

The Dallas Post

Sports Week

Hockey players get a lesson from Russians

By LEN KRYESKI
Sports Writer

WILKES-BARRE - It's 5:30 p.m., Saturday December 23, 1995. One half-hour before game time, three 14-year old boys walk into a Wilkes-Barre locker room to prepare for their upcoming athletic event. One wore a Los Angeles Kings ski cap. Another donned an Oakland Raiders jacket. A third had a Pittsburgh Penguins gym bag draped over his Penguins jacket. Sounds like a normal situation in Wyoming Valley.

Joined by more teammates, they came out of the locker room wearing red, white and blue. The U.C.K.A. letters on their jersey obviously stand for their team, league or even sponsor. So far so good, but when one speaks out you get your first clue. That's a pretty rough accent and most of the others aren't even speaking English.

The U.C.K.A. stands for the Central Red Army Sports Club, a group of 14-year old hockey players from Russia. The elite squad was in town last week for three days of playing and practicing hockey with the icers from Wyoming Seminary. The foreign guests also were housed by the families of Seminary's local players.

Starter jackets and merchandise representing professional American teams and sneakers are quite popular, although hard to get in Russia. For the youths of both cultures the trips to malls and shopping centers were just as exciting as playing hockey. Phil Gager and Matt Lloyd of the Back Mountain are senior co-captains for Seminary. Each had two

Russians staying with their family and learned a great deal from the experience.

Button was thrilled with the experience and had nothing but praise for his Seminary icers. Concerned about his team's stick handling this season, he feels that the Blue Knights made great strides in that department through the help of the Russian coaches and players.

Despite going up against players four and five years older, the Red Army skaters kept their poise for the most part and played a very disciplined brand of hockey. Speed and discipline don't often go hand-in-hand, but in this case they do. Add their incredible passing and stick handling abilities to the mix and it's easy to see why the team was so dominant.

"They're a great hockey team," said Lloyd. "Playing a great hockey team can only make us a better and playing them was a great experience."

The crowd at Saturday's meet numbered more than 100 at various times. Many fans would come and go, taking in just one period to witness the skill and style of play demonstrated by the youths from Russia. The biggest pleasure, however, was experienced by the Seminary players and their families. They were able to learn, if only a few of the differences and similarities they share with a foreign society. Such an event may not even have occurred just a few short years ago.

"They don't speak any English," Gager said, "but they brought us some neat Russian presents. We learned a little about their culture, but we didn't get to know them well enough."

"It was difficult at first, not

"It's automatic, they've been together so long."

Phil Gager

Wyoming Sem hockey player

"It was a great experience, this is great hockey."

Alexi Birukov

Russian hockey coach

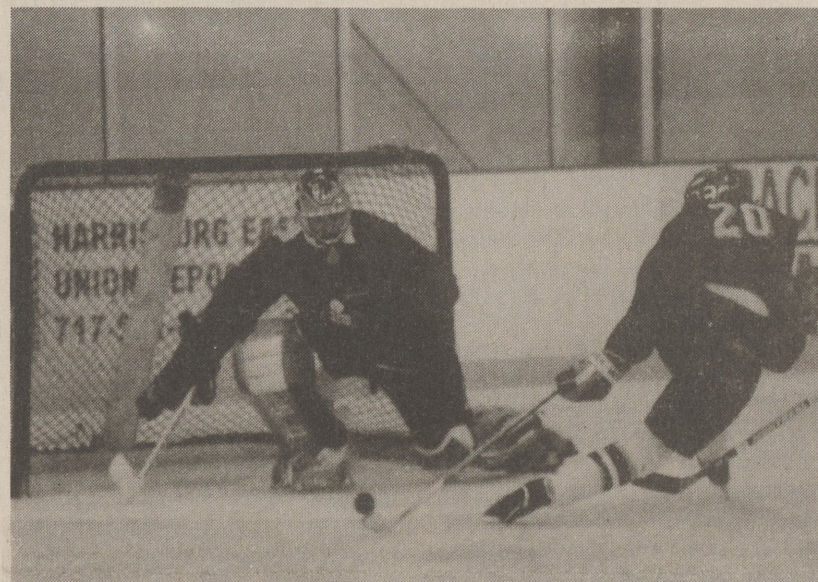
being able to communicate," Lloyd said. "It was fun after a while. We traded customs and got to know them and their culture a little better. It was interesting."

