

= West Coast Express ( ice hockey ) =

The West Coast Express was an ice hockey line that played for the National Hockey League 's ( NHL ) Vancouver Canucks from 2002 to 2006 . Named after Vancouver 's commuter rail service , the line consisted of Markus Naslund at left wing , Brendan Morrison at centre , and Todd Bertuzzi playing right wing . The West Coast Express was a high scoring line that was considered to be one of the best lines in hockey during its tenure .

Each player was acquired by the Canucks through various trades . Once each member arrived in Vancouver it took two years before the line played together regularly . Once they did , they helped to set a Canucks franchise record for points in 2002 ? 03 season ( later surpassed ) , a season in which the West Coast Express accounted for 45 % of the team 's goal production . All three players recorded their most individually recognized and best statistical seasons while playing on the line . Despite regular season success , the Canucks were never able to advance past the second round of the playoffs during the West Coast Express years . The line was disbanded when Bertuzzi was traded to the Florida Panthers after the 2005 ? 06 season . Both Morrison and Naslund played through the 2007 ? 08 season with the Canucks before leaving the organization via free agency .

= = History = =

= = = Player acquisitions = = =

The Vancouver Canucks made the Stanley Cup Finals in 1994 , but proceeded to regress as a franchise progressively finishing worse each season . As such they began attempting to add skill players to the line @-@ up through trades . The Canucks made various deals to " move the program forward and in a different direction " . With the franchise moving in a new direction the first member of the West Coast Express line arrived in Vancouver on March 20 , 1996 when left wing Markus Naslund was traded to the Canucks by the Pittsburgh Penguins for Alek Stojanov . Naslund struggled to start his Canucks career and during the 1997 ? 98 season he requested to be traded . It was not until the 1998 ? 99 season that Naslund emerged as an offensive leader with the Canucks , leading them in goals ( 36 ) and points ( 66 ) . Todd Bertuzzi was the second member of the line to join the Canucks ' franchise , when he was acquired by Vancouver via a trade during the 1997 ? 98 season . The New York Islanders received former Canuck captain Trevor Linden in exchange for right winger Bertuzzi , defenceman Bryan McCabe and a third @-@ round selection in the 1998 NHL Entry Draft ( Jarkko Ruutu ) . Bertuzzi began the 1998 ? 99 season playing on a line with Mark Messier at centre and Alexander Mogilny on right wing . Bertuzzi played with the two until he suffered a fractured tibia , an injury that resulted in Naslund gaining increased ice time . The final piece came to the Canucks on March 14 , 2000 with the acquisition of Brendan Morrison . In an attempt to improve their team to make a Stanley Cup run , the New Jersey Devils traded Morrison and centre Denis Pederson for Mogilny at the National Hockey League 's ( NHL ) trade deadline . Upon his arrival Morrison did not begin playing with Naslund and Bertuzzi nor did he begin his Canucks ' career at centre , instead he began on the wing .

= = = Express years = = =

Although the three did not begin playing together immediately , Bertuzzi and Naslund regularly played together on the top line with centres Mark Messier and Andrew Cassels . Starting with their arrival in 2000 , head coach Marc Crawford often moved Bertuzzi to the second line to play with twin brothers Henrik and Daniel Sedin to complement their cycling game . Morrison spent time on the third line with agitator Matt Cooke . Morrison joined Naslund on the top line due to an injury to Cassels in early November of the 2001 ? 02 season , the two were joined by Trent Klatt on right wing , with Bertuzzi playing on a line with the twins . During the game Bertuzzi joined Naslund and Morrison on a power play marking one of the first times the line was together . The Canucks won the

game but the line did not remain together as Cassels returned from injury , Klatt was injured and Bertuzzi was returned to the second line . The first game the trio played together as a regular line was on January 9 , 2002 . In the game they registered two first period goals in a 5 ? 4 loss to the Detroit Red Wings . Crawford liked the idea of having his two top scorers together , how Morrison worked with them on the power play , and felt Morrison could handle the demands of playing with two players who wanted the puck . In their second game together the line continued to its strong play as each member recorded two points in a 7 ? 1 win over the Carolina Hurricanes . After being put together they were given the name West Coast Express , a reference to a commuter train of the same name that provides service along a 65 kilometres ( 40 mi ) route between Mission , British Columbia and Vancouver . By the end of the season each player set new career highs in points to that time in their careers . Naslund raised his point total by fifteen finishing the year as the league 's second leading scorer up thirty @-@ one spots from the previous season . Bertuzzi enjoyed the biggest point increase on the line adding thirty points and moving from eighty @-@ first in league scoring to third . Vancouver finished the season as the eighth seed in the Western Conference . The West Coast Express totaled three goals and nine points in the playoffs before being eliminated in six games by the top seeded Detroit Red Wings . In the off @-@ season , Naslund received NHL First Team All @-@ Star honours .

