

## Dazzling Dubois getting it done

Pierre-Luc Dubois brings a wealth of positive attributes to the table.

He's big, skilled and a locker room leader, for starters. But it's his mental make-up that pushes him into this year's upper echelon of prospects. The Cape Breton Screaming Eagles all-purpose forward is firmly on the path to success because he is light years ahead of his peers in the mental part of the game.

"His professionalism is outstanding for a junior player," said Screaming Eagles head coach and general manager Marc-Andre Dumont. "He behaves like a pro, he talks like a pro - he's a pro. He lives in Rimouski but stayed in Montreal last summer because he wanted to train with

Bathurst. He is currently in his third season as an assistant in Rimouski, but continues to serve as his son's personal sounding board.

"I call him after every game and he watches every game," Pierre-Luc said. "Even if he can't see it that night because his team is playing, he watches it the next morning. Even though Marc-Andre is my coach and I listen to everything he tells me, I still like to get advice from my dad. I think he plays a really good role for me."

Watching Pierre-Luc play, it is readily apparent he is a coach's son. He pays close attention to the finer details of the game, including in the defensive end. Dumont trusts him to play every forward position and, even though he is one of the younger

### Dubois Report Card

<b>Size/Strength</b>	<b>A-</b>
<b>Skating</b>	<b>B-</b>
<b>Shot/Scoring ability</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Puckhandling</b>	<b>A</b>
<b>Hockey Sense</b>	<b>A+</b>
<b>Competitiveness</b>	<b>A-</b>
<b>Physical play</b>	<b>B</b>
<b>Composure/Poise</b>	<b>A-</b>
<b>Defence</b>	<b>B+</b>

it because if you think about, it will make the year feel a lot longer," Dubois said. "I just try to help my team win here and play my best. I can't control what happens at the draft so Evgeny's advice is just to stay focused on things here day to day and then just see what happens when I get to the draft."

Having an open mind is also what makes Dubois seem so credible when he paints a picture of his future. He invites criticism because of his career-mindedness and sounds like a coach or a scout when he describes his weaknesses.

"I'm trying to get stronger and faster," Dubois said. "I'm a big guy but I think if I could get an extra two or three steps and more explosiveness I could be more dangerous.

"I try to work hard in the summer and that's something I want to focus on. Obviously I can get better at everything and that's what I want to do."

At *Red Line*, we would agree Dubois doesn't catch your eye with a blazing stride, but he is above average in a straight line and stops and starts effectively for a teenager who hasn't yet filled out his bottom half. By all accounts, it was that slightly sub-par leg strength that contributed to him winding up just on the wrong side of the line at Canada's world junior camp. He survived the first round of cuts, but didn't make it through the final cull. He was the youngest player invited to try out.

"It was a great experience," Dubois said. "I learned a lot from the guys there. I was roommates with Lawson Crouse so we talked a lot about the draft and the world juniors and some of the experiences he's had. I went there and gave it my all, but they said maybe next year if I go back to camp and do well I'll have a chance."

## Pierre-Luc Dubois File

- ◆ **Ht/Wt:** 6-2/200
- ◆ **Position:** Centre
- ◆ **Shoots:** Left
- ◆ **Birthdate:** June 24, 1998
- ◆ **Team:** Cape Breton Screaming Eagles
- ◆ **Scouting Report:** His move to centre this season has taken his game to new heights. He's got the size, hands, hockey sense, and creativity to become a true #1 centre in the NHL. Add in his dedication to getting better, mental make-up, and willingness to compete hard on every shift in all three zones, and he's a fairly wart-proof prospect. The only minor pitfall is that he lacks first step explosion and a separation gear at the top end in his stride right now - but he is working on it diligently.

the best strength coach he could find. He worked with Mark Lambert, the strength coach of the Tampa Bay Lightning, and gained 19 pounds of lean mass. He modified his nutrition and he trained with guys like [Nikita] Kucherov, [Max] Talbot, Alex Killorn and Evgeny Svechnikov. It's a big sacrifice for a 17 year-old who lives away from home all winter to then spend the whole summer living away from home. But it's a choice for him, not a sacrifice because that's how much he's committed."

Dubois's excellence in the intangible areas is literally the result of a lifelong education on good habits. His father Eric was a draft pick of the Quebec Nordiques (fourth round, 1989) and spent six years in the minors and five more in Europe. He was an honest defenceman who often did the dirty work and only took one year away from the game before going into coaching in the QMJHL.

He's already spent more than a decade behind Quebec league benches, including head coaching stints in Baie-Comeau and

players on a veteran team, Dubois often sets the emotional tone.

"He's serious about hockey but he's also a fun teammate to be around," Dumont said. "He likes to play pranks, he likes to tease and he's very involved socially. He's not shy but at the same time he's very serious about doing things right, whether it's in the gym or it's a drill or whether it's extra time at the end of practice. He's always going to do what's expected and more.

"Last year as a 16-year-old he even learned some words and sentences in Russian so he could build a better relationship with Evgeny and Max [Lazarev]. I've been in the Q eight years as an assistant coach or a head coach and I've never seen a kid like him."

Dubois said he is still trying to sponge as much as he can from Svechnikov. The Russian winger was the Detroit Red Wings' first-round pick (19th overall) in 2015 and Dubois often quizzes him about what he might expect as he follows that same path.

"He just told me not to think about