Special mid-week edition of Prospect Prescription - we talk to Cory Clouston re: Mark Stone of Team Canada.

After scoring in each of Canada's first four games at the 2012 World Junior Championship – and leading the team with seven in the tournament – Mark Stone failed to find the back of the net in the home country's heartbreaking semifinal loss to the Russian Machine last night.

Call it the Prospect Prospection jinx. Earlier yesterday, we spoke to Cory Clouston, Stone's coach with the WHL Brandon Wheat Kings, and he told us while it came to no surprise that the 19-year old right winger was dominating in Edmonton, he was mighty proud to see his star player excel against the world's best.

"We're very well aware of what he can do. And we're equally aware of how he can lead off the ice," Clouston told Prospect Prescription. "We're not playing well right now and we obviously miss his play on the ice and his leadership in the dressing room. It's a credit to him for how he's been able to elevate his game at such a crucial time. He's been able to score some important goals early on in games to help set the tone for the team. And he's equally – if not more – important for our team, as well."

At six-foot-three and just shy of 200 pounds, Stone (http://www.wheatkings.com/roster/show/id/394) is a menacing presence every time he steps on the ice. In 33 games so far this season with Brandon, the 2010 Ottawa Senators draft pick (6th round, 178th overall) has scored at nearly a goal-a-game pace with 27 markers to go along with 38 assists for 65 points. Stone was actually leading the WHL scoring race before he left the Wheat Kings to suit up for Team Canada but now, after missing nearly three weeks of action, he trails Ty Rattie of the Portland Winterhawks by four points.

Clouston, who coached the Senators from 2009 to 2011, says Stone is a great fit for Ottawa and Ottawa is a great fir for him.

"I know they [Ottawa] think highly of him and I think it's a very good organization for him," said Clouston. "He's going to have a real good opportunity. Obviously, right now, his focus is to win the gold medal and then to help us win a championship in the Western Hockey League but from

there, he has his sights on playing for the Senators and I think he'll be really good fit for them."

The one major knock Stone had against him heading into the 2010 NHL Draft was his skating ability but Clouston says that's no longer an issue.

"I know people have talked about his skating but to me, it's not *how* you get there, it's a matter of getting there and he's worked extremely hard to improve his strength and conditioning," offered Clouston. "His speed and skating ability have come a long way in the last couple of years. To me, his best asset is his attitude and his desire and drive to be a better player.

"I have no doubt in my mind that the progress that he's made over the past couple of years, and his attitude and his skill, is going to get him to the next level."

With only 16 penalty minutes this season and 96 total in his 199-game WHL career, Stone is not going to rack up big PIM numbers for fantasy owners in roto leagues. But Clouston says don't fear for a second that you will be adding a shrinking violet to your fantasy roster. Stone takes care of business like fellow Winnipegger Randy Bachman.

"Mark's a very competitive player who will go into all the battle areas and has no problem being in front of the net, taking punishment. And he's a player who is very good in the corners," explained Clouston. "He's not a guy who is going to drop the mitts but he sticks up for himself in a different way. He's a guy who competes very hard and has, and holds, the respect of his opponent."

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