

= Gilbert Brulé =

Gilbert Jean Marco Brulé ( born January 1 , 1987 ) is a Canadian professional ice hockey centre who currently plays for KHL Medveđak Zagreb of the Kontinental Hockey League ( KHL ) . Drafted out of the Western Hockey League ( WHL ) , Brulé played major junior with the Vancouver Giants for three seasons . After being named the WHL rookie of the year in 2004 , Brulé was selected as the WHL playoff MVP and led the Memorial Cup in scoring , as part of the Giants ' WHL championship @-@ winning season two years later . Selected sixth overall in the 2005 NHL Entry Draft , he began his NHL career with the Columbus Blue Jackets before being traded to the Edmonton Oilers prior to the 2008 ? 09 season . After three seasons with the Oilers , he was placed on waivers , then acquired by the Coyotes for the 2011 @-@ 12 season and playoffs . He then joined the ZSC Lions for the 2012 @-@ 13 season . Brulé was released by the Zurich @-@ based team in October 2012 . Internationally , Brulé has represented Team Canada at the 2004 World U @-@ 17 Hockey Challenge and 2004 U @-@ 18 Junior World Cup , winning silver and gold medals , respectively .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Early junior career = = =

Brulé was selected first overall in the 2002 WHL Bantam Draft by the Vancouver Giants . The selection was originally possessed by the Prince Albert Raiders , but was dealt to the Giants in exchange for their third overall and third round selections . He debuted in one game with the Giants during the subsequent WHL season , while playing Junior A in the British Columbia Hockey League ( BCHL ) with the Quesnel Millionaires . Recording 57 points ( 32 goals and 25 assists ) over 48 games in his lone BCHL season , he was named the Interior Conference 's recipient of the Bruce Allison Memorial Trophy as rookie of the year .

In 2003 ? 04 , Brulé joined the Giants and tallied 60 points in 67 games . He became the first Giants player to win a major WHL award , receiving the Jim Piggott Memorial Trophy as league rookie of the year . The distinction made him a nominee for Canadian Hockey League ( CHL ) Rookie of the Year , which went to Quebec Major Junior Hockey League ( QMJHL ) rookie of the year Sidney Crosby of the Rimouski Océanic . He joined Crosby on the CHL All @-@ Rookie Team .

The following season , Brulé finished third in WHL scoring with 87 points ( 39 goals and 48 assists ) , establishing a Giants single @-@ season point @-@ scoring record ( surpassed by Casey Pierro @-@ Zabotel in 2008 ? 09 ) . During the campaign , he was chosen to a squad of WHL All @-@ Stars against the Russian select team in the 2004 ADT Canada @-@ Russia Challenge in November . Several months later , he competed in the 2005 CHL Top Prospects Game , where he recorded the first hat trick in the history of the all @-@ star match and was named Team Cherry 's player of the game . At the end of the season , Brulé was named the CHL Scholastic Player of the Year , having taken more high school credits than any other WHL player .

= = = NHL debut and Memorial Cup tournament = = =

Brulé was selected sixth overall in the 2005 NHL Entry Draft by the Columbus Blue Jackets . He remained the highest @-@ drafted Giants player in team history until Evander Kane was selected fourth overall in 2009 . Brulé had been the second @-@ ranked prospect behind Crosby by the International Scouting Services ( ISS ) at the beginning of the 2004 ? 05 season , while the NHL Central Scouting Bureau ( CSB ) named him the WHL 's top prospect in their preliminary rankings . By the end of the season , Brulé was ranked fourth overall by the ISS and fifth among North American skaters by the CSB . At the time of his draft , he was touted as an offensively skilled player with a competitive and physical edge . The ISS scouted him as an " outstanding skater with great vision on the ice ... a natural goalscorer . "

Brulé made the Blue Jackets ' lineup in his first NHL training camp and signed with the club to a

three @-@ year , entry @-@ level contract on October 3 , 2005 . He made his NHL debut against the Washington Capitals in the Blue Jackets ' season opener two days later , notching an assist on a goal by Dan Fritsche in a 3 ? 1 loss . The following game , he suffered a fractured sternum after receiving a hit from Calgary Flames defenceman Roman Hamrlík on October 7 . After missing 17 games , he returned to the lineup on November 20 . Brulé scored his first NHL career goal that night against Phoenix Coyotes , his team 's lone tally in a 5 ? 1 loss , beating goaltender David LeNeveu with a shot from the left offensive zone faceoff circle . Ten days later , he suffered his second injury in as many months , breaking his leg during a game against the Minnesota Wild .