Seminary hockey coach Chris Button met Andre Parfenov, the assistant coach of the Red Army team at a camp in the Czech Republic this past summer. The two developed the idea of a mini-series between their teams. Because events are not planned out as rapidly overseas, it took a lot of last minute organizing, but the Russians were able to finance their flight and the administration at

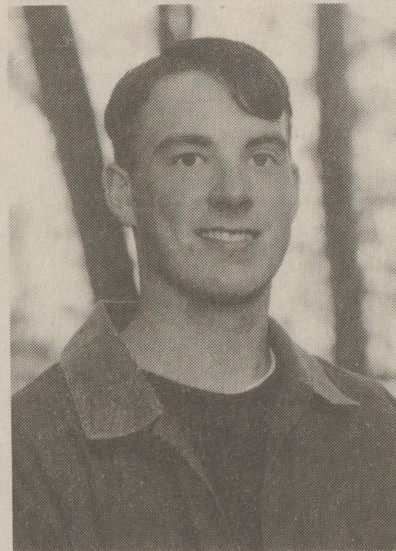
Seminary did their part to make the trip possible. Wyoming Seminary plans to return the visit in the near future.

"We were in Canada a few years ago, but this was our first trip to the United States," said head coach Alexi Birukov through Parfenov who doubles as an interpreter. "It was a great experience, this is great hockey."

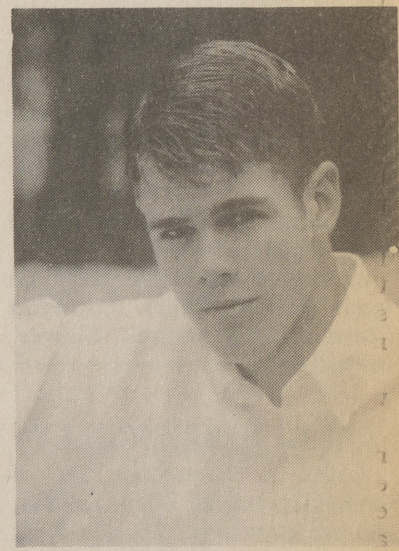
The 18 member Red Army team plays great hockey. The kids are a select group from all over Russia that have been playing together since the age of five. They live in



Matt Lloyd, in action in a game last season. He and Phil Gager played against the Russian Army hockey team last week.



MATT LLOYD



PHIL GAGER

dormitories, attend school in the morning and play hockey in the afternoon.

"This is their life," Button said. "They're trained to go to the NHL and European professional leagues."

The two teams spent a lot of time on the ice at the Wilkes-Barre Ice-A-Rama last week. The Red Army scored an easy 7-1 victory Thursday afternoon. Friday and Saturday morning was set aside for scrimmaging and a clinic run by the Russian coaches. The boys especially enjoyed the splitting of the two teams on Saturday morning. The festivities concluded with a marquee game Saturday evening. Seminary lost that encounter 6-1.

Much of the first period was played near Seminary's goal. Despite tremendous pressure, Blue Knight goalie Jared Scherler kept the game scoreless until the 1:28 mark. The Russians scored again 27 seconds later.

"We had a mental breakdown in the neutral zone," explained

Button. "When you make a mistake they'll capitalize on it - every time. That's the best I've seen Jared play and that's why the score was only 6-1."

"With them it's pretty much mental where the other guys are going to be," said Gager. "It's automatic, they've been together so long. They're excellent at moving the puck."

The Red Army team scored early again in the second period before Seminary got on the board when Luckesh Pavlichek narrowed the score to 3-1 at the 6:40 mark. Gager assisted on the play.