The 2002 ? 03 season was the West Coast Express ' best season , as each member of the line again increased their point total to career highs . Naslund finished the year with 48 goals and 104 points again ranking him second in the league in points and goals . The fourth highest point total in franchise history to that point in time . Bertuzzi recorded 46 goals and 97 points , his goal total ranked him third in the league in goal scoring . Morrison 's 71 points remains a career high which he has not gotten within 11 points of since . During the year Naslund scored a career @-@ high four goals in a 6 ? 3 win over the Edmonton Oilers , tying a Canucks record for most goals in a single game . In the game Bertuzzi added a goal and two assist while Morrison notched two assist of his own giving the line nine points in the game . Later in the season the West Coast Express helped the Canucks go on a 14 @-@ game unbeaten streak highlighted by back to back blowout wins to close out the streak . In the 13 game of the streak , a 7 ? 2 win over the Columbus Blue Jackets , the line registered 5 goals and 12 points . The following game the trio increased their output to 5 goals and 14 points . In the contest both Bertuzzi and Morrison registered two goals and two assists . Naslund scored a goal and added five assists for a career @-@ high six point night . The Canucks finished the season with 104 points , a franchise record at the time . The West Coast Express accounted for 45 % of the Canucks ' 264 goals during the season . Finishing fourth in the Western Conference , the Canucks faced the St. Louis Blues in the playoffs . They fell behind St. Louis 3 ? 1 in the series , but rallied back to force a game seven . In the deciding game , Naslund scored for the fourth consecutive game in the series and Morrison added the eventual game winner as the Canucks advanced to the second round . Facing off against the Minnesota Wild in game one of round two , the Canucks trailed late in the game . With just 8 @-@ 7 seconds remaining , Bertuzzi won a critical face @-@ off before Naslund took a shot that resulted in Cooke scoring on the rebound to force overtime , where the Canucks eventually ran out 4 ? 3 winners . Vancouver took a 3 ? 1 series lead before the Wild rallied to tie the series and force a game seven . The Canucks took a 2 ? 0 lead in the game after Bertuzzi scored twice in the second period . Following his second goal , Bertuzzi skated by the Wild bench and said " Get your golf clubs out , boys , its over . " The Canucks preceded to surrender four consecutive goals , losing the game 4 ? 2 and eliminating them from the playoffs . It was the last playoff game the trio would play together . In the off season Bertuzzi and Naslund were named to the NHL First All @-@ Star Team . Additionally Naslund was awarded the Lester B. Pearson Award ( since renamed the Ted Lindsay Award ) , given to the league 's best player as voted by the NHL Players ' Association .

= = = End of the Express = = =

The following season each member of the West Coast Express suffered a decline in performance . The trio were unable to complete the season as a unit due to injuries and suspension . On February

16 , 2004 in a game against the Colorado Avalanche , Naslund received a " questionable hit " from the Avalanche 's Steve Moore . Suffering a minor concussion from the hit and a hyper @-@ extended elbow when he fell to the ice , he missed three games due to his injuries . While Moore was unpenalized for the hit , some Canucks players felt that it was a " cheap shot " . In the second rematch of the two teams after Moore 's hit on Naslund , Vancouver allegedly put a " bounty " on Moore and were out to make him " pay a price " . Early in the game , Moore clashed with Cooke , but later refused to fight Bertuzzi , despite being taunted and followed around the ice . After being refused the fight , Bertuzzi punched Moore in the head from behind and slammed him into the ice . Bertuzzi was subsequently suspended indefinitely by the NHL , and the resulting injuries ended Moore 's career and left him suffering from concussion symptoms over the following seven years . Despite the loss of Bertuzzi , the Canucks won the Northwest Division . In the opening round Vancouver faced their division rival Calgary Flames . In the series Vancouver fell behind three games to two . They took a 4 ? 0 lead in game six before the Flames came back to tie the game and send it to overtime . The game remained tied into the third overtime when Morrison scored at the 2 : 28 mark to force game seven . In game seven the Canucks were again trailing late into the third period in the closing seconds Naslund went around Flames defenceman Jordan Leopold drove the net and put a shot on goal . Flames goaltender Miikka Kiprusoff , made the save but Cooke scored on the rebound with just 5 @.@ 7 seconds remain to force overtime . The Canucks failed to capitalize on the change in momentum as the Flames ' Martin Gelinas scored 1 : 25 into overtime eliminating Vancouver . Naslund recorded nine points in the seven game series while Morrison chipped in five . During the off @-@ season Naslund received the last of his individual NHL honors being named a First Team NHL All @-@ Star once again .

Following the cancellation of the 2004 ? 05 season due to a labor dispute , Bertuzzi was reinstated for the 2005 ? 06 season . With the return of all three line mate and new rules designed to increase offensive chances the Canucks entered the year with high hopes . Despite this , Naslund and Morrison 's point production again decreased from their last NHL season . Bertuzzi point total increased , however , he played in 13 more games than his previous season . The Canucks missed the playoffs for the first time in four years and the only time during the West Coast Express ' tenure . During the off season , the line was officially dismantled when Bertuzzi was traded to the Florida Panthers , along with goaltender Alex Auld and defenceman Bryan Allen , in exchange for goaltender Roberto Luongo , defenceman Luká? Krají?ek and a sixth @-@ round selection in the 2006 NHL Entry Draft ( Sergei Shirokov ) . Both Naslund and Morrison played two more years with the Canucks , often together ( but not always ) , before signing as free agents with the New York Rangers and the Anaheim Ducks respectively in the summer of 2008 .

= = Legacy = =

During its time , the West Coast Express was widely considered one of the most dominant line combinations in the league . The mid @-@ nineties witnessed the increased popularity of defensive schemes like the neutral zone trap which slowed the game , limiting scoring and offensive chances . The emphasis on defensive has been blamed for diminishing fan interest . When Naslund was traded to Vancouver in 1996 the Canucks often played in a half empty arena and there were rumors about the franchise moving . The line 's offense first style helped to popularize the franchise . They began to sell out home games on a regular basis and started to have a following on the road . In the 2002 ? 03 season the Canucks 264 goals was the highest total for the franchise in nine years . It remained unsurpassed by another Canucks team until the 2009 ? 10 team , which featured the NHL 's leading scorer , Henrik Sedin . The franchise record for points they set that same season stood for only two seasons until it was surpassed in 2006 ? 07 season . During which Roberto Luongo set a franchise record for goaltender wins with 47 , a single season win total that is also tied for second most all @-@ time in NHL history .

= = Career statistics = =

=== Regular season ===

=== Playoffs ===