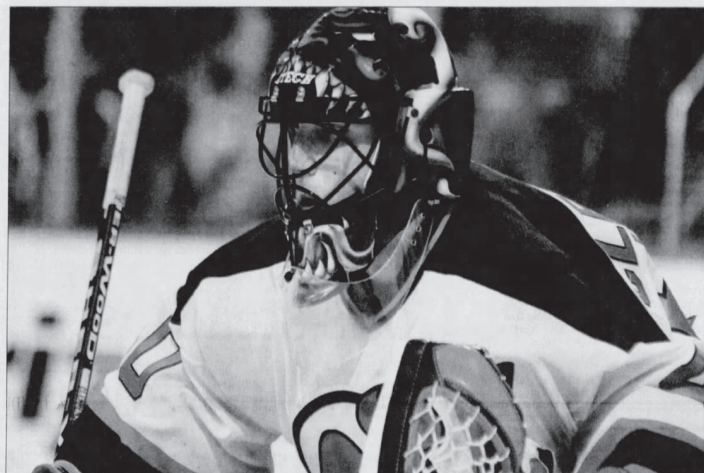




FROM URBANDALE TO THE NHL

GOALTENDER SCOTT CLEMMENSEN HAS MADE IT BIG



BRUCE BENNETT/GETTY IMAGES

Pride of Urbandale: Scott Clemmensen was the New Jersey Devils' starting goaltender for two weeks after eight-time NHL all-star Martin Brodeur was hurt in October. He has played in eight NHL games this season, two more than in his first four seasons combined.

DEVIL SAFETY NET

Clemmensen got chance when star goalie hurt knee

By LISA COLONNO
REGISTER STAFF WRITER

When one of the NHL's elite goaltenders went down with an injury recently, an Iowa skater into net for the New Jersey Devils.

Urbandale native Scott Clemmensen watched from the bench as NHL all-star Martin Brodeur dropped to the ice in the Devils' late October game against Tampa Bay.

"I knew he'd be coming out of the game," said Clemmensen, the Devils' back-up goalie. "I've seen him get hurt before... but I knew this was more serious because play was going on and he wouldn't get up."

Brodeur's knee injury gave Clemmensen an unexpected chance to test his skill against the world's top talent — a unique

break for a hockey player from Iowa.

Clemmensen, a product of Des Moines youth hockey, is the lone Iowa player in the NHL. He was quickly promoted to starter last month, and skated in six consecutive NHL games through Nov. 8. Brodeur returned to New Jersey's lineup last weekend.

"It was exciting for me to play a stretch of games there as the starting goalie for two weeks," said Clemmensen, now in his fifth pro season. "I've not played consecutive games and I've not seen the No. 1 guy very much, especially at the NHL level."

Clemmensen, 28, has spent the majority of his professional hockey career with Albany of the AHL, but made New Jersey's roster this fall. He has played in eight NHL games this season, surpassing his

Clemmensen bio

POSITION: Goaltender

TEAM: New Jersey Devils, NHL

AGE: 28

HEIGHT: 6-3

WEIGHT: 205

HOMETOWN: Urbandale

NOW RESIDES: Fishers Park, N.J.

FAMILY: Wife, Vanessa

Parents: Jan and Paul

Brother: Andy

DID YOU KNOW?: He posted a shutout in his first NHL start Jan. 20, 2004, becoming the 16th goalie in the modern era to do so... Graduated from Urbandale High School in 1996... Started playing hockey at age seven... Drafted 215th in the 1997 NHL Entry Draft.



Clemmensen

to the NHL Players' Association Web site, he will be paid \$450,000 this season.

The goaltender currently carries a 3.32 goals-against average and .882 save percentage. His numbers are better than eight-time all-star Brodeur's 3.45 average and .880 save percentage.

But Clemmensen knows his role remains as backup to Brodeur — winner of the last two Vezina Trophies, awarded annually to the NHL's top netminder.

He also embraces the chance to learn from one of the best.

