

The Blue Lion

Coach's Corner w/ Joe Burcar



Last season the Finlandia Lions hockey team accomplished one of their main goals for the season - make an impact in the Midwest Collegiate Hockey Association (MCHA) and host the first round of playoffs. Their goals for 2005-2006 do not vary much from

the previous year. The team would like to finish in the top three of the MCHA, resulting in a home play-off opportunity. Fifth year head coach Joe Burcar hopes to also have one-third of his team on the MCHA All-Academic Team. "We have very talented student-athletes in the classroom and on the ice," says Burcar. "This is a very important goal for us to accomplish." In the classroom and on the ice, Burcar will be looking for five returnees to lead the way: Josh Paquette (Marquette, MI), Joe Lewis (Marquette, MI), Mike Parks (Marquette, MI), Travis Hanson (Bark River, MI), Jamie Leffler (Vancouver, Canada).

"We also can't forget about the others returning," says Burcar. "Derek Onkalo (Houghton, MI), Jason Aldrich (Hancock, MI), Trevor Morrison (Ishpeming, MI), and Joe Juntilla (Calumet, MI). They will all get quality minutes on the ice this year, along with some of our new guys like Reed (Laulainen) and Ryan (Sullivan)."

Overall, Coach Burcar sees a tight race in the MCHA. "It is going to be tough each weekend," he says. "Most teams have a great core returning, making them very competitive. It should be an exciting season."

Upcoming Blue Line Club Activities

Blue Line Luncheons

November 18	Men's
January 20	Combined
February 3	Women's

*All luncheons take place at 12 p.m. at The Upper Deck Restaurant. The price is \$7 per person. Come hear from the coaches, and meet a few of the players!

The first **Blue Line Club Pizza Party** will take place December 10 at 9 p.m. at Gino's Restaurant.

Coach's Corner w/ Chris Salani



In their second season as an intercollegiate sport at Finlandia University, the Lions hope to capitalize on what they started last season. The Lions have 13 letterwomen returning to provide a strong base. With a talented

freshman class coming in and adding depth, the women's team will look to build off of the program's inaugural season of last year. The 2004-2005 season ended with a 4-19-1 overall record. Second year head coach Chris Salani was pleased with the team's performance. "Last season's satisfaction came from watching the women compete game in and game out, never giving up, versus, at times, incredible adversity," states Salani. "The attitude and work ethic were impeccable." To start the 2005-2006 season, Coach Salani is looking to his returnees to be the backbone of his team; **Sara Sleik (Iron Mountain, MI), Danielle Syrowik (Shelby Township, MI), Bree Cote (Copperton, UT), and Ashley Leitch (Garden City, MI)**. Each have the capability of controlling their aspect of the game, and with one year's experience with the Lady Lions, the team will look to them to be its leaders. In the net, the duties will be shared between Katie Markovich, Corinne Czekaj, and Alexa Watkins. Of his goaltenders, Salani is "...hopeful [that] one will stand out this year and take a dominant starting role." New players added into this year's mixture will bring explosive capabilities and needed depth to the line-up. **Chaselyn Duffek (Houghton, MI) and Tina Puuri (Houghton, MI)** will be the extra spark for the returnees on the offensive line. **Veera Salomaa (Turku, Finland) and Sami Fisher (Yakima, WA)** will help to stabilize the defensive unit.

For this season, Coach Salani looks for his team to be at .500 or better. "Our team goals are to improve upon the overall record from last year and shoot to make the NCHA playoffs," says Salani. "In addition to both of these goals, I want the team to maintain a steady improvement from game to game and several of our athletes to contribute to the success of our NCHA season, both returnees and newcomers."

Thank-you to all of the players who sold the tickets and worked the Pancake Breakfast on October 15. Special thanks also go out to Mike Laajala at the Hillside Restaurant, Vollwerth's, Pat's Foods, Ron and Sue Anttila, the Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, Cathy Lucchesi for the newspaper ads,

Alumni Spotlight

Mike Stanaway

You might remember Mike Stanaway best for his fiery play on the ice as a Finlandia Lion. Mike's small stature was deceiving, as the fiery center amassed 5 goals and 8 assists to go with 32 penalty minutes in his career. Since graduating in May of 2003 with a degree in Business Administration, Mike has completed an MBA through UW Whitewater, with double minors in Marketing and Management.

Mike is now the coach of the Green Bay Junior Gamblers Midget AAA Minor team based in DePere, Wisconsin, and married Jennifer (Judnich), another former Finlandia graduate, in August 2005. Mike and Jen also opened a new business called *HOCKEYPLUS*. The store sells new and used hockey equipment, and features an indoor sheet of synthetic ice in which consumers try products before they purchase them. Mike answered the following questions:

How has the transition been from playing to coaching?

The transition from playing to coaching has been very smooth. One of the things that I've had to adjust to is looking at the game as a whole. When I was a player, I would concentrate on my specific role on the team and try to find ways within my role to make the team better. When you are coaching, you have to look at the entire team. You have to decide where individual's strengths and weaknesses are and help use those factors to put a solid team on the ice. Many of the things I do in practice or in a game I learned watching my former coaches when I was a player. Coach Burcar taught me a lot of things about being a good student and a good athlete, but indirectly he gave me many valuable lessons on what it takes to be a good coach.

How far do you hope to go with coaching?

Like a lot of coaches, I hope to improve each day and advance in the game as far as I can. One of my goals is to one day have the opportunity to join the coaching staff at a school like Finlandia. I have always had a goal and a dream of making it to the college level. When I was a kid, I always dreamed of being a college hockey player. Now my goal is to one day become a college coach. I think what is most rewarding is the positive effect that I can have on a young man's life. When you are coaching you are often teaching life lessons along with game concepts, however there is no better feeling in the world than knowing you helped turn a young athlete into a better student and a better player.

What have you been doing with your spare time, if you have any?

My spare time seems to be pretty limited these days. Usually I try to take time to relax and spend time with my wife.

What is your favorite Finlandia Hockey memory?

When I look back at my time as a Finlandia hockey player there are many fantastic memories that come to mind. The first memory that I have is when I first had the opportunity to put on a Finlandia University jersey. I was filled with excitement and pride. I think a second memory that I have was the sadness and emptiness that I felt when I had to take that same jersey off for the last time as a senior. One of the things I will never forget about the time I had as a Finlandia hockey player are my teammates. I made some life long friends in that locker room at Houghton County Arena and that is something I will never forget.



Former Finlandia Hockey player Mike Stanaway coaching the Marquette Iron Rangers Bantam AA team during the 2003-04 season.

Upcoming Hockey Action

Finlandia Men

Nov. 5 & 6 Home vs. Toronto Rattlers

Nov. 11 & 12 @ Marian

Nov. 18 & 19 Home vs. Northland

Nov. 25 & 26 @ College Hockey Showcase

Dec. 2 & 3 @ Lawrence

Dec. 9 & 10 Home vs. Minnesota Crookston

Finlandia Women

Oct. 28 & 29 @ Earlybird Tournament

Nov. 4 & 5 @ St. Benedicts

Nov. 12 & 13 Home vs. Hamline

Nov. 18 & 19 @ Lake Forest

Nov. 25 & 26 @ Concordia College Tourney

Dec. 2 & 3 @ UW Superior

Dec. 10 & 11 Home vs. UW River Falls
