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Raffi Torres

SABRES PUSH for the PLAYOFFS

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From the Publisher

The NFL's unsettled labor situation has the league's personnel departments sailing into uncharted waters. When no agreement was in place by the start of March, the league went into an "uncapped year." That means that there is no salary cap or floor. Teams can spend as much - or as little - as they want.

The Buffalo Bills had no reservations about spending in the free agent market. Less than a week into the uncapped year, the team had already added offensive tackle Cornell Green, a veteran of five teams and owner of a Super Bowl ring. The Bills had plenty of young offensive line talent, but a lack of veteran leadership led to inconsistent play. Having an established player in the mix should help settle things on the offensive side.

Buffalo also waved goodbye to three players. Defensive end Ryan Denney and wide receiver Josh Reed, both longtime Bills, became free agents, as did wide receiver Terrell Owens.

The Bills will be filling needs for the rest of the

month before turning to the college ranks in April's NFL Draft. We'll take a look at their prospects for Draft Day and beyond in next month's issue.

While the NFL was getting ready to start free agency, the NHL saw the trade deadline come and go. Although there were some blockbuster headlines before the Olympic break, several teams made a splash after the games with prudent moves. Buffalo gave Ryan Miller a hero's welcome for his work with Team USA and said goodbye to soon-to-be unrestricted free agent Nathan Paestch. In return they picked up Raffi Torres and, like the rest of Buffalo, we welcome the gritty goal-scorer and feature him in this month's edition.

After the Torres trade, Buffalo lightened the load by cutting Clarke MacArthur loose in exchange for a couple of mid-round picks. The slightly revamped and refreshed team took back the Northeastern Division lead and hope to retain their position down the stretch.

With the Sabres making

their march towards the playoffs, both the Rochester Americans and the Portland Pirates are second in their respective divisions and look poised to make a post-season run. Old-timer Chris Jensen joins the other Hall of Famers in Portland and we spoke to Mike York, who's making his presence felt, after missing a long stretch of games due to injury.

After beating up on the Buffalo Bandits, the Rochester Knighthawks are only a half game out of first place. Carrying on the long tradition of family lacrosse, the Evans brothers - Scott and Shawn - have been putting up good numbers for their club. The Bandits, who are still in the hunt, have been getting production from hometown product Frank Resetartis as well as the usual veterans.

As the snow starts to melt and we see glimmers of Spring, many of us start to think about outdoor sports such as golf... Be sure to pick up our April edition as it features our annual golf directory special pullout section.

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Raffi Torres joins the Sabres

By George Kuhn

In Sabres general manager Darcy Regier's annual trade deadline roster tweak, the team added left wing Raffi Torres. The 6-foot, 216-pound winger no shrinking violet, and adds some essential elements to the lineup by playing bigger than his size. Torres had scored 19 goals with Columbus at the time of the trade, more than any other Sabre, and his shooting percentage of 19.5 percent was sixth overall in the league. Torres averaged slightly over 13 minutes of playing time per game with the Blue Jackets, significantly less than the 18-19 minutes he is expected to get here playing on a scoring line with center Derek Roy and winger Jason Pominville. With more time on the ice, Torres could pick up his scoring pace while wearing a Sabres jersey.

Torres scored a career-best 27 goals for Edmonton in 2005-06 and he had a strong playoff as the Oilers lost in the Stanley Cup finals. Torres also appeared in the AHL finals on two occasions, and his history of playoff success can only help the Sabres' similar aspirations in April. Sabres fans who want a preview of what Torres can do for their team should watch his YouTube videos, where he runs over some of the NHL's larger player like Jarome Iginla and Hal Gill.

Derek Roy remembers Torres well from their days competing against each other as juniors in the Ontario Hockey League. "I used to battle against him a lot. He played for Brampton and I played for Kitchener," Roy recalled. "We played against each other for three years. Now we're teammates and it's good to have him on our side. He was a really good player in junior and he's the same exact player now, he finishes his check."

Torres is very happy to be in Buffalo and expects to be able to contribute to further Sabres success. "I'm very excited about coming from Columbus to a team that knows how to win here in

Buffalo," Torres said. "They've done it here all season. Hopefully I can pitch in along the way."

A trade forces a player to adjust to new teammates, personalities and systems of play. Torres expects this transition as a Sabres to go well. "It was difficult when I was younger and quieter to fit in on a new team. Now, they know what they're getting here and I know that I'm going to be able to help out. I'm kind of a veteran player now so that process gets a little bit easier."

It's been said that Buffalo is a blue-collar town, and that the fans like their hockey players to bring their lunch bucket to the rink. That being said, Torres sounds like he will fit in quite nicely with the faithful at HSBC Arena. "I go hard up and down my wing, bang some heads and score some goals along the way," Torres explained. But Torres knows that his game needs some work to be at his best. "I haven't been too great in my own zone this year so I need to focus on that so I help out. I'm going to go out and try to be physical, hopefully get some big goals along the way and try to keep upbeat in the room."

The trade to Buffalo also brings him closer to home, as Torres' family lives in Toronto. "Yeah, I've played on some teams out on the west coast so it's nice that my family will be able to come out and watch some games," Torres said.

Torres was slated to move onto a top scoring line with Derek Roy and Jason Pominville where he can be expected to complement those skilled players with his own skills and presence around the goalmouth. "Roisie and Pominville are both highly skilled with a lot of speed so I need to make sure I'm in the right zone, not try to do too much, try to keep it simple to start," Torres said. "I've worked hard to get this opportunity so I hope I'm there."

While the Sabres have been slumping for the past few weeks, Torres believes

that his new teammates have the 'right stuff' to assert themselves again over the rest of the season. "I think the guys in this room are smart enough to know they can win. Obviously having Lindy Ruff behind the bench is a big help. He'll help the team get out of this slump. You've got to buy into what he's selling and you'll be effective."

Playing in a traditional hockey market like Buffalo is different from playing in Columbus, where Ohio State college football is essentially a major-league sport, but not hockey. Torres appreciates that his career has taken him back in that direction.

"It's exciting. I've kind of missed that playing in Columbus," Torres explained. The fans are great there but there's only about 14 to 15,000 per game. So it's nice coming to a city where they know their hockey and they demand hard work out of their players and it'll be nice to give them that. Only good things are ahead for this organization once we start putting some wins up."

Ruff seems eager to see what Torres can contribute. "We've seen him play, he's a big strong kid with a good shot. It'll take some time for him to breed some familiarity with the other players but we know what he brings and we think what he brings can be helpful to our team," Ruff commented. "All systems are close. Everyone has their own version of how they want to play. We want him to use his size and his skill to get in tight to the net where he can do some damage. Playing in your own end, each team has their own rules and regulations and we're trying to get him there."

With an expiring contract after the season, Torres is considered a rental player at this point and says that the team has not yet discussed a long-term contract.

"No talks yet," Torres said. "It's just pretty much go out and play your game and we'll see where it goes."



Raffi Torres bring new energy to the Sabres.

Photo by Joe Valenti

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Bandits' Resetarits living the dream

By Gregory Kowalczyk

Being a professional athlete is one thing, but being an athlete who plays for his hometown is another. That's exactly what's happening right now for Buffalo Bandits forward Frank Resetarits. A Hamburg native, Resetarits grew up playing lacrosse his whole life, setting state records in high school. Ultimately that led to becoming a co-captain at the University of Albany in which he helped lead his team to a National Championship in 2007. Resetarits was selected as a finalist for the Tewaaraton trophy in 2007 as most outstanding American lacrosse player.

After playing at the collegiate level for a few years,

Resetarits' perspective on his prospects changed. "I realized I could play pro probably around my junior year of college," Resetarits explained. "My school, Albany, had started to get ranked in the top 10 in D-I. I led D-I in scoring that year and play(ed) my summer in St. Catherine's playing junior box lacrosse, and had a pretty good summer scoring wise. That summer I also worked a lot with Andy Gannon of Excel Sports Training, who I still work with today. That's when I thought I may have a chance to get drafted."

That dream became a reality in 2007 when Frank was drafted by the San Jose Stealth fifth overall in the National Lacrosse League

entry draft. "Lacrosse was definitely something I was always interested in," Resetarits said. "By no means did I think I would make it this far. I just liked to play the game and hoped it could help me further my education, but to have it be something I can play in front of thousands of fans a night, is a dream come true."

