

Formenton finds his place on NHL Sens' roster

By Jake Courtepatte

For Alex Formenton, his pre-game routine remains the same no matter what ice he is stepping onto.

"I usually just tape my stick, and don't let it touch the ground until I hit the ice," said the King City native. "That's probably the only weird superstition I have, I just flip it upside down and put it against the wall."

"Other than that, it's just getting mentally prepared."

Over the past three seasons, those sticks have been leaned up against the walls at the Aurora Tigers and London Knights' dressing room facilities, and just once with the NHL's Ottawa Senators at the beginning of the 2017-18 season.

Yet this year, after making the cut for the first time to officially land a spot on the roster of the team that drafted him in the second round in 2017, he is hoping it will be for 82 games.

The big club's head coach, Guy Boucher, officially announced Formenton as part of the team's plan on Oct. 1, just a few days ahead of the team's season opener.

"I love it," said Formenton on Sunday, three games into the NHL season. "I've been learning lots already. It's been a great experience so far, and I'm having a lot of fun with it."

Though held pointless through the first trio of games, Formenton has shown bursts of speed playing on the wing of the Senators' third line, something he hopes will help his game translate to the NHL level sooner rather than later.

After impressing at training camp before the 2017-18 season last year, Formenton was a surprise to dress for the first game of the season before being sent down to his junior club, the Knights. Yet with one NHL game already under his belt, he said the excitement is still just the same.

"It's all still there. Stepping on the ice is the same every time. Getting that one game in last year at the start of the season, taking an experience like that definitely gives me a little bit of comfort and confidence coming into this season. I got to know some of the older guys, which helped a lot."

As one of the top prospects in the Senators system, he added that plenty of the more experienced players have "taken him under their wing" when asked to name some standouts.

"They're just always there if I have questions, as a young guy just out of the junior system it's a big transition—they've all kind of led me down the right path, so I give credit to all of them."

"I kind of just want to take it day by day, work my hardest, and hopefully every day get better."

With roots still back in York Region, and a stable NHL roster position for the first time, the next step for the young forward is looking for a place to stay in Ottawa.

"We'll see, I'm fine with the hotel for now, it's a nice hotel, so we'll just have to see."