

King's Pietrangelo leading Blues on historic run

By Jake Courtepatte

For just the second time in the past two decades, the St. Louis Blues are competing in the NHL's Western Conference Finals.

And it's King City's own Alex Pietrangelo, with the 'C' on his chest, that sits at the centre of the action.

St. Louis tied up the series with the San Jose Sharks in a 4-2 win on Monday night, where Pietrangelo had a hand in the game's final goal, assisting on a tally from Oskar Sundqvist with just a few minutes remaining.

Yet it was defence, an aspect of the game that the blueliner plays quite a large role in, that Pietrangelo said made the difference in the win.

'Sometimes some guys are just going better in games, so the coach makes decisions,' Pietrangelo told a media scrum post Game 2, where he tied the record for the most postseason points by a defenceman in franchise history with 12. 'This time of the year, you have to go with whoever is playing well.'

The 29-year-old from King City became the longest-tenured member of the Blues organization last summer after the trade of Patrick Berglund, responsible for playing the veteran presence in his ninth year with the club.

Yet the constant carousel in the dressing room, always a promising roster that comes up short in the post-season, does not faze the captain.

Rather, he believes the organization is now heading in the direction of the ultimate goal: to raise his first Stanley Cup.

'It's an exciting time to be a Blue,' said the big, talented blueliner. 'We've had some disappointing finishes in the last few seasons, with a good group of players, but I think (Blues general manager Doug Armstrong) and the team are pushing us in the right direction, filling the gaps that have been weak spots in our lineup.'

Pietrangelo, who spends the bulk of his off-season back in King on a training program, said it will take 'a heck of an effort' to get past an offensively-talented Sharks squad.

'We're going to have to put on our best effort, the defence, it will be tough but I think we're up to the task.'

Pietrangelo and his team surprised the Winnipeg Jets with a six-game series win in the opening round of the NHL playoffs, before needing seven games to best the Dallas Stars in the Western Conference Semifinals.