"It was a real honor going that high in the draft," Resetarits continued. "To hear my name called around the same time as some of the others that were picked really was special."

It was time to head out cross-country to play for the San Jose Stealth where Resetarits had two productive seasons, netting 34 points as a rookie and 16 his next year before an injury



Photo courtesy Buffalo Bandits

After a stint on the west coast, Frank Resetarits is playing for the home team and he couldn't be happier.

sidelined him for his second season. "The move was very fun. I got to enjoy a few winters in California, live with a bunch of guys on the team from all over North America, and sample some different kinds of cultures that we often don't get to experience in Buffalo."

When San Jose was forced to move to Washington, Resetarits, decided it was time to get as close to home as possible. "I talked to our GM at the time in the Stealth organization and he said he would try to get me back east." The Buffalo Bandits were able to work out a deal to land Resetarits and the rest, as they say is history.

As Resetarits' lacrosse

career heads into the next chapter, he's exactly where he wants to be, playing in front of sell-out crowds in his hometown and playing alongside living legend John Tavares.

"Playing with John is really one of the coolest things I've done with the sport," Resetarits explained. "He's a living legend, someone I grew up watching and it's unbelievable to be on the same floor as him. I have learned by watching him at practice what kind of dedication to the game and the kind of hard work you need to put in to excel."

Buffalo has a different atmosphere from most when it comes to their sports teams; it's something special to those who can experience it. It's more noticeable when you leave it and come back. Like the saying goes 'you don't know what you got till it's gone.' That's exactly what Resetarits is experiencing. "My favorite things about being in Buffalo are seeing family and friends. The food here is one of a kind and can't be replicated anywhere else, and the ability to see all the Bills and Sabres games are a thing I missed while I was out in California."

The "dream" wasn't possible without family and Frank has a great head on his shoulders, has the respect, passion and desire to know that he had help along the way and is grateful of everyone who has made an impact in his life. "My parents have done the most to make my career go up until this point," Resetarits said. "They spent countless hours driving me and my brother to games and practices all over the state and Canada, they spent a lot of money allowing us to play on teams and afford equipment. I'd also say that coach Ed Van Tine from Hamburg High School taught me a lot about the game and the meaning of it and how to be a person that guys want to play with on the field."

So next time you're down at the arena watching the Bandits run out the tunnel, watch for Frank and know that Buffalo has another hometown athlete supporting his city with pride, dignity and honor.

"It's one of, if not, the coolest things I've ever done. Running out of the tunnel for the first time in the home opener was unbelievable. This is the greatest sports city in America, and to have the privilege to play in front of people just like you is something that I will cherish forever."

Knighthawks' Family Tradition Carries On

By Bob Conlon

The world of lacrosse has historically been a tight-knit community. The sport not only has a large Native American and Canadian presence, but it also has a strong fraternal presence. Over the years there have been generations of fathers and sons playing as a legacy.

The Rochester Knighthawks have also enjoyed the tradition with great success. The Hawks have had several brother tandems that left a large mark on the club's history. In the past they have had the Malawsky brothers Derek and Curt, and the Gait twins Paul and Gary. The team presently has the Bomberry brothers Cam and Cory, one as a coach, the other a player. The most recent pair of brothers to make an impact on the team, however, is the Evans brothers, Scott and Shawn. The Canadian-born dynamic duo has quite a pedigree. Their father, Paul Evans, played with the Toronto Maple Leafs and their brother Steve also played lacrosse with the Toronto Rock.

Scott, the older brother, was born July 27, 1981, in Peterborough, Ontario. Entering his sixth season with the club, Scott just signed to a five-year extension through the 2014 season. He was acquired by the Knighthawks with the fifth pick overall in the 2003 NLL Entry Draft and has become a huge talent. Besides the Knighthawks, Scott played for the Peterborough Lakers. He is returning in 2010 after missing 2009 with a season-ending injury that he sustained during training camp.

Scott is still suffering from the effects of that injury this season. He was forced to miss three recent



Photo by Bob Conlon

The Evans brothers, Scott (left) and Shawn (right), celebrate after Scott's goal.

games against the Boston Blazers, the Philadelphia Wings, and the Edmonton Rush – the first scratches from a game in his career. This lingering injury is definitely affecting his goal-scoring production. This year he is on track to score 15 goals after scoring more than 40 goals in both the 2007 and 2008 seasons before his injury. He is in fourth place for all-time goals (156) and points (322), and fifth in assists with 166. In Scott's spare time, he gives back to the sport by helping coach a midget lacrosse team back home that went on to win a provincial championship.

Five years Scott's junior, Shawn joined his older brother when he was taken with the second pick overall in the 2005 NLL Entry Draft. Prior to joining the Knighthawks, he spent seven years also with the Peterborough Lakers, and the Six Nations Arrows. During that tenure he scored 199 goals and had 462 points. In 2005 he played a year of NCAA Division I lacrosse at Bellarmine University in

Canada. He was the leading freshman scorer with 53 goals and 21 assists.

Shawn is the only player in lacrosse history to win the Minto Cup, the Mann Cup, and a NLL Champions Cup in the same year. He also shares the honor with Craig Conn as the only two players to win two Minto cups back to back with two two different Junior teams.

With the injuries to both John Grant and his brother Scott last season, Shawn was forced to step up and take a larger role on the team. Shawn hit the challenge head-on, achieving career highs in helpers, points, power-play points, and shots on goal. He became one of the league's most feared snipers in the clutch with three game-winning goals. Shawn and his girlfriend Kayla are also the proud parents of Paityn, their daughter.

With seven games to go, the Knighthawks are presently in third place with a 5-4 record and are tied with the Boston Blazes. They are also right behind the Orlando Titans and the Toronto Rock.

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Sabres push forward to the playoffs

By George Kuhn

After two seasons watching playoff hockey on TV, Sabres fans and players have waited a long time to get back in and have enjoyed the team's superior play this season, standing shoulder-to-shoulder with conference leaders Washington and New Jersey for most of the season, and ahead of Stanley Cup champion Pittsburgh. A recent slump has seen the team drop from this lofty perch and has exposed a soft underbelly of low scoring and inconsistent play in front of goalie Ryan Miller.

Coach Lindy Ruff has acknowledged that it's his job to get the players ready to play winning hockey again. "I'm real confident we can get out of it. We've had two weeks off (for the Olympics); I've been gone for ten days of practice. When the substitute teacher's there, when you were a kid in school, you goofed off. We had four or five players missing. Now it's back to focus and determination to play the system and play it hard."

Of great concern to Ruff has been the team's increasing inability to play as a team and their difficulty in moving the puck out of its own end against opponents' strong forechecking efforts. Ruff has emphasized that players need to talk to each other in the defensive zone and to provide puck support, meaning working hard to get open for

passes and to let their teammates know that you're open. This is how to defeat opponent's forechecking pressure; by working the short passing game, to get the puck away from the pressure and exit the defensive zone by maintaining control.

Ruff is stressing communication and enthusiasm, reminding his players of how they were successful earlier in the season. "Part of our success in the first 30 game stems from puck support, knowing where your teammates are at, hearing another guys voice, leaving the zone under control as a five-man unit."

After a recent game, Ruff said he could swear that half the guys on the team had muzzles on. "When you're under pressure the only thing you can trust is someone else's voice and the fact that he has to be in a certain place for us," Ruff explained. "The support has to be there. We've proved it to ourselves as a team that when we have that support and we have that communication we can



Ryan Miller key to Sabres post-season hopes.

Photo by Joe Valenti

come out of our end as good as any team in the league. The communication hasn't been there; the puck support hasn't been there. And by the time we're getting out of our end, we're changing lines and the other team's coming at us again. It leads to poor changes, it leads to scoring chances against."

Now that the regular teacher has returned, he is confident that his students will be able to make the adjustments necessary to return to their winning ways. "They get it," Ruff continued.

"We know we're a good team. We know we've got a goaltender who can win us games. We've got a group of forwards who can put the puck in the net enough to win games. And we've already proven that we can defend with the best teams and against the best teams."

