



Selanne's last kick at the can: Uncertainty 'works'

By Josh Brewster - NHL.com Correspondent

Headed to the golf course looking like a high-fashion version of Ted Knight in "Caddyshack," Anaheim Ducks right wing Teemu Selanne could only shrug and grin about the drama that has unfolded during recent summers as he decided whether to play another NHL season.

"This has worked great for me," Selanne said of his annual indecision, finding that focusing on his career one season at a time has -- despite having driven fans nuts in the process -- made all the difference.

"When I really think it's my last year, I try to just do whatever it takes to take whatever I can from this game and leave everything on the ice every day," Selanne told NHL.com. "That's how I can motivate myself best, and I get the best out of myself."

After agreeing to a one-year, \$3.25 million deal this summer, Selanne revealed to Finnish newspaper Helsingin Sanomat that this would indeed be his last season. He confirmed as much to NHL.com at the Ducks' training facility, Anaheim Ice.

"I really think this is my last year and I enjoy it every day," Selanne said.

His summer golf course attire fools no one. Selanne's in better shape than many players two decades his junior, he works hard, and in his later years, his overall approach has been smart.

"My training is smarter," he said. "When I was young, as long as I did something, it was OK. Now, every practice, every drill, every workout, it's like I know what I'm doing. I know the purpose. I'm smarter in every area. Same thing with (the) right foods, enough fluids, enough rest. And the balance between work and rest, that's a key thing also. A lot of days when I don't feel good, I don't do much."

Selanne, 40, knows that time is precious in the life of an athlete.

"I'm stupid if I give this away," Selanne thought to himself as he made the decision to rejoin the Ducks, who surged at the end of 2009-10 despite a brutal start.

"We won seven games in the first 21," said Selanne, shaking his head. "We put ourselves behind the eight-ball, but we battled back. Before the Olympic break, we were two points back of the playoffs. Then we came back and lost five in a row and that really killed us."

Aside from the injury and subsequent infection suffered by forward Joffrey Lupul, Anaheim's crop of forwards looks as good and healthy as it has in years, with Jason Blake, Saku Koivu, Ryan Getzlaf, Corey Perry and Bobby Ryan returning rested and ready after a non-playoff season. Knowing that they fizzled last spring, Selanne says, should help motivationally.

"Consistency is the key this year and I really hope that everybody's going to remember last year's disappointment."

Injuries over his past three injury-plagued seasons haven't stopped the Selanne from scoring at a clip reminiscent of the early portion of his career. Selanne's career goals-per-game average is .510, while his post-lockout average is .501.

During the previous two seasons, Selanne scored 54 goals in 109 games, while missing 44 games mostly to injury. A long period of indecision kept him out of all but 26 games in 2007-08, but he still managed 12 goals.

A whopping 88 goals in the first two post-lockout seasons foretold a fantastic final chapter for "The Finnish Flash." Along the way, Selanne became the highest-scoring player in Olympic men's ice hockey history while earning silver (2006) and bronze (2008) medals, and won his first and only Stanley Cup with the Ducks in 2006-07.

Toward the end of last season Selanne passed the 600-goal mark, eclipsing his idol, fellow Finn Jari Kurri, finishing with 606. As the 2010-11 season begins, Selanne, now 17th on the all-time goal-scoring list, has

Dino Ciccarelli (608), Bobby Hull (610), Joe Sakic (625), Dave Andreychuk (640) and Jaromir Jagr (646) in his sights.

It's amazing that Selanne still manages to get open as often as he does, especially on the power play. His advice to younger players is to learn by watching the great players.

"If you can follow and look at how they play in different situations, it's really helped me and I really recommend (that) young players try to do the same," says Selanne. "It's key."

Bobby Ryan, 23 and the author of two 30-plus goal seasons, is paying close attention.

"(Selanne) has been through it all and done it all and can really give some feedback to the younger guys, bring them under his wing, give them a little tutelage, it's a huge thing. And he brings a lot to the community. He's a positive role model for guys in the room.

Ryan says determination is Selanne's example.

"He's had some tough times in the past with injuries the past two years and he's fought through them all," Ryan told NHL.com. "It'd be easy for a guy like him to say 'alright, I've done enough' I've scored my 600th goal and it's time for me to move on but he just keeps coming back for more."

"It's just passion," Selanne says. "That's why you started playing when you were 7-years-old and nothing has really changed."