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Empire Junior Report: Friday, December 9, 2011

Volume 1 Issue 13 Week ending Sunday, December 4, 2011

Upcoming Weekend Games:

This is a really busy weekend once again for Empire teams as there are 34 games on the schedule.

A complete schedule of league games can be found on line at:

<http://www.pointstreak.com/stats/pro/league/schedule.html?leagueid=362&seasonid=7391>

Visit the Empire Junior Hockey League at:

www.empirehockey.com

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK

This section will be used to promote our **Players of the Week**. Each week the League will select a Forward, Defense and Goaltender as Players of the Week.

Teams are to make nominations no later than Tuesday of each week by 6pm. Players of the Week will be announced on Friday's.

This week's Players are:

Goaltender: Matt Braun - Jersey Hitmen
Forward: Tyler Drevitch - Boston Bandits
Defense: Ty Lasker - Florida Blades

See their write up's next page.

Congratulations to these fine players.

Make submissions, along with picture to Pete Preteroti at: SportsNiag@aol.com

PLAYERS OF THE WEEK (Week ending December 4, 2011)



Goaltender - Matt Braun - Jersey Hitmen - 92 (Ramsey, NJ)

Braun had his best weekend of the year turning aside 61 of the 65 shots the Wildcats threw his way in the Hitmen's two game sweep to boost his save percentage to .910. It was the second time this season that Braun was in net for both games of a Hitmen sweep.



Forward - Tyler Drevitch - Boston Bandits - 95 (Middleboro, MA)

The Bandits leading scorer had 7 points and was +5 in 2 games this week. Against the Jr Bruins he had a goal and was +2, then he followed that with 1 goal and 5 assists +3 in the win against the Breakers.



Defense – Ty Lasker– Florida Jr Blades – 92 (Albany, NY)

Ty Lasker continued to elevate his game to another level this week. Lasker contributed in all three zones over the weekend home and home series against Palm Beach Hawks. He had a total of 6 points over the weekend in two games.

Empire Junior Hockey League Coach of the Month November - Jeff Devenney



Coach Devenney led his Brewster Bulldogs to a perfect 6-0 record in the month of November, including 4 hard won victories over tough Conference rivals. Under his guidance, the Bulldogs have a respectable 12-7-1 record heading into December and are a bona fide contender for the top spot.

In his second season as Bulldogs Head Coach, Jeff's record is 61-35-2 to date. He's helped over 20 players get to JR. A, NCAA & ACHA in 2 seasons.

Jeff played his Junior Hockey for the Seattle NW Americans and then continued at Arizona State University.

He also coaches the NY Pee Wee Rangers Quebec Team and is the player development coordinator for Westchester Express, Brewster Bulldogs and Brewster Ice Arena.

FEATURE OF THE WEEK (by David Falkenstein: Atlanta Junior Knights)

What We Are – Junior Hockey



As the clock ran out on an improbable upset win by the Potsdam Bears over the host Buffalo State Bengals game Saturday night, for most it appeared that it was just another NCAA contest among the dozens of games played that evening across the multitude of leagues and conferences that comprise NCAA hockey. For the players on each team, it was more important than that, as each game in the SUNYAC is like a playoff game with 16 league games among only the 25 these teams will play as real student athletes compete at a level that most never achieve.

For me and for those that spend part of our life savings on supporting junior hockey, it was a moment in time to reflect on what we do and what we are. For four special players, it was a homecoming of

sorts, as former teammates of the Atlanta Junior Knights came together, some on different teams, to celebrate the culmination of their dreams. Trevor Cope, Carlo Ahee, David Lansdowne and Kevin Carr, all former teammates on the 2009-2010 Atlanta Knights USAH Junior National Championship Runner up team, found themselves realizing together again, what their junior hockey experience made possible.

For me, it was a moment of intense pride as my wife and I flew to Buffalo to witness the realization of the ultimate accomplishment; the reunion of our players as participants, and not spectators, in an NCAA game. For me personally, my own emotions were hard to suppress, as I found myself beaming with pride as if it was my own sons competing out there, because in a way, they are my boys. To watch dreams become reality is something we rarely witness, it is precious and special, and when it is something that you have poured your heart and soul into to somehow find a way to make a difference, there is indeed a sense of closure.

Sometimes we get lost in understanding what we are. With the internal battles for territory and turf that has come to define the essential relationships within USA Youth Hockey and USA Junior Hockey, we have lost our way to a degree. As a junior team owner and rink owner, it is indeed a business, but when the business needs supersede the purpose, we all fail.

