

FEATURE

A full-page photograph of a man with short brown hair and a light beard, looking directly at the camera. He is wearing a dark blue soccer jersey with white and red stripes on the sleeves and a large 'USA' logo on the front. The background is a large American flag, with the stars and stripes clearly visible. The title 'Carolina Hurricanes' is overlaid in large red serif font, and 'Capture' is in a smaller blue serif font.

Carolina Hurricanes

Capture

by Jill Branson Hammergren

Erik Cole

The Carolina Hurricanes are heating up the ice in Raleigh and capturing the attention of the nation and soon the world. The Hurricanes will represent four teams at the 2006 Winter Olympics in Torino, Italy. Head Coach Peter Laviolette will coach left wing, Erik Cole and newly acquired center, Doug Weight along with the rest of the United States Men's Olympic Hockey team. Center Eric Staal, is on the reserve squad for Team Canada, which will provide replacements in case of injury. Canes net-minder Martin Gerber is one of three goaltenders on the roster for Team Switzerland and the Czech Republic chose Carolina defensemen, Frantisek (Frank) Kaberle to help with their Olympic chances.

Cole, who lives in Morrisville, is thrilled with the opportunity. "It's one of those personal accomplishments that I am really excited about. It's a proud moment for me, my family, and my parents and I am really looking forward to it."

the Limelight

The Hurricanes are playing at peak performance this season. Currently, they lead not only the Southeastern Division, but the entire NHL standings. Cole hopes their play on the ice will bring more fans to the RBC center. "Attendance has been good this year. It can always be better. All of the fans come excited and it



Kevyn Adams



Carolina Hurricanes Assistant Coach Jeff Daniels

shows. When I think back to the playoff run in 2002, it was unbelievable how loud it was. This place (the RBC Center) was rockin'. Our fans are the most energizing fans in the league. It was really apparent in the Toronto series when we were in front of a sold out crowd and they were in no way as loud as our sellout crowd in Raleigh. That's exciting and fun for the community."

Morrisville resident Jeff Daniels, who went from Hurricanes player to current assistant coach, believes the team's success on the ice also helps the community. "I think having the 'Canes in the area and the excitement of the team is a big benefit. It's exciting to see the kids in my neighborhood playing roller hockey, you didn't see that four or five years ago," said Daniels.

"There are more minor league teams now and more people are playing ice hockey for recreation." Daniels and his wife, Jennifer, have a two-year-old daughter, Jordan.

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► Kevyn Adams, Hurricanes Forward, also lives in Morrisville with his wife Stacy. They have two daughters, four-year-old Emerson and one-year-old Paulina. Adams says the team has an opportunity to build its fan base. "We have an impressive group of loyal fans who are at all the games, but we hope to pick up the casual fans. There are a lot of people in this part of the country who don't know hockey very well and they're learning the game. I think when they get to the game and see the excitement, we hope that sparks their interest and brings them back."

Cole believes that if the team continues to play as well as it has this season it will continue to get attention in the community. "Certainly it's very encouraging to hear that there are people out there watching and paying attention to the job we're doing. The way we're playing it's certainly good for the community and the market to have a team that is winning hockey games. They get behind the team and support it," said Cole. "We know there's lots of college football, college basketball in the area and we're still trying to make a name for ourselves, dig our heels in here and every time you go out and somebody stops you and lets you know they feel you're doing a real good job this year, it's encouraging."

All of these men who are very serious on the ice, are serious about their home lives as well and relish their most important role as Dad. Cole is the father of four-year-old Bella and 17-month-old Landon. "It's one of those things where it's nice to have and to go home to—to keep your mind off of things. No matter how bad things are on the ice, you always go home and have the kids excited to see you, it's a lot of fun. I really enjoy being a father. I have two beautiful children that I am extremely thankful for."

In January, when the Hurricanes honored long-time Hurricane Ron Francis and retired his jersey, the ceremony was done in front of a sell-out crowd. The Canes hope to build on that momentum and continue their good fortune for the rest of the season when they return from the Olympic break. They want the people of Morrisville and the rest of the Triangle community to get in the game!

For season ticket information, please call the RBC Box Office at 919-861-2323 or visit their website at www.carolinahurricanes.com.

