

Suit aggravated investor's woes

By DAMIAN CRISTODERO, Times Staff Writer
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TAMPA - Doug MacLean said his disappointment after the failed attempt by Absolute Hockey Enterprises to buy the Lightning was bad enough.

But to be involved in a lawsuit against one of his former partners, well, that is something he does not wish to be part of again.

"It wasn't a very comfortable thing," said MacLean, who along with Jeff Sherrin sued Hollywood producer Oren Koules for allegedly defaulting on his part of a scheduled payment to the Lightning and trying to arrange his own deal with team owner Palace Sports & Entertainment. The lawsuit was settled last week.

"I've never been involved with anything like that in my life. I put six months into this ...an unbelievable grind like I've never grinded in my life. I was just really disappointed. I just didn't like it at all."

MacLean will be in the Tampa Bay area this week to talk to local businesspeople, including Tampa attorneys Steve Burton and Tom Scarritt, about, perhaps, joining their still-forming effort to mount a bid for the team.

MacLean, the former Panthers coach and Blue Jackets president, said he hasn't discussed employment with any NHL team, though the Toronto Star speculated he would be a fit with the Maple Leafs if general manager John Ferguson is fired.

He said he has had inquiries about being a television analyst.

"There's nothing going on right now in the league," MacLean said, "so I'm just going to wait and see where this goes with Steve Burton. So, we'll see."

ANDRE'S TIME: Andre Roy did not score a goal Saturday against the Capitals, snapping his two-game streak. But he had two shots and a scoring chance.

It is that kind of involvement that helped increase Roy's playing time. The wing is averaging 4:55 for the season but 7:13 in his past four games.

"I think right now (coach John Tortorella) is going to give an opportunity to the guys who go out there and work hard," Roy said. "I try to do that, and he gave me a little bit of a chance there and rewarded me with ice time."

"I leave it up to the players to decide ice time," Tortorella said. "He's given us some good shifts, and other guys have struggled. But every game is different. It's up to the players."

LEARNING A LESSON: Center Blair Jones said he understands being five minutes early for a team meeting isn't good

enough.

Better make it 10.

Jones, recently called up from AHL Norfolk, got into hot water last season when he missed the start of a meeting the morning before a Lightning game at New York's Madison Square Garden.

"That was just me being 20 years old and being at Madison Square Garden," he said. "I was looking around at the bench, hanging out.

"It was 10:40 for a 10:45 meeting. I went back and said, 'I should be early,' and the door's locked. It was my own fault. Now I make sure I'm sitting there with no way to get in trouble."

COLLEGE HOCKEY: The Lightning College Hockey Classic is Dec. 29-30 at the St. Pete Times Forum and features UMass, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Colorado College and Notre Dame. Tickets are available at the box office and through Ticketmaster.

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