

Jim Dowd

NHL center, 39, Point Pleasant Beach ... in his own words

I THINK THE SECRET to the longevity, at least in my career, has been finding a role with a team. And not telling people to go screw themselves. I've been tempted every year.

I REMEMBER JUST ONE IMPORTANT THING my Dad told me when I was leaving for college. He said, "Screw the other guys. Do what you do." Mom just said, "Don't get anybody pregnant."

MY FIRST GAME in the NHL I remember. It was the only game I played my first year with the Devils in 1992. It was against the Boston Bruins. I'm pretty sure Adam Oates let me win the faceoff.

PROBABLY MY MOST STARSTUCK MOMENT in this league actually came the first time playing against Gretzky. It was pretty cool. I mean, there's no one even close to that guy. Nobody. No one's even going to touch his records. I'm not a starstruck guy. But *he's* Wayne Gretzky.

OBVIOUSLY, WINNING THE STANLEY CUP with the Devils in 1995 was the most memorable time in my career. Growing up in Brick and being a Devils' fan, there's nothing more you can say, nothing more you can ask for.

I HAD THE GAME-WINNING GOAL in Game 2 of the Stanley Cup that year, scoring it with a minute and 26 seconds left. That was definitely the highlight of my career. But I don't replay it in my head. I don't replay any goals in my head. When you're playing, yesterday is forgotten.

ONE OF THE MAIN PHILOSOPHIES I've developed is, you need to be prepared. When you're prepared, everything's easy. If you lose even the littlest edge, you lose what you have quick. You can build it, build it, build it ... but you can lose it all in one day.

OTHER THAN NEW JERSEY, I'd say Montreal was the best place I played. I'm a history guy when it comes to sports and there's so much history there. It was one of the Original Six teams (in the NHL). It was like playing for the Yankees.

THE LEAGUE HAS CHANGED a lot since I started. Definitely for the worse. All the new rules are horrible. Every one of them. There's not one good new rule. Does everyone else feel that way? Lots of guys don't care – because it's new to them.

I DO THINK ABOUT COACHING when my career ends, and I know I'll make a good coach. But whenever this ends, I'm not rushing into anything. I want to spend time with my wife and my kids. The kids are at a great age, 5 and 2.

I NEVER WANTED TO LEAVE here. But it's New Jersey. Everyone who leaves comes back anyway, don't they? ✦

INTERVIEW BY **BOB CONSIDINE**

ARTWORK BY **JEFF COLSON & PETER ACKERMAN**



Jim's Journey: Brick native and Point Pleasant Beach resident Jim Dowd has played for 10 different NHL teams during his 16-year NHL career, the most by any American-born player in league history. Dowd also played for five minor league teams and for a team in Germany during the NHL lockout season of 2004-05. Team-by-team graphic, page 86