

Sports

Mario Lemieux Truly 'The Best'

by Missy Mace
Collegian Staff Writer

In French, "*le mieux*" means "the best," but in Pittsburgh the best means Mario. At 6'4", 210 pounds, Mario Lemieux - the Pittsburgh Penguins' team captain - is the league's leading scorer.

He came to Pittsburgh in 1984 from his hometown, Montreal, where his parents Jean-Guy and Pierette Lemieux still live. He is one of three sons, Richard and Alain, all of whom practiced skating on a snow-packed floor at their home in Montreal. Alain, at age 27, plays professionally in Finland. At one time, he was Lemieux's teammate in Pittsburgh.

Lemieux was a phenom in Montreal. He played junior hockey for the Laval Voisons for whom he scored 282 points in 70 games in his last season.

Lemieux came to Pittsburgh in 1984 when the Penguins record was 16-58-6. Last year, the Pens' record was 36-35-9 and they missed the playoffs on the last day of the season. This year he has helped the Pens to a 28-17-4 record, which all but guarantees them a playoff birth for the first time since 1982.

Lemieux has practically guaranteed the Penguins their first playoff action since 1982.

Since his rise to stardom with the Penguins, Lemieux has constantly been compared to Wayne Gretzky. The two came together for the first time during the Canada Cup. Their combined talents were incredible and eventually defeated the Russian All-stars with Lemieux scoring the deciding goal on a pass from Gretzky. This pairing has since given Lemieux confidence that he has brought back to Pittsburgh.

Lemieux and Gretzky have their similarities and differences as hockey players, with the differences slightly outweighing the similarities. The obvious similarity is their great talent of performing successfully in the National Hockey League. Lemieux and Gretzky are the best players in the League.

Gretzky is now with the Los Angeles Kings and is in his 10th season. At the age of 28, Gretzky has already obtained 1771 points. Lemieux is on the verge of breaking Gretzky's record this year of total points in one season (215) and has a shot at his record of goals (95).

Last year, Lemieux took the NHL's scoring title and M.V.P. title that Gretzky achieved for the previous eight years. Also last year, Lemieux had more all star votes than Gretzky.

This season Lemieux reached the 100-point level in 36 games, which is the third fastest in NHL history, trailing Wayne Gretzky's performances in 1983-1984 and 1984-1985 seasons. He accomplished the feat in 34 and 35 games respectively. This season Lemieux is atop the NHL with 148 points, which is 25 more than Gretzky.

Another similarity is that Lemieux and Gretzky are the only players in the NHL's history to record two eight-point games in the same season. Last season, Gretzky was the NHL scoring leader on New Year's Day with 86 points. Lemieux was the runner up.

The Penguins are having their best year in history, as are the Kings. A comparison chart of the two players up to the All Star games is as follows:

Mario Lemieux: 54 games, 58 goals, 90 assists, 148 points, 68 penalty minutes, 21 power-play goals, nine shorthanded goals, six game-winning goals, one game tying goal, 222 shots, 26.1 shot percentage.

Wayne Gretzky: 56 games played, 42 goals, 81 assists, 123 points, 20 penalty minutes, nine power-play goals, four shorthanded goals, four game-winning goals, two game tying goals, 218 shots, 19.3 shot percentage.

Mario Lemieux saved the franchise in Pittsburgh. The Penguins were repeatedly having bad seasons and if they didn't draft a "star player" to help them they would have had leave Pittsburgh.

A "star player" isn't the only title Lemieux owns in Pittsburgh, there is also the "better" title used when compared to the all time pro Gretzky.

Many coaches were smiling as he was named an all star and rookie of the year. He continued to be an all star for four years in a row. Every season with the Penguins he has scored one hundred points or better.

Last year was Lemieux's biggest year. He earned The Hart trophy (the NHL MVP), he won The Art Ross trophy (the league's leading scorer) and he was the MVP in last year's All-star game. Off the ice, he won The Dapper Dan Award (Pittsburgh) two out of the last three years.

These awards are in addition to other team awards all prove why Mario Lemieux definitely lives up to his name as being the best.

Lady Lions Split

by John Musser
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The Lady Royals of the University of Buffalo found out how tough it is to play in 'the Pit' as the Lady Lions won their eighth game and third straight last Wednesday, 69-61.

The Lady Cagers raced out of the gate quickly with a 10-2 run in the first four minutes of play. Michele Madison and Krista Fortson powered the quick start

with four points apiece.

Buffalo was not about to take up residence in 'Blowout City,' and slowly cut the seven point deficit to three with 10:51 remaining in the opening half.

The Lady Lion advantage was still three points with five minutes left on the clock when Madison went on a scoring binge, netting eight points in two minutes to provide a seven point lead, 33-26.

The difference remained the

same as both teams traded buckets until the halftime buzzer, and the Lady Lions went into the locker room on top 37-30.

Buffalo slowly worked their way back into the game, chipping away at the Lady Lions lead. At the 8:09 mark, the Lady Royals hard work paid off, as Buffalo moved out front 52-51.

The Lady Lions didn't take long to regain the lead, as guard Lisa Dorenkamp nailed a three-point shot just 17 seconds later. Dorenkamp's bomb was the spark that ignited the Lady Lion's flame as they burned Buffalo for 12 unanswered points, pushing the count to 63-52.

The Lady Lions coasted to victory in the final two minutes, as Buffalo never got closer than six. The final score was 69-61.

The Lady Lions outshot Buffalo 50 to 40 percent from the field while also holding the edge at the foul line, 65 to 61 percent.

Michele Madison had game highs in points (23) and rebounds (seven) while shooting 60 percent from the floor. Lisa Butch added 16 markers and five boards, plus Lisa Dorenkamp pumped in 10.

The Lady Lions raised their record to 8-13 and have won five of their last seven. Buffalo, a NCAA Division II member, stumbled to 10-9.

The Lady Lions suffered their 14th defeat Monday night at the hands of the Buffalo State Lady Bengals, 60-39. The Lady Lions were never really in this game, they were outscored 32-16 in the first half and just couldn't catch up. The Lady Lions' next match up is Feb 16 against SUNY-Fredonia.



photo by Jeff Majcher
Michele Madison goes for two of her 23 points during the Lady Lions' victory over the University of Buffalo.

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