Youth hockey development created the pathway for the potential realization of the dreams for these four players, but junior hockey provided the final preparation to ascend towards their ultimate goal. Sometimes we lose sight of all of this, how the two hockey paths complement each other, and not how they compete. More importantly, it occurred without the participation of these players in Tier I or Tier II juniors and several of these players never put on a Tier I AAA youth hockey jersey. And in this small event, is embodied the same story for hundreds or perhaps thousands of young men that made good on their commitment to the sport and to themselves. However, it seems the hockey world doesn't focus on this experience, but rather there seems to be a rather odd focus on the very rare circumstances where players gain an athletic scholarship at a NCAA Division I institution or are handed a contract to play pro hockey.

We lose sight of what is important sometimes. I remember when I started the Knights program. We had no clue what we were doing, but we knew what our goal was. That goal was simple and yet profound, as we just wanted to give young men hope; hope that their dreams are not defined by how much money they have, that their dreams are not limited because they do not play Tier I youth hockey, that their dreams were not dependent on a system that didn't recognize it wasn't about the system, it was about them. We wanted to be the first program in our affiliate to directly put a hockey player in the NCAA, not for our own need to beat our chest, but to simply tell everyone that as a son of the south, or a disregarded player from Michigan, or a overlooked kid from Canada who wanted to play the sport they love and obtain a college degree, that it could be done . . . here. This is what we are about and not about the pointless positioning between the factions of hockey for the almighty dollar.

In 2006 I remember a competing hockey director with a Tier I youth hockey program tell me to call him in 10 years when our first player put on an NCAA jersey. I was in one sense offended and even more depressed. I was hoping he was wrong, but worrying that he was right. Who would come here, to Atlanta, the home of cornbread and peach cobbler, to accomplish what had never been done, to go from a southern hockey program directly to the NCAA?

Moreover, there was no money in it, no profit, and with the footprint of the south and all the travel, it would surely be a losing financial proposition. We had to hurdle the local market that neither understood junior hockey nor wanted it, mainly because the local programs, all led by former junior hockey players, didn't want to talk about it to their own players. Rather, it was about another turf war for hockey revenue and not about the player for the most part. We had to work around the regional Tier I program that saw it as a threat and not a compliment and without much guidance or support from the affiliate, who perhaps believed their role was to support youth hockey programs, and perhaps not the options for youth hockey players. We had our dreams and goals, but in the end it didn't matter what our goals were.

What matters, and what should only matter, are the dreams, goals and accomplishments of the players. Winning games will always be an essential aspect of this sport that cannot be suppressed, but winning for the player is what we should be about.

The 10 year wait for our first NCAA player placement took only two years, and my wife and I have watched in great amazement as more have followed, more than a dozen. There are another 20 that have gone on as student athletes as well, to play ACHA hockey, many with academic scholarships playing at the ACHA Division I.

Whether your son plays Division I NCAA hockey, NCAA Division III or ACHA, they will all be in the same position if we support their goals and dreams. When they have their first job interview following college, the first and most important item that will galvanize them all together is that they received a college degree. Their potential future boss will not care how many goals, assists and saves they recorded, or where they played, but the college degree may not have ever been achieved without the love of the sport to propel them towards it.

Youth and college sports provide the student athlete the opportunity to develop commitment, discipline, respect, courage, teamwork skills, and toughness to manage the challenges of life, and the correlation between NCAA student athletes and their success in the business world is well documented. Those successful life traits gained from NCAA participation are not just limited to Division I players. Learning to work hard when you are exhausted, when it is easy to say no, and learning to manage priorities to success, are necessary life lessons and life preparation.

Lessons learned about believing in a dream and realizing it, is part of the essential human experience. It is also a part of the pathway to success in life, and what we do is help make that experience possible.

After the game, my wife and I joined our four "boys" on the arena floor in our own celebration and it was a grand one, even though one team had lost the game. It was a moment for a group of teammates and friends to reconnect for a brief reunion, and to enjoy for a moment the fact that their dreams had come true . . . together.

For the rest of the hockey world it was perhaps an insignificant game in Buffalo that might not impress those that do not understand what it meant. However, in these troubled times where our very existence is being threatened and our purpose being questioned, it reaffirmed why we do this, and what we are, and why we exist. We exist for them.



After splitting the points in the 1st 2 game series between the **Philadelphia Revolution** and Potomac Patriots, the Revolution set their sights on winning game one of the 2nd two-game series. Defenseman Jon Houk opened up the scoring with a blast from the blue line. In the 2nd, center James Wallace scored a much needed goal on the power play. Clint Ausprung added to the lead after Fleming transitioned a loose puck and slid a back door pass to him. In the third period the Revolution power play continued to click as

Fleming and Jennings each added a goal on man advantage situations. Manvil "the anvil" Billones put the final touches on the game when he banged home a long side rebound off a shot from Joe Kotlarczyk. The Revolution was able to take a 6 - 1 victory in game 3 of 4 thanks to strong goaltending by Joe Marshal and the Revolution power play operating at 50% success rate going 3 for 6.

