

## **Red Wings' Probert says drug arrest turned life around**

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### **Body**

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Bob **Probert** **says** his **arrest** one year ago, for bringing cocaine from Canada to the USA, "was the best thing that could have happened to me."

In his first interview since his **arrest** March 2, 1989, and subsequent conviction, **Probert** **said** Thursday, "I look back now, I can see the self-destructive course my **life** was on. My activities off the ice were totally unmanageable. I'm lucky I didn't hurt anyone.

"I had a low self-esteem, a problem handling success. When things were going well, I'd think, 'OK, Bob, it's time to screw up.' "

**Probert** met with six reporters after he worked out on the ice with Detroit **Red Wings** assistant coach Colin Campbell.

No tape recorders were allowed, and attorney Harold Fried wouldn't let **Probert** answer questions about his legal battles, treatment for substance abuse or his lifestyle before his **arrest**. Fried **said** those subjects were off-limits because **Probert**'s situation is unsettled with the National Hockey League and U.S. immigration officials.

**Probert**, who **lives** in a Detroit substance-abuse halfway house, was issued a 90-day work permit Wednesday. He is awaiting a ruling on his appeal of a deportation order by an Immigration and Naturalization Service judge.

**Probert** also awaits NHL President John Ziegler's ruling on the **Red Wings**' request that he be reinstated. The **Red Wings** aren't **saying** when **Probert** might be ready to play.

**Probert**, who in the past was uncomfortable with the media, was upbeat and uncharacteristically talkative during the session.

"I blame myself for this," **said Probert**, who served a three-month sentence at the Federal Medical Center in Rochester, Minn. "It was good I went there because it opened my eyes. I realized in that situation how powerless I am."

**Probert** got to know imprisoned evangelist Jim Bakker at the Federal Medical Center and took a test to get his General Education Degree. **Probert** dropped out of school when he was 17.

**Probert**, about 15 pounds heavier than his ideal playing weight of 210, met for a closed-door meeting with coach Jacques Demers after Thursday's skating session.

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"I didn't talk to him as a hockey player. I talked to him as a human being," Demers said. "I liked the way he was talking: alert, smart. He's changed."

Minutes before, Demers had marveled at Probert's ability while watching him skate under Campbell's direction.

"He looks like he should be a tight end for the Detroit Lions," Demers said. "Look at the way he skates and shoots. That's not a man who hasn't been on the ice for a year."

Probert was tired by the end of the workout but said he felt good. "I've worked harder in the last four days than I have in the last four years."

## Classification

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