

# **Goalie Sean MacFarlane's Incredible Sunday**

Kent, WA 10 February, 2009 – So imagine for a moment that you're Sean MacFarlane, a seventeen year old hockey goalie living and playing Midget U-18 hockey in Kent 300 miles from your home town of Spokane, Washington. You're staying overnight at a teammate's house and its early Sunday morning. Your cell phone has been ringing for several minutes over and over and the caller refuses to leave a message. Finally, you answer the call and it's your mom. "Sean!" She says; "The Seattle Thunderbirds called this morning and they want you to suit up for tonight's game."

Well, it wasn't a dream! That's exactly what happened early Sunday morning to Sean MacFarlane, one of the goalies for Kent Valley's U-18 Selects. T-Bird's goalie Jacob DeSerres suffered a groin injury during a game in Tri-Cities Saturday night. With a game back home at ShoWare Center in Kent less than 17 hours away, the Seattle Thunderbirds were faced with an emergency. Russ Farwell, T-Bird's General Manager, phoned Danny Lorenz, Kent Valley's U-18 Coach, and asked if he could provide a backup goalie for their game with the Vancouver Giants just a few hours away. Lorenz's answer was affirmative. Lorenz began the process by contacting Sean's parents for permission. That in turn led to the phone call that took Sean forever to answer. The rest is history...



**Photo by T-Bird Fan Frank Pray: Kent Valley's Sean MacFarlane, #30, skates during warm up Sunday with the Seattle Thunderbirds as they prepare to play the Vancouver Giants at ShoWare Center.**

I had the pleasure of interviewing Sean MacFarlane Monday afternoon at Kent Valley Ice Centre following his U-18 Selects practice. Here's what a smiling and excited Sean MacFarlane had to say about his incredible Sunday with the Seattle Thunderbirds:

- Where were you when you got the call that the Seattle Thunderbirds wanted you to suit up for Sunday's game?

*"I was spending the night at Tyler Dunn's house. My mom called me and woke me up and told me what was going on. I guess she had to call me 8 or 9 times before she woke me up!"*

- What was your reaction when your mom gave you the news?

*"I screamed! I screamed so loud I woke up Tyler and Ryan. They didn't believe me!"*

- In the locker room prior to the game I thought you looked a bit nervous or fidgety; were you?  
*"Yes! Very! I don't think I've ever been that nervous."*
- How did the T-Bird players treat you?  
*"They were great, just awesome! They included me in everything. They talked with me and showed me around. They gave me high-fives before we went out onto the ice. They were terrific."*
- During warm ups they started you off softly, like they were testing you to see how you'd handle the shots. Later, you alternated with Pickard for the drills and it looked like the guys weren't holding back; they were throwing some hard shots your way. What was that like for you?  
*"Yes, they warmed me up with some easy shots at first to test me. During the drill Thomas Hickey took a slap shot from the hash marks and I stopped it. I only let two shots in during the drill. Later, Paul Fricker (T-Bird Goaltending Coach) told me that I did well."*
- I thought you had the best seat in ShoWare Center to view the game. What was it like for you on the bench with the T-Birds during the game?  
*"It was great. The guys talked with me and I was sitting next to Jeremy Boyer and he talked with me. It was great hearing what the coaches were saying during the game. It was exciting!"*
- The T-Birds were playing the Vancouver Giants in a game that was televised locally and throughout Western Canada. It was one of the biggest games of the season for the Birds against one of the toughest team in the WHL with only four losses on the season. The Birds get the win by defeating the Giants 4 to 3 and at the end of the game you joined the team on the ice for the celebration. What was that like?  
*"It was like they won the Stanley Cup! Pickard was jumping up and down! The guys included me in the celebration both on the ice and also off the ice in the locker room. It was awesome!"*
- You suited up as a goalie with the Seattle Thunderbirds, the very team for which your current coach Danny Lorenz played in goal for five seasons, and the team for which your coach still holds some team and WHL records. Were there any thoughts about Coach Lorenz during your T-Birds adventure Sunday night?  
*"Oh yes! Coach Lorenz told me he would be there. He encouraged me and told me to relax out there, do my best and just be myself. His records didn't slip my mind."*
- Did you call your mom and dad after the game?  
*"Yes, they were the first ones I called after the game. I talked with them for about a half-hour. They were pretty excited and proud. They watched the game on TV."*
- What else can you tell me about your T-Birds experience?  
*"It was a great experience, a great learning experience! The T-Bird players were great! The T-Birds staff members were great; the fans and the excitement of that great win; it was all terrific! Kyle Blondin and Ryan Kaluza wore my Selects jerseys at the game and Dunn and Kaluza were waiting for me after the game at the security gate. It took about 30 to 40 minutes for me to get out there after the game, but they were still standing there in the cold waiting for me. I went over to Tyler Dunn's place after the game and Laurie Dunn fed me a great meal. Everyone was happy for me."*  
*"My billets, the Levins, were really excited. They watched the game on TV. Little Alley Levin was so excited she ran over to her best friend's house to tell her about it."*
- Any final thoughts?  
*"Yes, two things! When I walked down the hallway with the T-Birds to go out onto the ice for the game I was trying to look serious and trying hard not to smile, but I couldn't help it,*

*I just smiled! Somebody told me later that I was smiling ear to ear and my helmet didn't hide it."*

*"Also, the T-Birds have invited me to practice with them this week and I'm really looking forward to that."*

The Seattle Thunderbird's move to ShoWare Center in Kent last fall has benefited the Kent Valley Hockey Association in many ways. Sean's experience Sunday is just one more example of the great value of the partnership we're building the T-Birds.

As many of you readers know, I serve the Western Hockey League and the Seattle Thunderbirds as an Off-Ice Official. I do the scorekeeping for most home games. When a T-Bird game comes to an end I'm generally rushing to tally up numbers, close out the score sheet and complete other paper work. However, Sunday night as the final seconds ticked off the clock to end the game, and as the players rushed onto the ice to mob Pickard in celebration, I put everything aside, stood up and watched Sean join the T-Birds for the victory celebration. As I stood there, I tried to look serious, but I couldn't help it. I just smiled!

Congratulations Sean on your incredible Sunday. Enjoy the week ahead.

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**Photo contributed by:** T-Bird Fan - Frank Pray