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Alumnus Laplante throws support behind Pronghorns women's hockey program

A five-year commitment of support from a University of Lethbridge alumnus has given the Pronghorns women's hockey team a power play opportunity in the ultra-competitive Canada West recruiting battle.

Dan Laplante (BMgt '88), retired entrepreneur and former oilfield service company executive, has pledged \$125,000, allowing the Horns to offer the maximum number of full-ride scholarships, enabling a stronger and deeper roster.

"Dan's generosity and support for the Pronghorns Women's Hockey Program will enhance the student-athlete experience and now provides the U of L with the ability to compete against other U SPORTS schools when it comes to recruiting the top U-18 female players in Canada and specifically Western Canada," says Horns head coach Doug Paisley. "The U of L has always been one of the best post-secondary choices in Canada and the City of Lethbridge has so much to offer from a community standpoint. Dan's backing of the hockey program now gives us the ability to build a perennial playoff contender and ultimately a team that can compete for a U SPORTS national championship."

U SPORTS programs have a cap on the amount of scholarship dollars that can be provided to student athletes so covering the costs of tuition and fees is carefully managed to maximize the use of scholarship dollars. Programs that cannot fund a full complement of scholarships are at a distinct disadvantage to those that can. Laplante wants to level the ice surface.



“The idea is to help our coaches by giving them a little more ammo,” he says. “The entire experience at the U of L is wonderful, but until you get there some students may not know that. The key is to get them there.

“My experience at the U of L was fantastic and I feel indebted to the University for providing me a platform and the experience that allowed me to be successful in business. A potential employer wants a well-rounded, engaged graduate. That’s what I always looked for, and I wanted a team player when I was hiring, somebody who would be more ‘we’ centric as opposed to ‘I’ centric.”

Laplante sees university athletics as an excellent training ground, and student-athletes as driven, committed and ultimately employable graduates.

“The vast majority of our partners, executives and salespeople, between my two companies, played team sports at either the U SPORTS or NCAA level,” says Laplante. “I see a real linkage in why employers hire university athletes because they have a lot of skills and a lot of valuable attributes that are transferable to the workforce.”

Laplante’s investment is part of the U of L’s SHINE campaign and highlights the community’s involvement in supporting students and promoting opportunities for them to thrive while working to achieve their academic goals. It comes on the heels of a similar commitment Laplante made of \$132,000 to the Horns men’s hockey team in 2018, allowing the program to also offer a full complement of scholarships.

“I didn’t think it was appropriate to support one gender without supporting the other,” he says. “It’s important to show the current players there are people who support them and also to help with recruiting for the future.”

For Paisley and his group, the support provides a funding stability that will allow the Horns to put their best skate forward.

“Dan’s an amazing person who truly cares about the University of Lethbridge and Pronghorn Athletics,” says Paisley. “We can’t thank him enough for the positive impact his commitment will have on the women’s hockey program for years to come.”

To view online: <https://www.uleth.ca/unews/article/alumnus-laplante-throws-support-behind-pronghorns-womens-hockey-team>

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