Sabres center Derek Roy agrees that the team has fallen short of its capabilities lately, and explains why the offense may have slowed down. "Getting players and the puck to the net, getting screens and rebounds and getting scoring chances," Roy said. "In previous games we've been hanging around at the side of the net hoping the puck comes to us instead of screening the goalie and having the player shoot through the screen. A lot of goals these days are 'garbage goals' so we've got to get to the net."

Ruff does acknowledge that it can be frustrating to see the team's performance slip when the players drift

away from his teachings. "It's just the ongoing battle that you have. As soon as you get some ice you tend to want to go one-on-one and try to be a little creative. It all stems from our own end, you can look at the other end but when you have one player going up against three and he's trying to play one-on-one and we're trying to get people off the ice that's just trying to make something out of nothing

layoff hasn't helped but does not offer that as an excuse. He is focused on what the team needs to do to be successful. "Everyone's got to buy into the system and work hard. There's no more trades to be made, this is our team. We've got to learn how to play the system and play hard. If everyone doesn't buy into it then we'll find ourselves either late into a playoff spot and lose or not even make the playoffs. I think right now it's desperate times and the guys have to really



Photo by Joe Valenti

Derek Roy exudes confidence about the Sabers continued success.

ing and it doesn't work."

Known for tinkering with his lines, Ruff can be expected to continue to toy with his team's lineup in an attempt to create some chemistry. "It may be time to shake up all the lines. You put pieces together. You put Tim Connolly together with two good goal scorers. Obviously Derek's a very creative guy with a couple of guys who can score goals. The Kennedy line was a good line for us; it was a shutdown line that we could use in any situation. We'll just go back to that line, it worked well for us in the first 20 games and see where we go from there."

Roy agrees that the long

work hard at the system."

Along with their coach, players like Roy exude confidence. They are prepared to leave their problems behind them because they have addressed their recent shortcomings and will soon shake their slump.

"I fully expect everyone to be back on track and working hard and working as hard as they can at the system and working hard as a team," Roy said. "We have not been playing as a team like we did before. We're talking more on the ice to get the camaraderie back in the dressing room and go on the ice and utilize it."

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Fantasy baseball

By Mike Fox

It's finally springtime, that time of year when life begins anew in the real world, as well as the fantasy world. We open our fantasy baseball season with some recommendations of players who have the potential to produce at a level far exceeding their 2010 draft position or auction price, as well as some names you should try to file away for the future.

Catcher

Last year at this time, Geovany Soto was atop everyone's wish list after a scintillating 2008 debut season (.285-23-86) that culminated with him being named NL Rookie of the Year. His price will be substantially lower this year after a horrific sophomore season (.218-11-47) that eventually saw him lose at-bats to the immortal Koyie Hill, but nagging injuries and simple bad luck had a lot to do with his 2009 travails. A rebound season is almost inevitable here.

Prospects: *Carlos Santana CLE, Buster Posey SF*

First base

Joey Votto is still flying somewhat under the radar despite smacking 49 homers over the past two seasons, but this might be the last time you'll be able to acquire his services at a discount. The 26-year old Votto is

coming off a .322-25-84 season, but even more notable are the .414 OBP and .567 SLG percentage, both stats good for sixth place in the majors last year. Factor in his cozy home field, and all signs point to a monster breakout season in the making.

Almost as intriguing is Kansas City's Billy Butler, after the longtime prospect finally started making good on all those promises with a .301-21-93 line, along with 51 doubles, second only to Brian Roberts in 2009. He's still developing at age 24, so it's not unreasonable to expect some of those doubles to start reaching the fences.

Prospects: *Justin Smoak TEX, Chris Carter OAK*

Second base
Veteran fantasy owners fondly remember when fleet Eric Young patrolled the middle infield in Colorado, and soon Eric Young Jr. may be garnering the same favorable reaction. EY Jr. showed last year the he inherited his dad's speed on the base paths (58 SB for Triple-A Colorado Springs) and line drive power. Clint Barmes is the incumbent 2B in Colorado, but his 23 homers last year at age 30 scream "fluke," and his .245 batting average and .294 OBP scream "mediocre." Barmes' super-



You can't go wrong by drafting Justin (left) or B.J. Upton (right).

ior defense will help him hold off Young for the moment, but his days are numbered.

Third base

Chone Figgins is hardly your prototypical fantasy 3B, but it is precisely that lack of pop that might allow you to get him at a bargain price this year. Sure, he's got no pop, but can you think of another 3B who has six consecutive 30+ SB seasons? Load up on power numbers elsewhere, and enjoy all those cheap bags.

Prospects: *Brett Wallace TOR, Pedro Alvarez PIT*

Shortstop
Things get iffy after the elite SSs are off the board, so grabbing one of the top six or so would be in your best interests. Failing that, consider filling in the blank with one of the new wave of speedsters. Elvis Andrus, Everth Cabrera, and Alcides Escobar all have the poten-



Photo MLB Pressbox

tial to exceed 30 SBs this season. Andrus would seem to have a leg up on the others, with a 33-steal major league debut season already under his belt. Of course, you can't

steal second base if you can't get to first base, so all come with initial caveats. If you don't feel lucky in that regard, you might be better served tabbing someone like Asdrubal Cabrera. He likely won't finish with as many SBs as the other youngsters, but should offer stronger contributions in the other fantasy scoring categories.

Outfield

This position offers the usual array of rising talent, so there's no need to crawl too far out on a limb to fill in your roster. Sure, it would be nice to land Jason Heyward, but he's only 20 years old, with zero big league at-bats on his resume. If you're not

in a save player league, let someone else overpay for the hype. If you simply must draft a relatively unproven player, focus instead on players like Carlos Gonzalez, Colby Rasmus, Andrew McCutchen or Garrett Jones. All but Gonzalez are already guaranteed full-time jobs, and all have at least already shown they can hold their own in the majors.

Farther up the wish list are a stack of players who will soon join the ranks of the true elite, including Adam Jones, Nick Markakis, and anybody named Upton.

Prospects: *Mike Stanton FLA, Desmond Jennings TB, and, of course, Heyward.*

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Local boxing happenings

By Bob Caico

Terry Williams, boxing coach, hosted an eight-bout card on Feb. 27 in Buffalo. Amateur fighters from Buffalo, Rochester and Lackawanna competed on a Saturday afternoon at the Flare Center. Results are as follows:

- Nate Arnold (Roc. St. Martin's) dec 3-2
- Niasheen Williams (RSM)
- Gracious Richards (RSM) dec 5-0
- Jerome Coster (Flare)
- Edwin Colon (Westside PAL) dec 5-0
- Gill Cepeda (RSM)
- Jordan Williams (Flare) dec 4-1
- Miki Gaston (Kiki's)
- Jose Rodriguez(Lackawanna) dec 4-1
- Walter Williams (Flare)
- Pat Thompson (WNY MMA) dec 5-0
- James Harmony (Univ. of Buffalo)
- Jordan Gaines (DeLeon Boxing)

dec 5-0 Andrew Jones (Lionheart Boxing)

Gaines and Jones fought four two-minute rounds in anticipation of them ending their amateur careers and embarking on the professional boxing scene.

.....
 At Singer's Gym Eight Buffalo Golden Gloves open champions who were crowned in March of 1948 traveled to Madison Square Gardens to compete in the Eastern Golden Glove tournament. Alex Ashley (112 pound), Tony BiFulco (118 pound), John "Spider" Thompson (126 pound), Bob Rosengart (135 pound), Tony DiPelino (147 pound), Lee Batchelor (160 pound), Bill Gullo (175 pound) and Terry Teague (heavyweight) were the representatives of the Courier-Express team. Thompson who was the 1947 runner-up in the 118-pound class was the lone winner for the squad. Rosengart reached the finals but was denied by Johnny Saxton (future world welterweight champion) of



1948 Golden Gloves champion John "Spider" Thompson went on to sport a 17-7-2 professional record. On April 9th and 23rd at the Flickinger Center come out to the 2010 NYS Golden Gloves tournament to see who will be the next Spider Thompson.

New York. Teague and DiPelino were defeated in the semifinals—both victims of well-boomed decisions. Teague lost to Coley Wallace best known for playing Joe Louis in the movie "The Joe Louis Story."

Redemption will have to wait for Amer Abdallah

Community Sports Report

"It's a reminder that kickboxing is a dangerous sport."