"Just watching him and how he handles different situations and how he got to be as successful as he has — that's the plus side," Clemmensen said.

"The downside is I'm not going

previous total of six over his first four seasons combined. According

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DAVID HETTER/STANFORD PUBL PHOTO

Back in the day: Urbandale native Scott Clemmensen, a New Jersey Devils goalie, played for the Des Moines Buccaneers from 1995-97.

Clemmensen follows NHL dream

CLEMMENSEN, from Page 3C

to play a whole lot. No matter what I do I'm not going to supersede him as starting goalie."

Until an unexpected opportunity. Clemmensen posted a 2-2-2 record in the six games he started in Brodeur's absence.

His toughest challenge came right away, when Brodeur left the Oct. 26 Tampa Bay game with 6:51 remaining.

The Devils were losing to the defending Stanley Cup champions, who also had a 5-on-3 power play when Clemmensen entered the game. He gave up two goals in the final minutes.

That was probably the toughest situation I've been thrown into as a goalie," Clemmensen said. "They scored during the 5-on-3, then Vincent Lecavalier, one of their best players, had a breakaway."

"It's a lot easier to start from the beginning."

His parents, Jan and Paul Clemmensen, traveled to his next game in net for the Devils on Oct. 28 win over Buffalo. When they are unable to see games in person, the Clemmensens turn

Scott Clemmensen's career statistics

Season	Team	League	Record	GAA	Save %
1994-95	Des Moines Capitals	USHL	15-6-0	2.68	.902
1995-96	Des Moines Buccaneers	USHL	10-7-1	3.44	.899
1996-97	Des Moines Buccaneers	USHL	22-8-2	3.34	.906
1997-98	Boston College	NCAA	24-8-4	2.78	.884
1998-99	Boston College	NCAA	28-14-4	2.87	.888
1999-00	Boston College	NCAA	19-5-0	2.20	.914
2000-01	Boston College	NHL	30-7-2	2.13	.914
2001-02	Albany River Rats	AHL	5-9-4	3.29	.898
2001-02	New Jersey Devils	NHL	0-0-0	3.00	.890
2002-03	Albany River Rats	AHL	15-24-8	2.65	.910
2003-04	Albany River Rats	AHL	5-15-4	3.07	.902
2004-05	New Jersey Devils	NHL	3-1-0	1.91	.952
2004-05	Albany River Rats	AHL	15-25-6	2.81	.916
2005-06	New Jersey Devils	NHL	2-2-2	3.32	.882

their television to the DirecTV NHL Center Ice package.

"We watch hockey every night, but it's always more interesting when the Devils are on," said Jan Clemmensen. "It's like you're so happy he's living his dream, which a lot of people don't get to do."

Scott Clemmensen represents Iowa in a league dominated by Canadian-born players and athletes from the East Coast. He's battled odds throughout his career, including those in the

Iowa High School Hockey League and the Buccaneers in the U.S. Hockey League.

His high school coach, Scott Krueger, said when Clemmensen played for the Buccaneers, the city's only shot of ice unsalvageable during the summer months.

Hockey coaches didn't have to be certified at the time, and to help his goalies, Krueger brought in former Buccaneers players.

"He probably had one of the toughest roads to get there,"

Krueger said.

Clemmensen focused on snagging a college scholarship. He went on to Boston College, where he won the 2001 NCAA title. He holds the school's career records for wins (98) and shutouts (13).

Now he's a novelty — the only NHL player from Iowa. "I'm definitely proud to be the one, or representative," Clemmensen said.

"When I was young I couldn't relate to anyone making it to the NHL. I just hoped for a college scholarship. I hope kids can realistically and practically visualize that someone from Iowa can go far."

His parents have received some fame around central Iowa as well. "When I give my name at places around town, they'll ask if I'm related to the hockey player," Jan said.

And Scott Clemmensen hopes for more recognition — to develop an extensive NHL career. "The next step for me is I want to become a starting goalie, a No. 1 goalie in this league," he said. "I concern myself with improving and, now that I'm in the NHL, I want to stay here for years to come."