In game 4 of 4 Potomac struck 1st on the power play, Turgeon took an off speed shot from the top of the circle that eluded Revolution goal tender Joe Marshal and put the Patriots up 1 - 0. In the 2nd Chris Howland of the patriots doubled their lead when he roofed a back door pass on the power play that put Potomac up 2 - 0. However Philly was not ready to throw in the towel and their perseverance paid off when Kyle Jennings took a turn around shot that banked off the post and in. Despite Philadelphia's efforts, the Potomac defense and the goal tending of Dustin Moyer stopping 30 of 31 was enough to once again split the weekend with Philadelphia.

Reclaiming Their Ground



To say it has been an up and down season to this point for the **Jersey Hitmen** would be an understatement. With some big wins and horrific loses under their belt the Hitmen seem to be turning the corner of late.

Since the Hitmen entered the Empire Junior Hockey League for the 2009-10 season they have been the dominant team in the Garden State. However, with their early struggles and a much improved Jersey Wildcats squad their supremacy seemed to be slipping away. The Wildcats began the year red hot and two wins over the Hitmen in Wayne had the Cats in position to steal this seasons in state bragging rights. However, with a trip to Randolph on Thanksgiving weekend the Hitmen reclaimed their stake as the team to beat in New Jersey.

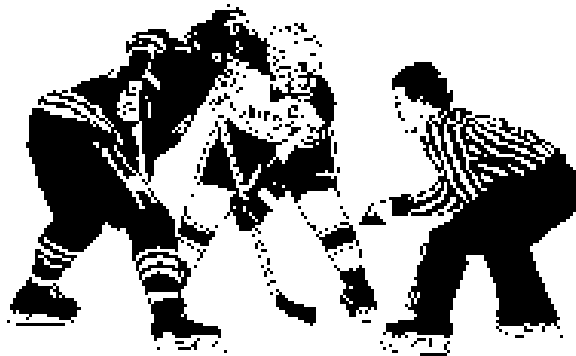
Things did not start off on the right for the Hitmen on Saturday as Patrick Lackey tallied a power play goal for the Wildcats just over two minutes into the contest. From there the rivals would play a back and forth, high tempo period, but there would be no more scoring.

In the second period it was a whole different story. The line of Robbie Marsanico ('96), Chris Fersini ('92), and Devon Duarte ('92) would explode for four goals, the first coming off the stick of Fersini 2:18 into the period. The dangerous trio would end their shift with another Fersini goal just 33 seconds later. Wildcat defenseman Scott Mogerley would briefly deadlock the game at two when he blasted a power play over the shoulder of Matt Braun ('92) 6:35 into the second. Two minutes later the Hitmen would go up for good courtesy of Marsanico's third game winning goal of the season. Before the period was over Fersini would complete his hat trick and the scoring at 11:38. Despite a late push in the third from the Wildcats the Hitmen held strong and claimed their first victory of the year by a final of 4-2

Sunday's contest would get off to a much better start for the boys in blue. Newcomer Nick Farina ('92) notched his first goal in a Hitmen uniform on the power play at 12:37 of the first to give the Hitmen a 1-0 lead. Despite controlling the period a costly turnover sent Jake Lessick in on a breakaway with just over a minute left in the first. Lessick would make no mistake burying his shot over the glove of Braun with 1:04 left in the period. However, the Hitmen continued to apply heavy pressure and were rewarded for their efforts when Robbie Marsanico forced a turnover of his own to create a breakaway. Marsanico would first his attempt through the legs of TJ Noce to put the Hitmen back on top with 37 seconds to play in the first.

In the second the Wildcats pulled even again courtesy of a power play goal from Erik Andersson 6:07 into the period. However, despite the tied score this game was all Hitmen. Steve Scholer ('94) would give the visitors a 3-2 edge when he found the back of the net on the power play at 13:32. Exactly three minutes later Marsanico would add his second of the day and third of the weekend to push the lead to 4-2 heading to the locker room.

In the third Cody Calcagno ('95) would give the Hitmen the breathing room they were looking for when he put home his second of the season at 8:22. From there the clock would quickly wind down the on the Wildcat's chances of a comeback sending the Hitmen to the road sweep and the proud owner's of New Jersey bragging rights.



Florida Blades continue their winning ways



Estero, Fla.— The **Florida Jr. Blades** continued their winning ways with a weekend sweep of the Palm Beach Hawks. The Jr. Blades (18-0-1) faced off against the Palm Beach Hawks (7-18-1) in a home-and-home series beginning Saturday night in West Palm Beach.

The Hawks roster was bolstered by six Eastern Junior Hockey League South players including starting goaltender Brad Rocheville were unable to stop the dominant Jr. Blades team.