The words of Amer Abdallah after sustaining what has been described as a "substantial personal injury" during training for his upcoming title fight at Lockport's Kenan Arena. Due to the injury, Abdallah has been forced to postpone that fight, as well as others on the fight card, until July 24.

While not specifying the exact nature of the injury to Abdallah, manager Elizabeth Bouchard said of the postponement, "We take this sport very serious-

ly and are not going to risk any long-term damage."

Personal friend and advisor "Baby" Joe Mesi, who has been at his side, concurred with the decision to adhere to safety precautions.

For his part, the kickboxer says he agrees with the decision of his trainers and doctors, even though it is emotionally upsetting. "This was the best I've ever felt leading into a fight in my career," Abdallah added.

Originally scheduled for March 20, Abdallah's fight was for the Eastern U.S. Light Heavyweight Championship - one of several titles the Lockport kick-

boxer held prior to his three-year hiatus from the sport.

Now rescheduled for Saturday, July 24, REDEMPTION will still take place at Lockport's Kenan Arena. Fans holding tickets are advised to hold onto them until new tickets are issued and then exchange them for the same seat.

Any further questions regarding tickets or details of the re-scheduled fight card should contact Elizabeth Bouchard at 439-5232 or Ticketmaster at (800) 745-3000.

Pro wrestling events and info

By Ivan the Impaler

After a hiatus of Way Too Long, the International Wrestling Federation is making its glorious return on Saturday, March 13. The Meeting Place in Niagara Falls, N.Y. will host the rebirth, reincarnation and retransformation of a fed that rocked Portageville, N.Y. several years back, and is now expanding westward.

The main event features former TNA star Cody Deaner making his triumphant return to WNY to face Big League John McChesney. Cody held the TNA Knockout's (Women's) Title for a brief period (it's a complicated story; TNA doesn't officially acknowledge it, but WE do), and probably would have held more gold were it not for recent anti-Mullet bias rampant in TNA.

Deaner competed several times in WNY, including at NWA NY, Ballpark Brawls, ESW and other promotions. He's also wrassled all across Ontario, going as far as his double-wide trailer would take him.

Now, he wants to be known as Everyman Cody Deaner. We're not sure why (maybe he fights for the rights of Every Man), but we'll find out on March 13.

Also, Hellcat will face Gabe Saint; wherever Hellcat goes, Johnny Kayfabe and the Mysterious Triple X can't be far behind. What kind of havoc will they wreak at the Meeting Place? Will Mayor Dyster have to call out extra security?

Discussion question

Wrestlemania 26 will be held March 28 in Arizona. Nobody asked, but This Reporter hereby offers his list of the Top 15 Matches of the first 25 WMs. Granted, these rankings are highly subjective and could change daily. Or hourly.

We tried to base this on the match quality itself, not on the pre-match hype (i.e.,

that's why there are no Hulk Hogan matches listed).

Feel free to discuss and debate amongst yourselves.

1. Bret Hart vs. Steve Austin - WM 13
2. I-C Title: Ricky Steamboat vs. Randy Savage - WM 3
3. Triple Threat Heavyweight Title: Triple H vs. Chris Benoit vs. Shawn Michaels - WM 20
4. IC Title Ladder Match: Razor Ramon vs. Shawn Michaels - WM 10
5. Shawn Michaels vs. The Undertaker - WM 25
6. Iron Man Match: Bret Hart vs. Shawn Michaels - WM 12
7. TLC 3-Way Tag Title Match: Edge & Christian vs. The Dudley Boyz vs. Hardy Boyz - WM 17
8. Owen Hart vs. Bret Hart - WM 10
9. Heavyweight Title: Edge vs. Undertaker - WM 24
10. WWE Title: Kurt Angle vs. Brock Lesnar - WM 19
11. Shawn Michaels vs. Ric Flair - WM 24
12. WWE Title Match: The Rock vs. Steve Austin - WM 17
13. Kurt Angle vs. Shawn Michaels - WM 21
14. Bret "The Hitman" Hart vs. Rowdy Roddy Piper - WM 8
15. Kurt Angle vs. Chris Benoit - WM 17

Upcoming events

Saturday, March 13 - IWF (International Wrestling Federation) -The Meeting Place -2469 Niagara Road - Niagara Falls, N.Y. Scheduled to appear: former TNA star Cody Deaner-6:30 p.m. start.

Saturday, March 20 - Ring of Honor - International Centre, 6900 Airport Road - Hall 4A- Mississauga, Ontario, Canada - 7:30 p.m. start.

Sunday, March 28 - WWE - Wrestlemania XXVI (PPV)

- Glendale, Ariz. - 7 p.m.

Saturday, April 3 - NWA NY - -The German House, 315 Gregory St. - Rochester, N.Y. - 6 p.m. Belltime. - See www.nwaupstate.net for details.

Saturday, May 1 - Buffalo Championship Wrestling - Lake Erie Italian Club-South Park Avenue - Lackawanna, N.Y. - 7 p.m. Belltime. For info, contact troybuchannan@yahoo.com . Scheduled to appear: Steve Corino, Danny Doring, Pepper Parks and Chet "The Jet" Jablonski.

Saturday, May 8 - Ragin' Wolf - Mixed Martial Arts - Seneca Niagara Casino - 7 p.m. -see www.ragingwolf.com.

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The girl behind the mask: Abby Posner

By Angela Stefano

What started as something fun to do with her best friend has turned into Abby Posner's 'favorite thing ever.'

Posner and her friend, who played for an Amherst house hockey team, were in eighth grade when they jokingly planned their futures one day.

"Somehow we got to playing hockey, and we were saying we wanted to play hockey together when we were adults, meet the Sabres, something crazy like that," Abby said. "She told me I should try out, and I thought it might be fun."

Four years later, the 17-year-old is now in net for the Amherst Lady Knights 16U travel team, which is in second place in Western New York State and hosting the state tournament in mid-March. Having already found success, Abby hopes to have the chance to play for her high school during her senior year.

When Abby started at Amherst High School, she wanted a chance to compete for her school. But because there was no girls' team at Amherst, she became goaltender for the JV boys.

"It was really difficult," said Abby, now a junior. "I was a freshman, I was the only girl. I had to have a locker room by myself, so I couldn't really be a part of the team bonding, and I never really became that close with the boys on the team."

"It just didn't work out well," she continued. "I like playing on a girls team a lot better."

Abby quit the JV team after one year and went back to playing for Amherst town teams. Because of this



Photo courtesy Posner family

Abby Posner celebrating after a Super Sunday win.

experience, Abby and her mother Isabell have become proponents of Girls 4 Varsity Ice Hockey, a group of players and families committed to organizing girls teams at local high schools.

"I really wanted to play for my school to have school spirit and just be part of a school sport," said Abby, "and the boys team wasn't really what I had in mind."

"[My mom] got really into it," Abby explained. Isabell became an advocate and started pleading her cause at meetings, but, as her daughter admitted, "no one really listened."

Slowly but surely, however, the idea gained momentum. An exhibition game took place in January, and many school districts have committed to having some sort of girls team for the 2010-11 school year.

"It's not varsity, but at least the girls are getting together to meet each other and skate together," Abby said. "If we don't have varsity or JV, there will definitely be a club team."

Her Amherst team's season will end in March – April if the team goes to Nationals – but Abby doesn't slow down during the summer. She's planning on doing some goalie camps and clinics and trying out for the Empire State Games team.

But no camp will top last summer's camp where she got to work with her role model, Sabres goalie Ryan Miller.

"It sounds kind of silly, but I wanted to be just like him," Abby said, explaining why she originally chose the goaltender position. "I was so impressed with his ability, and I wanted to be able to do the same."

Abby even got some one-on-one time with Miller, who, she remembers, was working with her on wrap-around drills.

"He was giving me tips on how to hug the post, just talking to me for a long time and giving me some good advice," she said.

She admits, however, that it isn't always easy to be the one standing in net.

"I do feel pressure a lot, especially in really important games," Abby said. "I kind of feel like a lot more is resting on my shoulders, and that has nothing to do with the ability of my teammates."

"It's just, if I let in a goal sometimes, I feel like I could have saved it," Abby added, "but I have to just try and let it go."

And it's important to remember that hockey really is a team sport.

"I love making a great save, and it just feels so good to be on the ice and work as a team," Abby said. "It's not an individual thing, and I think that's really cool."

