

OU's Black Bears have success as club team

BY JIM TOTH
STAFF WRITER

If you knew Oakland University fields a men's ice hockey team — raise your hand. If you didn't, you do now.

Recently completing their third season of competition as a club team through the Department of Campus Recreation, the Black Bears have quickly become a team local hockey fans have rallied around.

Coached by Birmingham Brother Rice graduate Anthony Jalaba, the Black Bears find themselves members of the Great Midwest Hockey League, formed in the Spring of 2001 and servicing teams from Michigan, Ohio and Indiana.

All GMHL teams, which includes ones at Indiana University, Miami (Ohio), the University of Michigan, Michigan State University and Ferris State University, are members of the American Collegiate Hockey Association Division II.

"Our league has really grown a lot in the caliber of play," said Jalaba, who along with assistant coach and fellow Rice grad Tom Ricketts, have headed the program the past three years.

"We play in the most competitive league, and although our record may not show it, we have been pretty successful. As a team we've grown greatly in three years."

With players maybe not quite as talented but with the same drive and determination as those found on any NCAA Division I roster, the Black Bears, who

HOCKEY

play their home games at the Onyx in Rochester, finished the recent campaign with a 16-13-3 ledger and No. 6 ranking nationally.

They recorded two wins in three games in another strong showing at the 2001-02 ACHA National Championships in New York City and with a host of returning players, eagerly await a fresh beginning next year.

"Given 123 teams (playing Division II hockey), we were very happy with a No. 6 ranking," said Jalaba, who calls Southfield home. "We have a lot of young, quality kids who put a lot of time in to make this program successful. It's a full day for these guys during the season and a big commitment both financially and timewise."

The 20-man roster — which continues to grow in such ways as word of mouth and e-mail — is comprised of players from Oakland and Macomb counties with varying hockey backgrounds.

Those players include Carlo Licata, Karl Borgquist, Brandon Marneau, Rob Wishaw, Jason Artymovich, Derek Snideraitis, Kenny Schneider, Eric Wojno, Dan Olesky, Geoff Acres, Scott Marlinga, Nick Borg, Sean Trueblood, Nick Schenduk, Ryan Teasdale, Mark Granger, Carmelo Russo, Ron Kolito, Ryan Deliso, Shaun Zeldes and Steve Jalaba.

Kolito, a junior, and Marneau,

a sophomore, spearheaded the Black Bears offense during the season, while Zeldes was the workhorse in goal.

"We have a lot of guys who just like to play," said Zeldes, whose efforts during the year garnered Most Valuable Player accolades as voted on by teammates. "We may not be on the same level as say the CCHA (Central Collegiate Hockey Association), but we play a competitive brand of hockey."

Other Black Bears grabbing post-season honors included Olesky (Most Offensive Defenseman); Wojno, Trueblood and Marlinga (Most Defensive Forward); Wishaw (Most Gentlemanly Player); and Borgquist (Hardest Hitter).

For Jalaba, the task of coaching a hockey team is one he relishes and one that, along with his other responsibility as an attorney, quickly fills the hours in a day on a regular basis.

"This has always been something I wanted to do and coaching this team has been a lot of fun," said Jalaba, who devotes nearly 35-45 hours a week to hockey.

"I have two full-time jobs, so it presents a lot of challenges. It's a very dynamic role to be a coach of a college hockey team."

"Club hockey not only provides a chance for education but adds to it, also. It complements the whole experience."

Competition from page D1

Lehto, Miller and Ryan.

High school figure skating has grown considerably in the last year in which 10 new teams were added, bringing the total number in the state to 32.

The schools are divided into four districts — three in the metro-Detroit area and the Upper Peninsula.

Each team has a high and low division based on figure skating test levels, and each one competes in spins, jumps and footwork combinations.

The top three teams in each district (high and low levels) advance to the state championship event.

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"Figure skating has always been an individual sport," coach

Susan Schnoes said. "These high school teams have taught the girls how to work together as a team, without taking too much time away from their studies or individual training."

"The United Farmington girls come from different skating clubs, with different coaches, and are from different schools. They have proven teamwork and good sportsmanship can help you attain your goals."

"We have a great group of dedicated girls. I'll be sorry to see our two seniors leave, but I look forward to meeting our new additions next year."



STAFF PHOTO BY JOHN STOKMEIER

Ice time: (Left to right) Oakland head coach Anthony Jalaba, a Birmingham Brother Rice graduate, and Black Bears Shaun Zeldes, Karl Borgquist and Scott Marlinga competed this season in the Great Midwest Hockey League.

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