



**BC Inline Hockey Association (BCIHA)**  
**Interview with Matt Pope, Manitoba Moose/Vancouver Canucks**



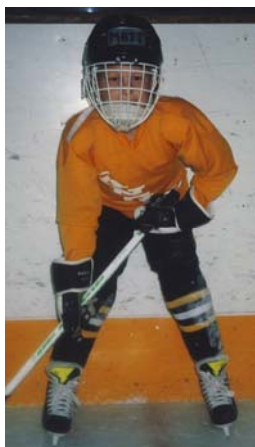
**BCIHA:** At 25 years old you've achieved a fair bit in ice hockey, what with your role with Langley Minor Hockey, the Langley Hornets (BCHL), Bemidji St University (NCAA Div 1), Bakersfield Condors (ECHL) and Manitoba Moose (AHL) and recently signing a contract with the Vancouver Canucks. When and where did you start playing ice hockey?



**Matt Pope:** I started when I was 3 years old in Langley Minor Hockey Association - what would now be compared to tot hockey I guess. My dad coached me for about 9 years and got me a great start.

**BCIHA:** Can you give us a summary of your ice hockey experience from the time you first started playing up until now?

**MP:** Well my dad tells me I hated it for a few weeks because I fell down all the time, but apparently I got over that habit! Something weird about me is that I had never won a championship in minor hockey. I played in thousands of tournaments over the years and never once got first place, some seconds and some consolation round winners but never 1<sup>st</sup>. It wasn't until my first year of college hockey with BSU that I won anything big. We won the season banner and the playoff banner before advancing to the sweet 16 National Tournament. During my NCAA career, I ended up winning a total of four banners in my four years there so I had a good career championship wise.



**BCIHA:** You just completed your first year of pro hockey in which you were selected to the ECHL's All-Rookie team and then had quite a run with Manitoba in the Calder Cup Playoffs. What are your thoughts on the past year?

**MP:** My first year pro went very well. I didn't know what to expect and it turned out to be a great year, I got opportunities and I took advantage of them. I couldn't have asked for anything better.



I scored a hat-trick in my 2<sup>nd</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> game in the ECHL with Bakersfield and managed over a point a game after that. I was selected to the all-star game and then named to the starting line-up for it. Then I was called up to play for the Binghamton Senators of the AHL and did well, however, after a week they didn't have room for me because players came back from injury. Luckily for me the Manitoba Moose took that opportunity to bring me onto their team and I finished the season with them. I had a great run with the Moose both personally and as a team. We won the season





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title and lost in game 6 of the Calder Cup Finals. The Canucks then signed me to a two-way contract for one year.



**BCIHA:** Growing up in Langley and now signing with the Vancouver Canucks, your hometown team, what is that feeling like?

**MP:** It’s an amazing feeling. The Canucks have been my favorite team since I watched my first game. I never got a chance to go to many games growing up, but my dad or grandpa tried to take me to one a year. I wanted to sign with the Canucks and I’m glad they made me a good offer so I didn’t have to sign somewhere else. I am hoping to play a

few games with the Canucks this year and do well enough to get me an extension on my contract. It would be a dream come true to play a game in GM place as a Canuck.

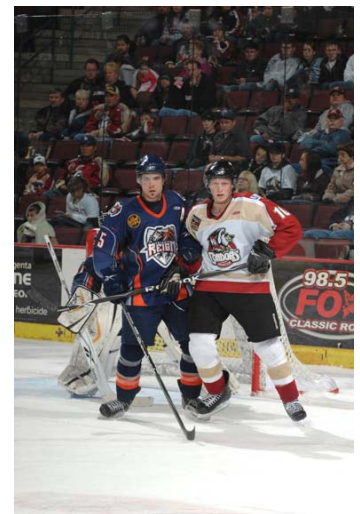
**BCIHA:** We understand that you also played inline hockey in the past, is that right?

**MP:** Yeah I loved roller hockey, I started when I was about 15 I think, took me a couple weeks to learn how to stop but after that I enjoyed it!

**BCIHA:** Where and for how long did you play inline hockey?

**MP:** I played at Langley Sportsplex from the age of 15 to 24.

**BCIHA:** Why did you end up playing inline hockey?



**MP:** I don’t know exactly why I started; I think I just saw it going on at the rink and it looked like a lot of fun!

**BCIHA:** What did you enjoy most about inline hockey?

**MP:** I liked the non-contact part. I could use my “dangles” out there that you can’t get away with in ice hockey. I also found I had a really good wrist shot because the puck was so much lighter, the only bad thing is that I couldn’t figure out to take a slap shot in roller hockey, still can’t!

**BCIHA:** Do you still play inline hockey or have the demands of ice hockey precluded you playing the sport recently?





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**MP:** Just not allowed, it would be a great way to stay in shape if I could - you sweat a lot out there! In my NHL contract it states I'm not supposed to participate in other sports or sporting events so that put a stop to it, but when I'm done playing pro hockey I'll definitely get back into roller hockey!



**BCIHA:** Do you feel that playing inline hockey had any positive effects on your ice hockey game?

**MP:** It definitely helped me with my hands, because there is no hitting you can do a lot of stick handling that helps your hands improve.

**BCIHA:** What is fondest memory of playing inline hockey to date?

**MP:** Winning the gold championship with the Thunder a few years ago

**BCIHA:** Some ice hockey people believe that playing inline hockey actually ruins an ice hockey player's ability to excel. Would you agree with this feeling?

**MP:** Hah, no I wouldn't agree. I played for about 10 years and it never hindered me at all. I have heard that it ruins your hockey stride... but I don't believe it at all, if anything it takes a few times on the ice to remember that you need to stop differently!

**BCIHA:** Thanks for taking the time to talk with us. We wish you the very best in the future.

**MP:** No problem it was my pleasure!