Outdoor track and field shining stars

By Adam McGill

With the outdoor track and field season just starting, it's important to get to know some of the best athletes in Western New York. Below are some promising young standouts who could distance themselves from the competition this spring.

Matt Gac: University at Buffalo

Matt Gac (Newark Valley, N.Y.) has improved his throwing in every meet this past indoor season. The junior placed first in the weight throw competition at the Mid-American Conference Indoor Championship, with an impressive throw of 66-2.25 (19.87 meters). The throw set a new UB school record, which was also previously held by Gac. The thrower was named Most Improved for Buffalo in the 2009 outdoor season, and he has continued his success moving into the 2010 outdoor season. Gac will be a leader on the throwing team, and he is sure to be among the team's point leaders at the end of the year.

Samantha Gray: Erie Community College

Samantha Gray (Buffalo, N.Y.) is the team's best middle distance runner. Gray is a graduate from Kenmore West High School, and the sophomore has really made a name for herself in the Buffalo area. Her best event is the 400 meter-dash, and she runs it with such a sense of urgency. Gray will be one of the only distance runners on the team this season, so expect her to make the most of the situation.

Kevin Green: Erie Community College

Kevin Green (Buffalo, N.Y.) was crucial to the Kats' success this indoor season, and moving forward the freshmen will definitely be a focal point of the team's outdoor season. Green is the team's best field athlete; competing in the long jump, triple jump and high jump during the indoor sea-



Photo by Allison Grimes/UB Athletics

UB sprinter, Jamiee McClary, broke three school records in only her first season.

son. Look for Green to have an impact immediately, as ECC starts their outdoor season at Alfred State College on March 27.

Erica Johnson: Buffalo State College

This indoor season, Erica Johnson (Poughkeepsie, N.Y.) set school records in the 55 meter-dash (7.11 seconds) and the 60 meter-dash (7.65 seconds). Besides being a new school record, Johnson's 55 meter-dash time also set a new SUNYAC record. The junior sprinter was named to the All-SUNYAC First Team this indoor season, and she is quickly becoming one of the best sprinters in school history. Johnson will be the Bengals' best sprinter heading into the outdoor season, so make sure to keep an eye out for her this spring.

Tiffany Maskulinski: University at Buffalo

Tiffany Maskulinski (Elma, N.Y.) is one of the premier pole-vaulters in Buffalo. The senior has been a focal point of Buffalo's

field team for years, and she seems to be getting better with each attempt. The nursing major earned a trip to the NCAA National Outdoor Championships in 2009, but due to a knee injury was unable to participate. She also is the two-time Coaches Award winner for the outdoor season, and has developed into a great leader for the incoming athletes. Maskulinski shines more in the outdoor track season, so look for her to have another strong season for the blue and white.

Xavier Mateen: Buffalo State College

Sprinter Xavier Mateen (New Rochelle, N.Y.) has made amazing strides the last couple of years. Mateen was a part of the 2008 indoor 4 x 200 meter-relay that set a school record with a time of 1:30.60. Also this indoor season, Mateen ran a sizzling 200 meter-dash, with a time of 22.23 seconds. The time was just behind Willie Hordge's school record (22.02

seconds), who ironically Mateen has been chasing his whole career. The junior was named to the All-SUNYAC Second Team for the indoor season, and he has built some momentum going into the 2010 outdoor season.

Jamiee McClary: University at Buffalo

The freshmen burst onto the scene this indoor season by capturing three UB records. The Rochester native now holds university records in the 60 meter-dash (7.62 seconds), 200 meter-dash (24.45 seconds), and 400-meter dash (54.84 seconds). McClary also currently holds eight records at Our Lady of Mercy High School in Rochester. The hurdler/sprinter was even named to the All-MAC Academic Team for her efforts in the classroom. McClary will be leading the Bulls' sprinters this outdoor season, and she will have all the pressure that goes along with it.

Under 18 and beyond: Emily Pfalzer skating for Team USA

By Angela Stefano

For one of Western New York's rising hockey stars, it all began on a backyard family ice rink.

"We have a rink in our backyard that my dad's been building since before I was born," Emily Pfalzer, a Getzville native, said. "My brothers were always playing out there, and I wanted to play, too."

She's come a long way from pick-up games and taking shots on her siblings. At only 16, Emily has competed on national teams and is poised to eventually make it to the Olympics.

In 2007, Emily was chosen to attend the USA Player Development Camp in Minnesota, and has attended each year since. In 2008 and 2009, she was chosen from that camp for the USA All-Star team.

Then, this year, Emily was selected for the USA U18



Photo courtesy Pfalzer family

Defensemen Emily Pfalzer skates for Team USA U18.

National team. The team competed against Canada in Calgary and, in November, got to train with the women's Olympic team.

"The best part was putting on the USA jersey for the first time, and then the national anthem," Emily said. "You don't really think about it when you just hear

the anthem, but when you're wearing the jersey and looking up at the flag, it's really cool."

She also made friends with girls from all over the country, who she gets a chance to visit when she has tournaments with them or in their hometowns.

And now, the young defender is waiting to hear if she was selected for the USA team for the International Ice Hockey Federation Women's U18 World Championship. The tournament will be held in Illinois in the spring.

A junior at Nichols School, Emily has been on Amherst boys hockey teams, the Buffalo Bisons girls hockey team, and played for Nichols her freshman and sophomore year, but now competes with the Mississauga Chiefs of the Provincial Women's Hockey League. Her team recently

won a very large Stoney Creek tournament, and hosted and won the Mississauga Girls Hockey League Christmas Classic.

"Traveling is well worth it," Emily, who, despite a hectic schedule, maintains a spot on the Nichols honor roll, said. She drives four hours round-trip to Mississauga twice a week for practices – doing homework in the car – and has dryland workouts two or three times a week. Her weekends are usually spent at games all over Ontario.

"It's a lot faster, the players

are really good, and it's better competition," she said.

It's a lot of work for her parents, too, but they also say it's worth it.

"At one time, we had all three kids playing travel hockey, and that was something," Emily's mother Jill Pfalzer said. "You make awfully good friends when you play travel hockey, because you're with the same people so much. It's easier for us now because her brothers are away at college....The weekends are a lot of travel, but we enjoy it, and the people up there are

just wonderful."

Emily "definitely wants to coach" when she's older, Mrs. Pfalzer added, and has a shot at the Olympics once she's in college, but she's not basing her future entirely on hockey.

With schools already trying to recruit her, Emily will most likely attend college on a hockey scholarship but she plans to study medicine and "wants to go to a good academic school," because she isn't planning to make a living playing hockey.

NASCAR driving experience evokes new respect for racers

By Dave Sully

On Saturday, Feb. 6, the respect I had for all race drivers, particularly NASCAR drivers, took a quantum leap when I participated in the highly popular NASCAR driving experience at Homestead Speedway. The combination of cramped quarters, little maneuverability, highly limited visibility, coupled with intense G-force going through the turns, has banished forever the notion that racing is just driving faster than your competitors and out-braking them in the corners. The stress they endure, both mental and physical, over a period of hours at a time, at incredibly high speeds, cannot be measured. But emulating what they do, even in part as I did, gave me an unforgettable glimpse into a world most people observe from afar. The result was a profound admiration for all who race.

Joined by my cousin Larry Mudd and his friend, Jerry Burlingame, we completed registration in the infield, not far from pit road, and were issued a nomex fire suit and ear buds for the radio. There



Photo courtesy Dave Sully

A final check before hitting the race track in the No. 24.

was also a half-hour orientation where safety was stressed over and over, a thorough explanation of the five-point shoulder harness and how to remove it in an emergency, along with a primer on what to do in the unlikely scenario of an in-car fire.

After that, we were instructed on how to attach and detach the steering wheel and to check to make sure it's secured. Window netting engagement was also explained. Then we were taught how to communicate via the radio, the key being the transmit button located on the steering wheel in easy reach of one's thumb. Since I was going to be in constant contact with a crewman in the stands to guide me, this was vital.