Upon recovering , he was returned to the WHL on January 13 , 2006 . By reassigning Brulé before he played 10 NHL games , the Blue Jackets retained the first year of his rookie contract . Another strong factor in the decision to return him to junior was the acquisition of centre Sergei Fedorov , making Brulé expendable . Returning to the Giants , Brulé scored at a near @-@ goal @-@ a @-@ game pace . He was named WHL Player of the Week on February 20 , 2006 , after recording 5 goals and 10 points in 3 Giants wins . He was later chosen as WHL Player of the Month for February with 12 goals and 23 points in 13 games . Completing the season with 23 goals and 38 points in 27 games , he earned WHL Second All @-@ Star Team honours . In the opening round of the WHL playoffs , Brulé was named WHL and CHL Player of the Week by scoring four goals and seven points over three games against the Prince George Cougars . He received his second WHL and CHL Player of the Week honour during the WHL Finals against the Moose Jaw Warriors on May 10 , having accumulated five goals and nine points in two games . His award @-@ winning week included a three @-@ goal , four @-@ point performance in Game 1 of the series ? a 7 ? 5 win for the Giants . He went on to lead the WHL in scoring with 30 points in 18 games to earn the airBC Trophy as playoff MVP , helping the Giants to their first President 's Cup as WHL champions .

Advancing to the 2006 Memorial Cup , the Giants tied for third out of four teams after the round @-@ robin . Requiring a tie @-@ breaker game to determine who would play in the semi @-@ final , Brulé recorded five points ( two goals , three assists ) against the Peterborough Petes , one point short of the tournament single @-@ game record , in a 6 ? 0 win . The Giants were subsequently eliminated in the semi @-@ final by the Moncton Wildcats 3 ? 1 . Brulé registered the only Giants goal in the game . Finishing with 12 points in 5 games , Brulé earned the Ed Chynoweth Trophy as the national tournament 's leading scorer . He was also named to the Memorial Cup All @-@ Star Team , alongside Giants teammate Paul Albers .

Four @-@ and @-@ a @-@ half years after his junior career , the club honoured him in a ceremony prior to a game against the Kamloops Blazers on January 28 , 2011 , as part of " Gilbert Brulé Night " . Brulé was the fourth alumnus added to the club 's Ring of Honour , commemorating the team 's best players ; a plaque was unveiled inside the stadium bearing his name and the number 17 he wore on his jersey as a Giant . At the end of the Giants ' 2010 ? 11 WHL season , they released their fan @-@ voted " Top 10 Giants of the Decade " , which listed Brulé at # 2 , behind Milan Lucic .

== = Columbus Blue Jackets = = =

Still eligible for junior , Brulé made the Blue Jackets ' roster for the 2006 ? 07 season . A month into the campaign , he was assured by General Manager Doug MacLean that he would not be returned to the Giants as he had been the previous season . He was scratched several times under head coach Gerard Gallant , but after Gallant was replaced by Ken Hitchcock in late @-@ November , he began receiving more playing time . Playing mostly on the fourth line in his rookie season , he averaged 10 minutes of ice time per game . He went on to tally 19 points ( 9 goals and 10 assists ) over 78 games in his first full NHL season .

During his second NHL season , Brulé recorded 9 points ( 1 goal and 8 assists ) over 61 games with the Blue Jackets . He was sent down to the American Hockey League ( AHL ) in January 2008 for a month @-@ long assignment as his play struggled , notching 5 goals and 10 points in 16 games with the Blue Jackets ' minor league affiliate , the Syracuse Crunch . At the end of the Blue Jackets ' regular season , Brulé was reassigned to Syracuse for the club 's Calder Cup playoff run .

