FEATURED:
COACHES CORNER WITH CARL TROGEN OF NORTHERN MICHIGAN UNIVERSITY's FRESHMEN ARE JANUARY'S FRESHMEN OF THE MONTH.

CONNECTIONS
JANUARY 2013

ACHA EST. 1991
ACHA Staff

Chris Wilk - Executive Director
Marshall Stevenson - President
Brian Moran - Treasurer
Jim Martin Secretary
Chris Ostrander - Director of Public Relations
Brian Moran - Commissioner, Men’s DI
Bill Shannon - Vice President, Men’s DI
Mike Radakovitch - Commissioner, Men’s DII
Paul Hebert - Vice President, Men’s DII
Rick Kaminski - Commissioner, Men’s DIII
Scott Solomon - Vice President, Men’s DIII
Kim Becker - Commissioner - Women’s Division
Heath Isaacson - Vice President, Women’s Division
Al Murdoch - USA Hockey College Club Section Director
Chris Van Timmeren - USA Hockey College Club Section Director
Ed Giacomucci - Referee-in-Chief
Mike Lichtenberger - Coach-in-Chief

About ACHA Connections

ACHA Connections is a new feature run by the American Collegiate Hockey Association and ProspectsDB to help prospective players learn about the over 400 ACHA members across the country.

The “Be Recruited” button on the ACHA website will direct prospective players to the ACHA Connections site which will allow players to connect to ACHA teams. The site and monthly newsletter will provide a new connection between the ACHA and prospective players. By visiting the ACHA Connections website, a player can provide his/her information to as many teams as they please by filling out just one form.

The ACHA Connections newsletter will provide a look at freshman from various ACHA programs, exclusive interviews with coaches and additional content on the ACHA. Visit www.achahockey.org and www.achaconnections.com for more information.

If you or your team has a freshman for a profile or a coach looking to share their recruiting advice, contact Chris Ostrander (costrander@achahockey.org) for more information on appearing in the next issue.

Editor: Chris Ostrander
Photos courtesy of: Dallas Baptist University, Natalie Hannah, Carl Trosien, UW-Lacrosse
Coaches Corner Q&A

Carl Trosien - Northern Michigan

Q: How heavily do you recruit on a yearly basis?

Carl Trosien: I would say we are heavily active year round. We do a lot of follow ups, phone calls and emails in season. We do a large amount of our active recruiting during the week. We try and use the Holiday Break and then end of the season say March to do most our visits and scouting. We try and get players in for visits all season, road trip visits have been a huge success in the past. I think we do 90% of our scouting via Video either from YouTube, Fasthockey or we have players mail video up. We do very little on site scouting because the ACHA season is so long. We had to find ways to see prospective players with very little time to get out and recruit.

Q: What do you specifically look for from a potential recruit?

CT: We look for kids who are good students. It sounds so generic but we don’t want a kid who we know from day 1 is at risk of not being eligible. We see a direct link between the classroom and the ice when it comes to learning and retaining information we teach. We look at skating ability and position specific skill sets. We can tell a lot about a player just by watching his decisions and you get a good feel for that player. We love kids who make good choices with the puck. Stats are sometimes misleading and we tend to try and see the player on video before we get too heavily involved.

Q: Is there anything a player can do to stand out when they’re being recruited?

CT: Be respectful and ask a lot of questions. The more questions the more we feel that player is interviewing us. That’s when we know a kid is serious and we love that. When a prospective player tells me he has done his homework about NMU and has a good idea of the program he is looking at, it lets me focus on talking hockey. Kids who offer Video, GPA and SAT/ACT and Coaches references from first contact always stand out because you feel like they have nothing to hide.

Q: What type of expectations do you have for players when they come in as freshmen?

CT: That really depends on the freshman. We expect our freshman to come in ready to compete from the start of camp. We have a freshman second on our team in points. We want the skill players to be ready to contribute offensively. If you are a top-six forward or a top-four defenseman you’re going to be put in that position. If you’re the best goalie we have you will play a lot of minutes. I have no problem with freshman being big pieces to our team. They are important to adding depth. We also expect all freshman to establish a solid academic foundation off the ice.

Q: What is your specific approach to recruiting and bringing new players into the program?

CT: We have a no stone left unturned approach. We pride ourselves on returning every phone call and email. We recruit, we have players contact us, we have kids show up to tryouts. We understand that recruiting is the one thing we can do to build the program as quickly as possible. If you are sitting back waiting for players to come to you programs like ours have already scored a major victory. We do pride ourselves on being honest and up-front with prospective players. We prefer to under promise and over deliver. We open our locker room to prospective players. They know they are free to visit anytime and we want them to interact with current players. The more they see what we do and talk with our players, we know the better shot we have at landing them.
Alex Nelson is the nation’s leading freshman scorer at the Women’s DII level. She is tied for ninth in the nation and is averaging a goal-per game in her first year with UW-Lacrosse.

UW-Lacrosse head coach, Ryan Lofgren: Alex has been a very special player for us this year. The talent she brings with her is outstanding. Her vision with and without the puck is some of the best I have seen. She has great speed and soft hands which is a deadly combination on the ice. She is a tough player who goes in hard to the corners and in front. She is on our PP and our PK. She can bury the puck and make great plays. All around a solid hockey player.

Bobby Jones has taken the nation by storm registering an astounding four points-per-game average thus far. Jones set the Texas high school scoring record with 87 points as a senior with Midlothian.