We were then ready to head for the cars, which were

staged on pit road. Since I was scheduled to do a three-lap ride along (with a professional driver, reaching speeds of 175-180 mph) as part of my package, I proceeded to the helmet rack where I was fitted to a professional racing helmet and given a neck collar. When my turn came, I was

helped into the seat and the five-point harness was secured. I observed immediately that there is very little visibility inside the cockpit. Because of the configuration of the seat there is virtually no peripheral vision. You can't see past the right half of the windshield either, because of the reinforcement bars in the middle and the roll-cage inside the car. The only real view you have is straight ahead and a little to the left, but not too much because of the window netting.

My driver headed down pit road, wasting no time getting up to speed once we exited the access road in turn two. The first thing I noticed, beside the noise, was the G-force pushing me to the right. There is no way to ignore this, because it requires

strength and concentration to navigate through the turns.

Three laps later we coasted into the pits. Then I waited for the next available car. I was secretly hoping that I would get to drive the No. 24 car, and much to my satisfaction I beat the seven-to-one odds and climbed into the car that Jeff Gordon has made legendary. That alone would have made my day, but the fun was just beginning.

After a crewman helped me buckle in, attached the wheel (which I carefully checked),

put the window nets up, plugged in the radio, and started the car, I waited for Bill, my handler to call me to the speedway. After a couple minutes, he said to start down pit road, making sure I was in forth gear (the cars are all standard shifts with a four-speed transmission) by the time I was ready to enter the track in turn two.

Bill told me to take it up to 4,000 RPM on the first lap, which I was able to do to his satisfaction. Ultimately, I was able to hit a top speed of 147.52 mph, which was perfectly fine with me.

Following the checkered flag after my session, I coasted back to where I started, and was helped from the car, probably grinning from ear to ear.

We then turned in our helmets, doffed our driving suits, and were given a certificate authenticating our top speed. I'm not sure if I will take it to the next step (more laps, higher speed), but even if I don't, the experience was something I will never forget and I'm glad I did it. It gives writing about the sport a whole new perspective, one I'm pleased to relate.

Doctari's Fishing Forum

with Rich Davenport

March Madness delights WNY anglers

The groundhog's prediction for 2010 seems spot on the money as winter's grip continues to wallow our region with snowstorm after snowstorm, giving everyone a heavy dose of cabin fever as the wait for spring seems unbearable. Stream anglers, however, see this late season pounding as a harbinger for healthy spring stream flow, just in time for the annual trout runs.

Last Ice Happenings

Hard water anglers now watch the weather closely for warm ups and watery precipitation, as ice surfaces begin to deteriorate as spring closes in. Anglers would be well advised to seek out current conditions reports before heading out, as the heavy snows of late February turn to slush and water in a hurry, with shore areas suffering first. Main ice still shows very safe, so we should see most inland waters fishable through the March 15 close of NY wall-eye and northern pike seasons.

Chautauqua Lake continues to be the destination of ring back seekers, with larger fish now showing active throughout the lake. Small marmoska jigs and mouseie grubs twitched a few feet off bottom receive plenty of attention, with suspended fish over deep holes still on heavy feed. With the yellow perch spawn just a few weeks away, now could be the best time of year for perch fishing this 'lost Finger Lake.' Walleye bite continues to be fickle, with best bites very early and again late in the day, over depths varying from 25-40 feet. Jigging Rapalas (#5 or 7) and blade baits like the Vibe-E or Silver Buddy deliver most consistent hits when worked close to bottom. Crappie bite continues to be a mainly after dark affair, but expect action to start picking up as ice conditions go south.

Quaker Lake pike seekers find action picking up in advance of this game fish's spawn, especially in the



Photo by Rich Davenport

Ice fisherman ply the deep waters of Chautauqua Lake in pursuit of yellow perch.

shallows around Quaker Run Creek. Large chubs set on tip ups in six to eight feet of water work best for small and large pike alike. Trout seekers find some success jigging wax worms or spikes a few feet off bottom near the spillway and along the old submerged creek channel. Crappie activity picks up near submerged structure.

Trout Runs

Great Lakes feeders see more rainbow and brown trout running upstream as the spring steelhead spawn starts to rev up. Timing outings to account for runoff events will help make your spring trout efforts more efficient.

Lake Ontario streams, many of which control water flow through hydroelectric dams, often offer the best springtime trout options. Eighteen Mile Creek from Burt Dam to Olcott Harbor now holds fish from the dam to the piers at Lake Ontario. Casters working spoons off the piers can connect with running browns and steelhead, especially early and late in the day. Stream waders should use caution as runoff makes shoreline and stream levels changeable from day to day. Nevertheless, egg sac drifted along the bottom or under a float through deeper holes delivers great early spring action. Fly casters do well with egg presentations, egg-sucking leeches, pheasant tail nymphs and sucker spawn patterns.

Lake Erie feeders are filled with fish, but the trick is accessing them. Ice floes stacked along the banks makes wading and shore casting tricky, with the up and down mercury levels this time of year producing open waters one day, and thin ice preventing angling

the next. Large streams like Cattaraugus muddy up quickly during meltdown events, but the smaller feeders, like Big Sister Creek, Little Sister Creek and Smoke's Creek clear faster and may offer better early spring opportunities. Although egg sacs, salted minnows and small spinners work great, the trusty night crawler may deliver the best action, especially when the ground thaws and worms start showing increased activity.

Dunkirk Harbor shows runs of rainbow trout and some browns mixing in, entering the warmer waters of this popular spot, with casters getting into fish off the City Pier and the recently reopened fishing platform at the NRG coal-fired electric power plant.

Dates to remember

March 11-14 - WNY Outdoors Expo, Fairgrounds at Hamburg Ag Center

March 15 - last day of NY pike and walleye season

April 1 - Opening day of NYS inland trout season

April 25 - Bison City Rod & Gun Club Teach Me To Fish family fishing clinic.

Remember, take a kid fishing, and give the gift that lasts a lifetime!

Rich Davenport is co-founder of WeLoveOutdoors.com, an avid outdoorsman and member of the NYSOWA. His works are also published in *NY Outdoor News*, *Walleye.com* and the *Buffalo News*. Rich is also the recording secretary for the Erie County Federation of Sportsmen's Clubs, Secretary of the Western NY Environmental Federation, member of the Erie County Fisheries Advisory Board and is the Region 9 Rep NYSCC Big Game Committee. Email rich@weloveoutdoors.com.

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NHL trivia quiz

By Mike Fox

The Stanley Cup is the most famous sports trophy in the world, but the NHL has many lesser-known awards as well. Try your hand at these questions and see if you've been paying attention at presentation time.

1. Steve Mason is the reigning Calder Trophy (top rookie) winner. Who was the last goalie before him to win the award?

- a. Tom Barrasso
- b. Kari Lehtonen
- c. Evgeni Nabokov
- d. Roberto Luongo

2. Who is the only goalie ever to win five consecutive Vezina Trophies (best goaltender)?

- a. Terry Sawchuk
- b. Jacques Plante
- c. Ken Dryden
- d. Tony Esposito

3. Who is the only defenseman to win four career Hart Trophies (player judged to be most valuable to his team)?

- a. Eddie Shore
- b. Harry Howell
- c. Bobby Orr
- d. Denis Potvin

4. Who is the most recent player to win two consecutive Hart Trophies?

- a. Mark Messier
- b. Alex Ovechkin
- c. Mario Lemieux
- d. Dominik Hasek

5. Pavel Datsyuk has won the Lady Byng Trophy (combined sportsmanship and playing ability) four consecutive times. Who is the only Sabre to ever win the award?

- a. Gilbert Perreault
- b. Don Luce
- c. Pat LaFontaine
- d. Dale Hawerchuk

6. Who is the most recent to win the Lady Byng and Hart Trophies in the same year?

- a. Jean Ratelle
- b. Jean Beliveau
- c. Pavel Datsyuk
- d. Joe Sakic



Photo by Joe Valenti

Alex Ovechkin is the reigning Hart Trophy winner. Was this his second in a row?

7. Who was the first player to win consecutive Conn Smythe Trophies (playoff MVP)?

- a. Maurice Richard
- b. Bernie Parent
- c. Bryan Trottier
- d. Billy Smith

8. Who is the only three-time winner of the Conn Smythe Trophy?

- a. Wayne Gretzky
- b. Guy Lafleur
- c. Patrick Roy
- d. Nicklas Lidstrom

9. Who was the last player to win four consecutive Art Ross Trophies (regular season scoring leader)?

- a. Joe Thornton
- b. Jaromir Jagr
- c. Phil Esposito
- d. Marcel Dionne

10. The Jack Adams Award (best coach) was first presented in 1973-74. Who is the only three-time winner? Hint: He won the award with three different teams.