Helping the Crunch advance to the second round , he recorded 2 goals and 5 points over 13 post @-@ season games .

= = = Edmonton Oilers = = =

In the 2008 off @-@ season , Brulé was traded to the Edmonton Oilers for forward Raffi Torres on July 1 , 2008 . He was one of the final cuts in his first training camp with the Oilers and was assigned to the Springfield Falcons , Edmonton 's AHL affiliate . On October 17 , 2008 , he suffered a knee @-@ on @-@ knee hit from opposing defenceman Adam McQuaid during a game against the Providence Bruins , causing him to miss several contests injured . During a call @-@ up to the NHL later in the season , Brulé scored his first goal with the Oilers on January 11 , 2009 , in a 2 ? 1 win against the St. Louis Blues . He was reassigned to Springfield 10 days later . Finishing the season with 3 points in 11 games with the Oilers and 24 points in 39 games with the Falcons , he was re @-@ signed by Edmonton in the off @-@ season to a one @-@ year , two @-@ way contract on August 12 , 2009 .

Brulé began the 2009 ? 10 season as the Oilers ' fourth @-@ line centre out of training camp . With improved play and the injury of first @-@ line winger Ales Hemsky , Brulé moved up the Oilers ' depth chart and recorded his best statistical season in the NHL . However , after suffering from a recurring flu throughout the campaign , which sidelined him for a combined 11 games , he suffered a high @-@ ankle sprain during a game against the Dallas Stars on April 2 , 2010 ; following a collision with opposing forward Brian Sutherby , his skate got jammed underneath goaltender Kari Lehtonen 's pad . The injury sidelined him for the remaining week of the campaign . He finished the season with a career @-@ high 17 goals , 20 assists and 37 points in 65 games , third in team @-@ scoring . Becoming a restricted free agent in the 2010 off @-@ season , Brulé filed for arbitration with the Oilers after failing to come to terms on a new contract . The two sides managed to avoid their arbitration hearing by signing a two @-@ year , \$ 3 @. @ 7 million deal on July 27 , 2010 .

After staying healthy through the first three months of the 2010 ? 11 season , Brulé suffered continued injury problems for the rest of the campaign . After being sidelined with a stomach virus for four games , he suffered an abdominal injury the following month and missed 23 additional contests . After returning to the lineup , he sustained a concussion during a game against the Pittsburgh Penguins on March 13 , 2011 . In total , Brulé missed 39 games with injuries in 2010 ? 11 , limiting him to 7 goals and 2 assists .

On June 24 , 2011 , it was reported that Brulé had been traded along with a fourth @-@ round draft pick to the Los Angeles Kings in exchange for forward Ryan Smyth . Due to health concerns , the deal never materialized as Brulé had not yet been cleared to play following his concussion ( under league rules , an injured player can be traded but cannot be bought out , which is what the Kings had planned on doing ) . Furthermore , Kings General Manager Dean Lombardi made it apparent to the media that the team wanted someone with a smaller salary cap hit if Brulé could not be bought out . The Oilers ultimately acquired Smyth in exchange for forward Colin Fraser ( whose cap hit was over \$ 1 million less ) and a seventh @-@ round pick in the 2012 draft .

During the off @-@ season , Brulé worked with a sports psychologist to address the mental aspect of his game , including his confidence . Near the end of the Oilers ' training camp , on October 2 , 2011 , he was placed on waivers for the purpose of being assigned to the team 's AHL affiliate , the Oklahoma City Barons . While the departure of Andrew Coglianò in July 2011 made room for Brulé to move up the Oilers ' depth chart at centre , the performance of Oilers rookies Ryan Nugent @-@ Hopkins and Anton Lander helped make him expendable . Regarding the move , Oilers General Manager Steve Tambellini described Brulé as having lacked consistency . Brulé cleared waivers two days later ; an Edmonton Sun article suggested that he would have likely been picked up by another team if not for his \$ 1 @. @ 85 million salary .

