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Regehr pockets second Masterton nomination

By [JEAN LEFEBVRE](#) -- Calgary Sun

This perseverance stuff is old hat for Robyn Regehr.

Still a month shy of his 23rd birthday, the Calgary Flames defenceman yesterday received his second Bill Masterton Memorial Trophy nomination from the Calgary chapter of the Professional Hockey Writers' Association. The Masterton is presented annually to the NHLer who "best exemplifies perseverance, sportsmanship and dedication to hockey."

Owen Nolan might have a thing or two to say about that sportsmanship thing after a couple of recent run-ins with the young Flames blueliner but there's no denying Points 1 and 3.

Three years ago at the age of 19, he became the award's youngest ever nominee as a result of a near-miraculous recovery from two shattered legs suffered in an off-season automobile accident.

After the personal triumph came a professional challenge -- a tortuous 2001-02 campaign that stalled the progress of the former Colorado Avalanche first-rounder.

"First of all," Regehr explained, "it started this summer when I was back home in Saskatchewan thinking about the previous year. I just wasn't very happy with the way I played."

The Rosthern resident wasn't alone in his dissatisfaction -- he was a team-worst minus-24 and in the latter stages of the season was occasionally asked to watch games from the press box.

Year-end debriefings with GM Craig Button and then-coach Greg Gilbert gave the former Kamloops Blazers star something to chew on during the off-season.

"It was pretty much up to me as a player and as a person to get back going the way I could play," he admitted. "It was a long summer and it gave me a lot of opportunity to think about what happened and to think about what I had to do to improve so it wouldn't happen again."

"It was a tough summer ... When hockey season comes around again, I was highly motivated and looking to come in and have a lot of fun and play strong."

The stay-at-home blueliner's numbers -- no goals, 11 assists and a minus-12 rating -- aren't eye-popping but his physical play has re-established Regehr as a franchise cornerstone. Regehr's rebound is made all the more remarkable by the fact he's battled through wrist, rib and abdominal muscle injuries throughout the season.

"Both Darryl (Sutter) and Jimmy (Playfair) have been great with me," said Regehr of Calgary's head coach and assistant in charge of d-men.

"They've sat down with me and we've had very good discussions on exactly what kind of player they think I can be and I've told them I feel comfortable and that I can become that type of player."

"I think I'm on the right track right now. I want to be a premier defenceman in the NHL, a player that's a physical guy out there and an impact player. I think I can get to that point."

Two Flames have won the Masterton -- Lanny McDonald in 1983 and Gary Roberts in '96. Calgary netminder Jamie McLennan was the recipient in '98 when he was a member of the St. Louis Blues.

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