- a. Pat Quinn
- b. Jacques Lemaire
- c. Scotty Bowman
- d. Pat Burns

Answers:
1. C 2. B 3. A 4. B 5. A
6. D 7. B 8. C 9. B 10. D

He's paid his dues, and now Pete Metzelaars is reaping the benefits

By Joe Kirchmyer

When you're a coach in the NFL and working 12 to 14 hours per day on a regular basis during football season — and occasionally 16 hours or more when duty calls — you don't have a lot of free time on your hands. That's the situation Pete Metzelaars finds himself in as offensive quality control coach and assistant offensive line coach with the Indianapolis Colts. But when the opportunity recently presented itself to return to Western New York as part of the Buffalo Bills 50th Anniversary Team celebration, old No. 88 just couldn't say no.

"It was a great honor, and somewhat humbling, to think that I could be selected as the best tight end in Buffalo Bills history," Metzelaars, who was introduced during halftime of the Bills game against Tampa Bay at Ralph Wilson Stadium, said. It certainly helped that the Colts had a Monday night game that week against the Miami Dolphins.

And in case you're wondering, he made it to Miami in plenty of time for the game, in which his Colts certainly did the Bills a favor by knocking off the Dolphins, 27-23.

Metzelaars played a total of 235 NFL games, recording 383 receptions and 3,686 receiving yards while scoring 29 touchdowns; a great majority of those statistics compiled during his impressive 10-year run with Buffalo from 1985 to 1994. His career also included stops in Seattle, Carolina and Detroit.

"When I retired as a player, I wasn't sure what I wanted to do," Metzelaars said when asked of his journey into the



Photo courtesy Buffalo Bills

Pete Metzelaars, voted the best tight end in Bill's history, is now working with the Colt's offense and offensive line.

NFL coaching ranks. "I started coaching high school ball and working with some youth groups at our church and I realized how much I enjoyed being around the sport. Then I knew I wanted to pursue it at a higher level, and that began the process of attempting to get an opportunity in the NFL."

The process would include working as an assistant coach at Wingate University (a Division II school) and then with the Barcelona Dragons of the now defunct NFL Europe league. His break came with the Colts in 2003.

"It's been a great experience, starting with our owner Jim Irsay, to Bill Polian, Tony Dungy, Jim Caldwell and all of the other coaches I get to work with," Metzelaars said of the job in Indy. "And now Frank Reich is on board with us. Frank and I were teammates for 12 years, 10 in Buffalo, then with Carolina and later with Detroit."

The highlight of his coaching career came on Feb. 4, 2007, when the Colts earned

a 29-17 decision over the Chicago Bears in Super Bowl XLI.

"Winning the Super Bowl was a phenomenal feeling and it's unfortunate for the Bills faithful that we never got over the top, both for ourselves as players and for everyone in the area. To finally win one was an incredible experience, especially being able to share it with my wife Barbara and our two sons."

"We have a great situation here in Indy," Metzelaars added, "with a great quarterback and system. I'm pretty spoiled, really."

Could he ever see himself as a head coach in the NFL, possibly as one of those highly sought-after assistants should the Colts win another Super Bowl?

"Coaching a position, coaching it well and making players better than they were before... that's my only goal right now," Metzelaars said.

While he's proud of his accomplishments as both a former player and current coach, the modest Metzelaars doesn't parade around town wearing his long-awaited Super Bowl ring. He'll sometimes wear it for special occasions such as off-season speaking engagements, but at those events he'd rather share a different message, one about Christianity and "doing the right things" in life. "When I have a speaking engagement, I like to talk about pursuing your goals and working harder than you ever thought you could."

His heartfelt message is reflected by his own admirable work ethic. Who could possibly argue with the results?

Joe Kirchmyer is president of Kirchmyer Media. To comment on this article, please e-mail jkirchmyer@verizon.net.

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Former Olympian York makes triumphant return to Amerks

By Chris Colleluori

Mike York may be a first-year Rochester American, but he's no stranger to donning the red, white and blue. An Olympian for Team USA in 2002 at Salt Lake City, York brings knowledge like no other to the Amerks.

"It was an incredible experience. Once in a lifetime I guess you could say," the silver medalist from Waterford, Mich. said. "The very first game, coming onto the ice, the game was getting ready to start and the crowd, the energy — it was unbelievable. It gave me chills."

"It's something special to be able to represent your country in an event like that," York continued. "It was right after 9/11, so there was a lot of pride in the country, and to have the Olympics on American soil, all in all it was unbelievable."

York scored an NHL career-high 61 points in 81 games with the New York Rangers and Edmonton Oilers that season, and eight years later, he's still piling up the points.

In particular on Feb. 28.

While his countrymen were earning another silver medal 2,800 miles away, York looked every bit like the Olympian he was eight years ago as he put on a show of his own at the Blue Cross Arena. In a 4-3 win over the Binghamton Senators, York assisted on all four goals, including Jeff Taffe's overtime winner.

Not a bad day for someone who had just missed 33 straight games in the heart of the season because of knee surgery.

"It was hard for me to even bend it without pain," the left-winger said of his knee before the surgery. "It was frustrating, and it came to a point where I had to get (surgery). I couldn't have gone on playing the rest of the year like that. I wouldn't have been any help to the team."

He's been plenty of help since his return.

York, a veteran of 579 NHL games with 322 points, registered a point in each of his first two games back on Feb. 19-20. However, they were both losses, pushing the Amerks' slide to four straight and six of their previous seven. Sunday, Feb. 21 was a differ-



Photo by Bob Conlon

Mike York won a silver medal with Team USA during the XIX Winter Games in 2002 and is now averaging a point per game for the Amerks this year.

ent story.

With the Portland Pirates in town — the farm team of the Buffalo Sabres — York delivered the game-tying goal with less than two seconds left in the third period to force overtime. As if that weren't enough, York netted the game-winner in the shootout to give Rochester its 2,000th win in franchise history.

"The whole day was a big day; it was Hall of Fame day, so a lot of those guys were around. It was good to get a win for them," York said. "Obviously you want to come out of the weekend with some sort of positive, and we needed it."

The positives have continued for York, who netted nine total points in his first six games since the surgery to give him 28 points in as many games by the start of March.

But best of all, York has been able to play "relatively pain free" as far as the knee is concerned. And overall, he's just happy to be back on the ice.

"It's just frustrating not being able to be a part of everything and not being able to go out there and help the guys," the 5-foot-

10, 185-pounder said. "I'm a fan of the sport and love to watch, but when you have an opportunity to be on a team and play, I want to be out there."

When he finally made his way back out there, it was his first game since Dec. 2, and his conditioning wasn't what it used to be.

"Monday it felt like I got ran over by a truck," York said, following up with a hearty laugh. "My whole body was pretty sore. But we had Monday off and Tuesday was just a workout day. We got plenty of rest and I felt back to normal on Wednesday."

The return to normalcy comes just at the right time for Rochester. As March rolls in, playoff fates start to become clearer, and the Amerks started the month in second place in the North Division and tied for sixth in the Western Conference.

"It's important for us to maybe put some sort of streak together, get hot at the right time, and get everybody on a positive note," York said. "Hopefully we just continue the effort and get going in the right direction."

Lounsbury Adaptive Ski Program

By Holly Malinowski

On Feb. 17, United States military veterans participated in a beautiful day of skiing at Holiday Valley in Ellicottville. These heroic veterans continue to display great bravery and courage as members of the Lounsbury Adaptive Ski Program. The program serves individuals with physical and cognitive disabilities. The overall goal is for the veterans to rehabilitate while simultaneously having an enjoyable experience. The Lounsbury program is supported by volunteer ski instructors who are certified to deal with the individual's respective needs. The program is located at the Sugar Plum Lodge, adjacent to the Tannenbaum Lodge.

