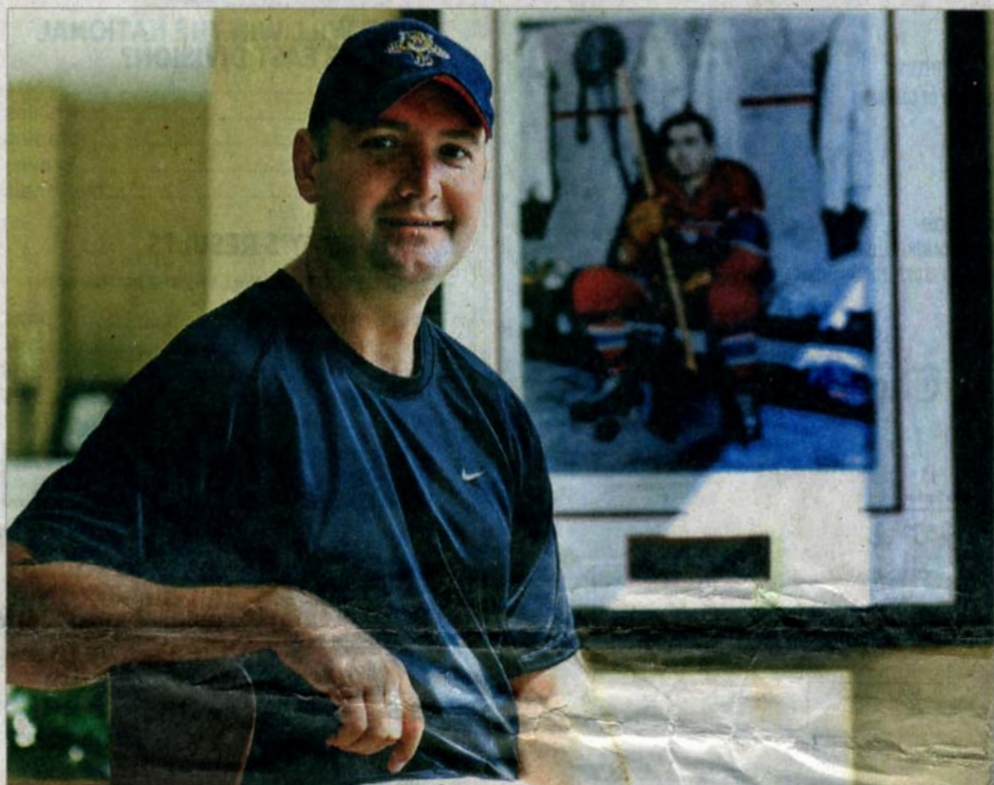


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SUNDAY FOCUS | PANTHERS



JIM ROSS/FOR THE MIAMI HERALD

EARLY ACCOLADES: Panthers coach Peter DeBoer, sitting in front of a picture he was given as a coach of the year, comes to Florida with much junior success.

UPWARD MOBILITY

PANTHERS COACH PETER DeBOER LEAPS FROM SMALL-TOWN LIVING TO A BIG-TIME OPPORTUNITY

BY GEORGE RICHARDS
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CONESTOGO, Ontario — As he sat on the deck overlooking a lush back yard complete with oak trees and a crystal-clear swimming pool, Peter DeBoer said there is plenty he's going to miss about Canada when he moves south.

His life today is pretty good.

But DeBoer is betting that things are going to get even better once he begins a

new life coaching hockey in South Florida.

"I don't know what I'm going to miss the most," DeBoer said, watching the sun set as hamburgers sizzled on a gas grill.

"Ask my wife. I'm so excited about this job, I'm writing down line combinations in the middle of the night."

The excitement is understandable. DeBoer, 40, has spent a lifetime working

•TURN TO DeBOER, 13D

NEW PANTHERS COACH PETER DeBOER BY THE NUMBERS

10

Head coaches in Florida Panthers history. Peter DeBoer became No. 10 when he signed a contract with the team June 13. Of the 10 coaches, current general manager Jacques Martin has the longest tenure: three years (2005-08).

539

Coaching victories by DeBoer in the Ontario Hockey League while with the Detroit Whalers (1995-97), Plymouth Whalers (1997-2001) and Kitchener Rangers (2001-08). Only five other Ontario Hockey League coaches have 500 victories.

2003

Year in which DeBoer guided the Kitchener Rangers to the Memorial Cup, the top prize in Canadian Hockey League's junior men's hockey. It was the second Memorial Cup championship for the franchise. The Rangers won their first title in 1982.