Dallas Baptist General Manager, Ryan Erwin: I had seen Bobby skate at a few times while he was a senior in high school and knew he was an exceptional player. His speed and ability to score every time he got on the ice really stood out. I began to talk with him and his family about DBU. I invited him out to DBU for a campus visit and told him about the school and the Patriot Hockey team and he decided that DBU was the place for him.

Alex Nelson is the nation’s leading freshman scorer at the Women’s DII level. She is tied for ninth in the nation and is averaging a goal-per game in her first year with UW-Lacrosse.

UW-Lacrosse head coach, Ryan Lofgren: Alex has been a very special player for us this year. The talent she brings with her is outstanding. Her vision with and without the puck is some of the best I have seen. She has great speed and soft hands which is a deadly combination on the ice. She is a tough player who goes in hard to the corners and in front. She is on our PP and our PK. She can bury the puck and make great plays. All around a solid hockey player.
As foreign as an ice rink might be in the middle of the desert, the sport of hockey has taken hold of the state of Arizona. Amongst the cacti and tumbleweeds, the sport has gained a strong and loyal following and the interest has seeped into the collegiate ranks. While the arrival of the Phoenix Coyotes in 1996 marked the official arrival of the sport, the teams at Arizona State and the University of Arizona have also capitivated a region that is growing more hockey mad as each day passes.

While the NHL remains in a lockout-driven hibernation, the Sun Devils and Wildcats have been making waves with their on-ice performance even before the NHL rolled into town. The Arizona program is over 25 years old while the ASU program also dates to the 1980s. Led by Sean Hogan, the Wildcats have maintained their hold on a top-20 ranking (#18) for the entire first semester of this season. At Arizona State, the Sun Devils have captured headlines with their stunning first semester that included an upset of Penn State, the NCAA’s newest member.

Of course, the success and interest in each team is not a new development at either school. In fact, Arizona has regularly drawn massive crowds to the Tucson Convention Center for their home games.

“I have experience from the CCHA and our crowds are just like Ferris or Lake Superior State,” Hogan said. “When we play at home there is an incredible atmosphere and a crowd like I’ve never been around.”

Hogan attributes the strong support to a number of factors that trace to Tucson’s thirst for the sport and the team’s involvement in the community. Wildcat players are regularly participating in community programs and also visiting local schools to help raise visibility and fan interest.

ASU receives a similar level of support, although their facility isn’t at the size of the Tucson Convention Center the Wildcats all home. While the Sun Devil players note that fan interest is always higher when the team is winning, it has never been a challenge to draw fans out to games.

“With all of the new recruiting and off-ice with media has made things far more noticeable on campus,” captain Colin Hekle said. “People [approach us] on campus when they see hockey stuff asking how we are doing and when we are playing next.”

The proximity of ASU’s campus to Phoenix and Glendale serves as a compliment for the program as well. Not only has the success of the Coyotes helped to draw fans to the team, the current lack of a product to follow has raised interest.

“The lockout has been a blessing in disguise for us,” Hekle said. “Our building is pretty small but we are getting sellout crowds almost every night. I have to think the lack of NHL hockey has something to do with that.”

Consistent sellouts from both programs may serve as a shock for some who question the viability of the sport in what is considered to be a non-traditional market. But much like the Dallas metropolitan area, the arrival of the game began to grow the sport at the grassroots level. In fact, there are six Arizona natives on the Sun Devils’ roster and ten on the Arizona roster. ASU freshman Jordan Young, a Cave Creek, AZ resident, coming back home to play was an easy choice when his time in the NAHL and USHL had come to a close.

“Coming back [to ASU] was because I found out that it can be just as good as any other league, it just doesn’t have the support of school-sponsored sports,” Young said. “It might be a non-traditional market but the hockey is out here. It just isn’t as exposed as other areas.”

Growing up in Arizona’s burgeoning hockey culture, Young has seen many correlations between the growth and popularity of the Coyotes to the success that the Sun Devils are enjoying. Specifically, he points to the Coyotes move to their current home in Glendale and the economic growth that followed soon after.

“Now that things have developed, they’re getting a larger following,” he said. “The same goes for us. Now that we are growing we are trying to gain more of a following through publicity to make people know that hockey is still going on. If it is made available, they will come watch it.”

Young’s upbringing in Arizona not only exposed him to the region’s interest in hockey but also the culture that surrounds ASU. For Hekle, a Winnipeg, Albert native who spent time in the area growing up, his knowledge of the campus, city and culture made ASU an easy choice when hockey was added to the mix. Both also noted their excitement about being involved in the in-state rivalry with Arizona.

Of all the heated intercollegiate rivalries that are perpetuated throughout the various levels of the ACHA, ASU/Arizona might be one of the best. Not only does the annual success of each school provide meaningful games, the history of the rivalry from other sports and proximity takes it to another level.

“Arizona and ASU is on a different level in terms of a rivalry,” Hogan said. “The hatred between the two schools makes it fun. We have a ton of respect with what Greg Powers has done but the rivalry between the schools and the teams is like nothing I have ever seen.”

“I’m pretty sure that the two Arizona teams bring in some of the largest crowds in terms of attendance,” Hekle echoed. “For a lot of guys on our team, those ASU/AU games are some of the biggest crowds they’ve ever played against.”

ASU won the first four meeting this season, but there are still four more games on the schedule between the two rivals. In fact, Arizona will host ASU for the final two games of the season in what promises to be a raucous weekend series.
January 2013
American Collegiate Hockey Association
PO Box 827
Union Lake, MI 48387