With Russia leading 4-1 the third period featured more of a normal transition game up and down the ice. A nice one-handed grab by the Russian goalie kept Pavlichek, an exchange student from the Czech Republic, from scoring a second goal. Russia scored two goals in the final 2:55 to account for the final. Seminary was outshot in the contest 40-7.

Third-quarter burst takes Sem past Knights

Santarelli leads scoring with 21 points

By LEN KRYESKI
Sports Writer

LEHMAN TOWNSHIP - Holding a 40-38 lead with under three minutes remaining in the third quarter, Wyoming Seminary closed out the frame with an 11-0 run and went on to defeat Lake-Lehman 60-49 in high school basketball Saturday. The Blue Knights outscored the Black Knights 21-9 in that deciding period.

Lehman fell to 0-3 in the Wyoming Valley Conference. It was Seminary's first win of the season, their league record stands at 1-2.

Bad passing and the efforts of two fellow Back Mountain players did the Black Knights in during the waning minutes of the critical period.

Bruce Gover and Carlo Santarelli each fired in a three pointer for Seminary during the run. Santarelli finished the quarter by swishing a foul shot on the end of a 3-point play.

"I was struggling earlier," Santarelli said. "I was just hoping to get off some good shots. I did and was able to put them in."

Gary Vanderburg's guys built a first quarter lead under similar circumstances. Despite being able to break Seminary's half-court press, Lehman missed scoring opportunities by forcing too many passes. With point guard Joe Ellman leading the way, the Blue Knights also hit four treys in the opening period to build an 18-11 lead.

Lake-Lehman got back in the game in the second quarter by improving their passing and taking control of the boards. Angelo DeCesaris, Dave Milunic and Sam Spencer combined for 11 rebounds as Lehman cut the half time deficit to one, 30-29.

DeCesaris also scored eight of Lehman's 18 points in the quarter

"I was just hoping to get off some good shots. I did and was able to put them in."

Carlo Santarelli

Wyoming Seminary

and connected on both of his three point attempts. It was a trey by guard George Frank that put Lehman on top 27-26 with 2:11 remaining in the half. At that point the Knights enjoyed their first lead since 2-0. Two free throws by point guard John Oliver with 55 seconds remaining gave Lehman their last lead of the afternoon 29-28.

Both teams struggled for baskets in the closing period. After falling behind 57-39, Lehman closed the contest by outscoring Seminary 10-3. Rebounding again played a major factor in Lehman's late heroics as Oliver, DeCesaris and Milunic combined for eight boards in the closing minutes.

Seminary's key to success was to move the ball around, work it inside and then flip it back out to the open man, usually Santarelli or Ellman, on the wing. That formula helped produce their first victory in what's been a rough season so far.

"We're coming along," Santarelli said. "We lost to a couple of teams in the end, but we have some games coming up that we should win."

The senior wing player led all scorers with 21 points. Gover finished the contest with just the three pointer.

DeCesaris led Lehman with 17 points and 11 rebounds while playing the entire contest. Milunic added 11 points and eight rebounds. Oliver scored nine and led all players with seven steals.

GAME NOTES

In October, officers of the Game Commissions' Northeast Region attended a memorial service for District Game Protector Joseph McHugh of Carbon County. Mr. McHugh was the last officer of the Game Commission to be killed in the line of duty, some 80 years ago. The "ultimate sacrifice" given by Officer McHugh, along with the many years of dedicated service by employees since then, have had a positive impact on the natural resources we enjoy today in Pennsylvania. WCO John A. Morack.

Littering violations seem to be forever occurring. When caught, most litterbugs have few excuses to offer, but on a recent occasion, a man discarded a soda bottle, a potato chip bag and a pair of socks from the window of his car. When stopped, he was quick to apologize for what he did, but claimed his girlfriend insisted he throw his socks away, because his feet smelled so bad!

WCO Joseph G. Wenzel, III.

