm sure he never pushed them to play hockey."

Attending school in the off-season, Lund is only 20 hours away from graduation at Arizona State University. He is a business major

with a minor in finance. This off-season Lund will be operating his own hockey school in British Columbia. Teammate Hinse

and Aero coach Bill Dineen will be joining him along with Minnesota North Star's goaltender Cesare Maniago.



LARRY LUND, Aeros' All-Star center

Johncock posts best practice lap

INDIANAPOLIS (AP) — Jutawed A. J. Foyt brought the crowd to its feet Tuesday, but it was little Gordon Johncock who posted the fastest practice lap of the day as action intensified at the Indianapolis Motor Speedway.

Foyt, the 40-year-old Texas charger, arrived here from Houston to begin practice for the 59th Indianapolis 500-mile race, May 25.

When Foyt appeared the crowd of about 4,000 enjoying the warm temperatures and sunny skies, gave him a standing ovation. But in a couple of trial runs, he pushed his car up to only the 181-plus range.

Johncock, the 1974 champion, had the fastest time of any of the drivers for the second straight day, whirling around the 2½-mile asphalt oval at 190.880 miles per hour.

That was well behind last year's top qualifying speed of 199.071, turned in by defending champion Johnny Rutherford. But the speeds definitely began to pick up as winds subsided.

Fifteen drivers turned in laps over the 180 mark Tuesday, including Rutherford and other former champions Bobby and Al Unser and Mario Andretti. Bobby Unser, the older of the two racing brothers from Albuquerque, N.M., was behind Johncock at 187.852 mph.

In all, 31 cars made it onto the track Tuesday.

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