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Langager named CIS most valuable

By CRAIG SLATER

Lethbridge Herald

The kind of week Jay **Langager** is having he might want to consider joining teammate Mark Shefchyk at the casino.

"I'm not that big into gambling, though," **Langager** said. "I think Roll Up the Rim is the biggest I'd go with gambling."

Regardless, both **Langager** and Shefchyk already hit the jackpot today as Canadian Interuniversity Sport announced its major award winners from the 2006-07 men's hockey season. The pair were officially recognized at a banquet held in Moncton, N.B., site of the national championship tournament.

Langager, the fifth-year captain of the University of Lethbridge Pronghorns, earned the grand daddy of them all by collecting the Senator Joseph A. Sullivan Award as the CIS most outstanding player. "I'm not really big on the individual awards, but this is certainly a special one and one that I'm very proud of," said **Langager**, who was awarded Canada West MVP earlier this month. "I'm pretty humbled by winning this award because any one of the other guys could have won it too."

This marks the first time a Pronghorn men's hockey player has won the national player of the year honour.

"Jay really stepped it up this year," coach Greg Gatto said. "He came to us last year and got his feet wet and played well, but this year he took his game and our team to a whole new level."

Langager was also a first team all-Canadian.

"It's a pretty big accomplishment for Jay and for the program as a whole," Gatto said.

Langager's good fortune doesn't end there, either. While visiting coaches and doctors in Bakersfield, Calif., over the weekend - where he'll play for the East Coast Hockey

League's Condors beginning March 30 - **Langager** was re-united with his Kelly Cup championship ring that was stolen from his Lethbridge apartment last year.

"It hasn't left my finger since they gave it back to me. I don't know where to put it and what to do with it," **Langager** said. "It's special to me and I don't want this one to go missing."

"This is probably one of the best seasons I've had overall," he said after recording three goals and 26 assists in the regular season. "There's not a lot of glory playing on the back end and you rarely see defencemen win awards like this because they usually go with the guys with all the points. But your teammates and the coaches notice the little things like puck movement and strong defensive play in your own zone. . ."

In addition to his remarkable university career, the Loreburn, Sask., product garnered attention from the National Hockey League as well.

With veteran Steve Staios set for season-ending surgery and Daniel Tjarnqvist having had a sports hernia repaired this week, the Edmonton Oilers' blueline is painfully thin. Jason Smith and Matt Greene are the only veterans on the back end, playing amongst a group that includes rookies Ladislav Smid, Bryan Young, Dan Syvret and junior call-up Sebastien Bisailon.

"I was talking with their assistant GM (Scott Howson) and they wanted to bring up two more D-men," **Langager** said. "But they brought up (Sebastien Bisailon) from junior and (Ladislav) Smid is back, so they don't really need me right now. If something comes up I might get a late call."

Langager said he earned an invite to Oilers training camp this fall and will play out the remainder of the ECHL regular season and playoffs with the Condors.

AROUND THE 'HORNS: Earlier this month **Langager** also received the Randy Gregg award (academics and community involvement) and the Mervyn Dutton Award for the Canada West top defenceman, to go along with his Canada West MVP. . the Pronghorns enjoyed their best season since 1993-94 by posting a 14-9-5 regular season record, good for second place in the Mountain Division. They hosted their first playoff series in 13 years and lost the best-of-three series 2-1 to UBC.