The Lounsbury Adaptive Ski Program is a chapter of Disabled Sports USA. Disabled Sports USA was founded in 1967 by disabled Vietnam veterans. The Mission Statement of Disabled Sports USA is: "to provide national leadership and opportunities for individuals with disabilities to develop independence, confidence, and fitness through participation in community sports, recreation, and educational programs." Disabled Sports USA is also recognized by the International Olympic Committee and is a member of the U.S. Olympic Committee. The organization holds the motto: "If I can do this, I can do anything."

Members are preparing for the upcoming 24th National Disabled Veterans Winter



Photo by Holly Malinowski

Disabled Sports USA takes pride in their motto: "If I can do this, I can do anything."

Sports Clinic. This event runs from March 28 - April 2, 2010 at Snowmass Village, Colorado. Veterans train and raise money to facilitate their ability to participate at the event. Former Marine, Jake Hipps, was at Holiday Valley and is an active member of the Lounsbury Adaptive Ski Program. Jake has skied five years with the Buffalo-based program and will be competing in the upcoming Sports Clinic in Colorado. He's looking forward to the competition. "It's a great program with compassionate and caring staff who know what they're doing, with no pay but through the kindness of their heart," Hipps explained. Jake has frequent weekend training sessions at Holiday Valley, through the support of volunteer staff. Jake demonstrated his skiing skills, and presented skillful use of his single-man adaptive ski.

Veterans Bob Lillis (Army)

and Evan Graver (Navy) were also participating in the day's event. Bob Lillis was a Vietnam Veteran, serving from 1969-1970. Bob has skied the past three years with the Buffalo-based program. Bob was happy to be at the slopes and: "wished he would have known about it sooner." Evan Graver came to Holiday Valley from the Ohio-based program, where he has skied for the past six years. He expressed great satisfaction, and commented: "the adaptive ski program has come a long way. I'm glad to be a part of it, and made good friends along the way."

Another component of the adaptive skiing program is the Wounded Warrior Disabled Sports Project, part of the Wounded Warrior Project. The Mission of the Wounded Warrior Project is "to honor and empower wounded warriors." Here, service members from the Iraq and Afghanistan conflicts receive rehabilitative services. More information can be found at www.woundedwarriorproject.org.

"This is a wonderful program and opportunity for family and members to ski," said Pam Kaznowski, the Buffalo VA's recreation supervisor. "This happens because of generous donors from organizations such as the VFW and AM Vets, and by Holiday Valley for hosting the Lounsbury Adaptive Ski Program."

For additional information about the program, or to donate, please call the Buffalo VA at (716) 862-6814.

Jensen Voted into Pirates Hall of Fame

Community Sports Report

The Cumberland County Civic Center's rafters will have a new addition when Chris Jensen becomes the 13th member of the Portland Pirates Hall of Fame, presented by Unum.

Jensen, who secured the honor through an on-line and in arena fan vote, will be inducted on Saturday, March 27th when the Pirates face-off against the Springfield Falcons at 7 p.m. at home.

"It's a big honor and I don't know how else to put it," Jensen said when informed of his selection. "When I was told I was being considered I went on line and checked out the list of Hall of Fame members. I played with a lot of the guys that are already in and with the names that I saw I know I'm in great company. Being selected into the Pirates Hall of Fame is more of a surprise than anything else. It's an unexpected and a great honor. I don't spend a lot of time thinking about my playing days very often but when I do, Portland is



Photo courtesy Portland Pirates

After a long career in the NHL and AHL, Chris Jensen will be honored in the Portland Pirates Hall of Fame.

always my favorite."

Jensen brought his veteran leadership, his imposing slap shot and superior passing skills to the inaugural Pirates season and was instrumental in the team's 1994 Calder Cup victory by scoring 16 points in 16 playoff games. In two seasons with the Pirates (1993-94 and 1994-95), Jensen collected 68 goals and 70

assists for 138 points in 123 games. His 68 goals are the seventh most in franchise history. The now 46 year-old was originally selected 78th overall by the New York Rangers in the 1982 NHL Entry Draft and went on to play 74 NHL games with the Rangers and the Philadelphia Flyers registering 21 points.

"We are pleased to welcome Chris as the 13th member of the Pirates Hall of Fame, presented by Unum," Pirates Managing Owner/CEO Brian Petrovek said. "He enjoyed a lengthy professional career, two outstanding seasons in Portland and was a key component in leading the Pirates to the Calder Cup Championship in 1993-94 and as a result of his accomplishments, is a great addition to our family of Hall of Famers."

Jensen, who works for an excavation company taking care of heavy equipment, currently lives in Minneapolis/St. Paul with his wife, Shannon, and two sons Jordan and Kyle.

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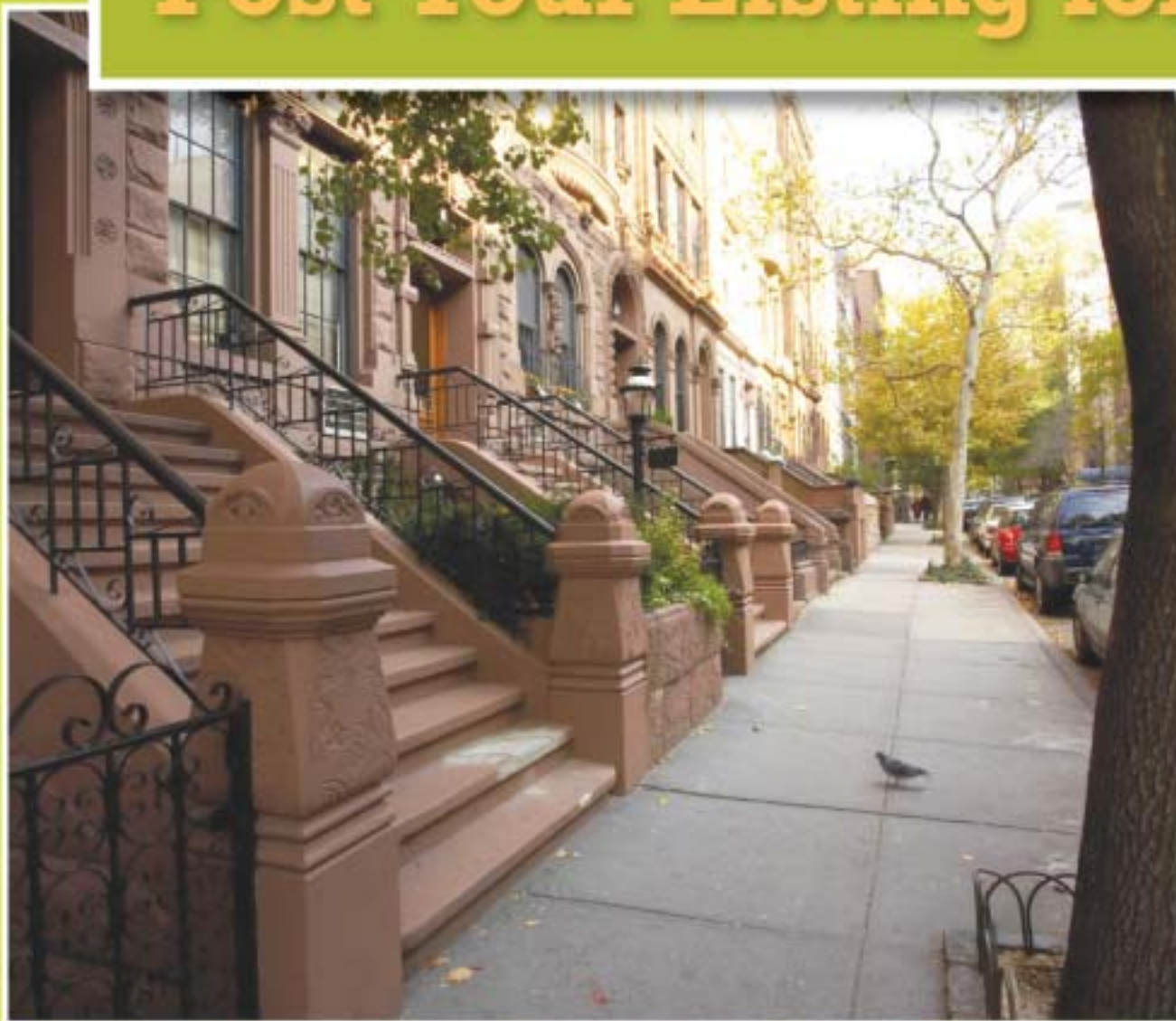
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