Keystone Winter Games at Montage in February

The Keystone State Games Inc. announces the 1996 schedule of events for its various sports festivals, which give Pennsylvania's amateur athletes the opportunity to win gold, silver and bronze medals in athletic competitions patterned after the Olympic Games.

The 9th annual Winter Sports Festival will take place at Montage Mountain Ski Resort, Scranton, February 8-11. Skiing events include the downhill, giant slalom, modified giant slalom, snowboarding, dual slalom, and cross country.

The sanctioned United States Figure Skating Association (USFSA) and the Ice Skating Institute of America (ISIA) endorsed figure skating competitions will take place Friday through Sunday, Feb. 16-18, at the Wilkes-Barre Ice-A-Rama, Coal Street Park.

Athletes age 50 years and older can participate in the Pennsylvania Senior Games July 15-20, at Shippensburg University. There are more than 20 sports ranging from archery and basketball to swimming and track & field. Every two years, on the even years, the Pennsylvania Senior Games also serves as the qualifier for the United States National Senior Sport Classic (USNSSC) which is held every two years on the odd

years. Pennsylvania senior athletes must participate and place in a national sport at the PA Senior Games in order to be eligible to participate at nationals.

The 1996 PA Senior Games will be the qualifier for the 1997 nationals to be held May 21-29, 1997, in Tucson, AZ.

The Summer Games, the largest sports festival of the Games attracting more than 10,000 athletes annually, will be held July 31 - August 4 in Harrisburg and will include 34 teams and individuals sports. For the purpose of team sports, the state is divided into eight regions, with county in which athletes live determines their region. Tryouts for the team sports will be held in April, May and June.

A non-profit organization, the Keystone State Games rely on the state government, corporate sponsorships, and athlete entry fees to support the largest amateur multisports festivals in the Commonwealth.

To receive an entry booklet and more information on the Keystone State Games, contact the Games at 717-823-3164 Monday through Friday 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. or send a postcard with your name, address, telephone number and sports festival(s) you are interested to: 31 South Hancock Street, Wilkes-Barre, Pa 18702.

Gate of Heaven splits with Regis

Gate of Heaven JV and varsity teams split against Regis Academy at Regis.

GOH JV team beat Regis by a score of 57-40. The GOH team was led by J.C. DeRojas with 19 points, Andrew Lohin, 13 points and Brad Feleccia 11 points.

The GOH varsity team lost to Regis by a score of 70-66. The GOH team was led by Michael Regan with 31 points and Brad Feleccia 19 points.

In other action Gate of Heaven JV and varsity teams beat Holy Child at Gate of Heaven. GOH JV team beat Holy Child by a score of 48-20. The GOH team was led by J.C. DeRojas 19 points, Andrew Lohin 10 points and Brad Feleccia 8 points.

The GOH varsity team beat Holy Child 62-56. Gate of Heaven was led by Michael Regan 29 points and Brad Feleccia 19 points, Scott Doughton 14 points.

GOH Green wins league game

Gate of Heaven 7th-8th grade Green Team split two games in St. Joe's Oblate League action. Gate of Heaven beat Plains 53-50 and lost to Falcone 48-28.

Coach Russ Susko's team was led in the Plains contest by C.J.

Adamchak with 17 points and P.J. Spigarni with 13 points. Bryan Wagner, Joe Latosek and R.J. Barna played strong defense. In the Falcone game C.J. Adamchak canned 12 points. Rob Bradbury had several rebounds.

Lady Gators overwhelm Holy Child

The Gate of Heaven girls' 8th grade varsity had their first game of the season on December 21, at Holy Child. Gate of Heaven won by a score of 55-10.

High scorers for Gate of Heaven Gators were Maria Wright with 13 points, Lindsay Mace with 12 points and Tess Bruns with eight points. Laura Harkins had a good defensive game for the Gators. Jo An Fimowicz was high for Holy Child with six points.

HELP WANTED

Sports Photographer

The Dallas Post is looking for a freelance sports photographer to take two or three assignments weekly.

Must have 35 mm camera outfit and action photo experience. Paid on a per assignment basis, with film and processing supplied.

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