

SHARING THE SMYTHE

BY JONATHAN MARCHESSAULT

The Conn Smythe is kind of a funny trophy to win. It's great, but how do you look at a team like ours and pick out one person? The whole reason we won was our depth. They could have announced four or five different names for that award, and nobody would have been surprised.

I have been in Vegas from the beginning, and I remember, during those early days, thinking that people didn't give us enough credit for the talent in the room. We didn't know what to expect either, but once we got on the ice together, we had some really good players, as we showed.

But this team – this was the most talented group we've had, or I've ever been around. I guess that's obvious when you win the Stanley Cup – and win it convincingly, like we did. But it's true, and you can go down the roster and see why.

Start with Jack. I told him on the ice that he got me the Conn Smythe, and I stand by that. He can do so much on the ice, and he can almost make it look easy. It starts with his stride and how he covers so much ice so quickly. But he can pass, he can shoot, he can skate, he can defend – there really isn't anything he can't do.

I think I'm a pretty good player. I'm sure the other guys on the team will tell you that I'm a confident person. And I can play with good players, but I think I'm more of a complementary player. Guys like Jack – they just make everyone around them so much better.

Stoney is the same way. He just elevates the group. But he does it in a different way than Jack. Where Jack flies around the ice and you are in awe of his skill, Stoney creates time and space with his smarts. And what a leader. After what he did in Game 5, he could have easily won the Conn Smythe.

I can't go too far without mentioning my brothers, Smitty and Karly. Obviously, those guys are part of why I say the first team was more talented than people gave us credit for. They can do absolutely anything you want them to on the ice. First power play? First forwards on the PK? Score a big goal,



or block a shot? Those guys are complete hockey players. I'm so honored that people connect me with them. The name Misfits means a lot to me, and winning a championship together made it even sweeter.

I guess you can tell I'm a forward when I haven't mentioned a goalie or a defenseman yet. Adin was a rock for us in the playoffs, just as all our goalies were all year. Talk about another great Conn Smythe guy.

And our defense was probably the strength of our team. A guy like Petro amazes me, how he can do everything and do it all so well. He's strong, he's big, he's skilled – no wonder you look up at the end of the night and he's got a couple points, six blocked shots and a +3. And he plays half the game!

Shea is more of the flashy type, with his skating and his moves. If you made me play defense, that's the kind of stuff I would hope I could do.

I could keep going and probably name everybody on the roster. That's what I mean about being

surrounded by more talent than ever before. The true sign of our depth was probably how much our third pair or fourth line meant to us.

Haguer and Whitey really seemed to come into their own this spring. That night I had a hat trick in Edmonton, they were out there defending [Connor] McDavid and [Leon] Draisaitl in a six-on-five. There isn't another so-called third pair in the league that can do that.

The next series, we probably played our best game of the year – if not in franchise history – in Game 6 at Dallas. It was Roy-Kolesar-Carrier who led the way for us that night.

I guess I'm glad I didn't have to vote on the Conn Smythe. But I'm sure glad I got to share a room with these guys.