= = = Phoenix Coyotes = = =

After recording 18 points ( eight goals and ten assists ) over 27 games with the Barons , Brulé was

recalled by the Oilers on January 9 , 2012 , in lieu of injured forwards Nugent @-@ Hopkins and Jordan Eberle . In order to join the team , however , he needed to clear re @-@ entry waivers and he was consequently claimed by the Phoenix Coyotes the following day . Brulé debuted with the Coyotes on January 12 , playing 14 minutes in a 3 ? 2 shootout loss to the Detroit Red Wings . Two games later , he recorded his first two points as a Coyote , a goal and an assist , in a 6 ? 1 win against the Colorado Avalanche .

A free agent going into the NHL lockout , Brulé opted to sign as a free agent in Switzerland with ZSC Lions of the National League A on a one @-@ year contract August 13 , 2012 . In the 2012 ? 13 season , he appeared in only 14 games before he requested an immediate release from his contract with the Lions to return to Canada for personal issues on October 23 , 2012 .

In the following season , Brulé accepted an invitation to the Coyotes ' training camp for the 2013 ? 14 season . He was assigned to the Coyotes ' AHL affiliate , the Portland Pirates , to begin the season on a try @-@ out contract before on November 30 , 2013 , re @-@ signing with Phoenix on a one @-@ year , two @-@ way contract . Brulé played three games in his return to the Coyotes before he was reassigned to the Pirates . In declining to report back to the Pirates , Brulé opted to retire from professional hockey on January 1 , 2014 .

= = = Return to hockey = = =

On May 12 , 2014 , reports surfaced that Brulé opted to resume his playing career after signing a one @-@ year contract with Russian club Avtomobilist Yekaterinburg of the Kontinental Hockey League ( KHL ) .

= = International play = =

Brulé made his international debut with Hockey Canada representing Team Pacific at the 2004 World U17 Hockey Challenge in Newfoundland . During the semi @-@ final , he scored a goal and three assists , leading Team Pacific to a win against the United States . His efforts earned him his third player of the game award of the tournament . In the gold medal game , Team Pacific lost to Team Ontario 5 ? 2 , earning silver . Later that year , he represented Team Canada in the 2004 U18 Junior World Cup as an alternate captain . Brulé helped lead Team Canada to gold , scoring the game @-@ winning goal in the championship match , a 4 ? 1 win against the Czech Republic .

The following year , Brulé participated in the Canadian national junior team 's summer development camp in preparation for the 2006 World Junior Championships . At the time of the final roster selection in December 2005 , however , Brulé was recovering from a leg injury , suffered during NHL play with the Blue Jackets . He was invited to the team 's summer camp again in 2006 , but declined , choosing to focus instead on making the roster for Columbus .

= = Personal life = =

Brulé was born in Edmonton , Alberta , later moving to North Vancouver , British Columbia , during his childhood . He had a sister named Leah who died at the age of 12 as a result of complications from cerebral palsy . Brulé was nine years old at the time of his sister 's death and later had her name tattooed on his left wrist . Despite growing up in both Edmonton and Vancouver , Brulé was a childhood fan of the Los Angeles Kings .

In May 2010 , Brulé donated \$ 10 @, @ 000 to a fund assisting an Edmonton boy suffering from lymphatic cystic hydroma . The money was allocated to a costly surgery to be performed in New York , which doctors in Canada were unable to perform . Brulé received further media attention a year later for picking up a pair of hitchhikers who turned out to be Irish rock band U2 frontman Bono and his assistant in a West Vancouver neighbourhood on May 31 , 2011 . In return , Brulé was given backstage passes for him , as well as his girlfriend and mother , for U2 's concert in Edmonton on the next day . During the show , Bono thanked Brulé for the ride .

In July 2013 , Brulé revealed in an interview that an adverse relationship with his father may have

been at least partly to blame for his floundering NHL career .

= = Career statistics = =

= = = Regular season and playoffs = = =

= = = International = = =

= = Awards = =