The depth of talent on Florida's roster continued to show as D.J. Thomas (3g, 1a) paced the team with three first period tallies. Jon Davidson (3g) also lit the lamp with three goals of his own marking the first hat trick of his junior career. Defenseman Ty Lasker (2g, 2a) recorded two more goals and Bobby Ruddle (1g) rounded out the Jr. Blades scoring. Goaltender Joe Keyser continued his dominate play stopping 23 of 25 shots. Keyser currently leads the league in both save percentage (.936) and goals against average (1.21).

Keyser also started Sunday's contest stopping all but one shot before rookie Bryan Canter was subbed in late in the third period. Canter allowed two goals and the Jr. Blades won 11-3. Prior to Sunday's game, associate coach Jake Laime was asked about the Jr. Blades offensive success this season, "Every member of our team is an offensive threat," said Laime. "All four lines have the ability to score and our defensemen are really versatile." This proved true as rookie defenseman Blake O'Neill chipped in two goals while Ty Lasker and alternate captain Ross Kovacs each contributed a goal. Josh Stanclift was awarded first star of the game with four points in the contest (1g, 3a). Newcomer Marcus Ortiz also had four points (1g, 3a) while Eryn Siracusa (3a), Joshua Koerner (1g, 2a), J.P. Larmoyeux (3a) and D.J. Thomas (2g, 1a) all tallied three points.

The weekend's unsung hero was Eryn Siracusa who contributed on nearly 33% of the Jr. Blades scoring opportunities. With seven assists in two contests, his 31 points in 19 games ranks him amongst the league leaders. "Eryn sets the temperature of our team," says head coach Tad O'Had. "He is a passionate player with an incredible work ethic and sense of the game. He loves playing hockey and makes each of his line mates better."

Notes: Bobby Ruddle sat out Sunday's contest after being suspended for fighting in Saturday's game. The Jr. Blades continue to have the best penalty kill in the league (92.86) having only allowed seven goals.



Boston Bandits Top Breakers, Lose to Jr. Bruins

The Boston Bandits returned to action after the Thanksgiving break to host first place Jr Bruins. With a good sized crowd in attendance the two teams did not disappoint. The game featured some great fast skilled action. The Bandits would fall behind but then Connor Callow (93') would score to tie the game assists going to Aahron Lara (94') and newcomer Mike Taormina (96'). It looked as if the period would stay that way when two costly Bandits mistakes would lead to Jr Bruins goals. The Bandits would not give up and made it close but too little too late. Dylan Santos (92') had two goals and Tyler Drevitch (95') had the other goal. BANDITS 4 Jr Bruins 7.

The second game of the weekend the Bandits hosted their close rival the Baystate Breakers. The game would go back and forth with each team trading the lead. The game was tied 3-3 at the end of the second period when the Bandits would take over for good in the third scoring 7 goals. The offense was lead by the team's leading scorer Tyler Drevitch (95') he finished with 6 points on a goal and 5 assists. Other with multiple point scorers were: Niall Caparon (92') 4pts (2g,2a), Paul Fregeau (93') 4pts (2g,2a), Will Platt (94') 3pts (2g,1a), Mike McGovern (92') and Evan Jackson (94') 2 assists each. BANDITS 10 Breakers 4.

Boston Bandits Upcoming Games:

The Bandits travel to the NE Huskies Showcase in Fitchburg, MA. They play Friday vs Space Coast, Friday vs Florida Eels (at BIA Bridgewater, MA), Saturday vs Philadelphia, Sunday vs Maksymum



The **Hampton Roads Whalers** Empire team pulled out a hard fought 3-1 victory over a tough East Coast Eagles squad on Saturday night at The Factory in North Carolina. Jonathon Jones got the Whalers going with a 1st period goal at 7:59 from Josh Yu. In the 2nd period the Eagles would tie things up with a power play goal at 5:47. Later in the 2nd, Ryan Gullett converted for the Whalers with an assist from Keegan Howver at 19:05. In the 3rd period Keegan Howver put the nail in the coffin at 6:16 from Jonathon Jones to make it 3-1. Grant Laughrey was again the story in net, turning aside 54 of 55 East Coast shots including 24 in the 2nd period for his 6th straight win. Laughrey now sits 6th in the Empire in GAA with a 2.33 and 1st in SV % with a .941. The Eagles held a 55-47 shot advantage. The Whalers went 0 for 6 on the pp, East Coast went 1 for 8. The Whalers had 18 PIMS on 9 infractions; the Eagles had 24 PIMS on 7 infractions.

The Whalers now look to their next set of games against the Potomac Patriots. First game will be Saturday Dec. 10 @ 7:20pm. The second game is Sunday Dec. 11 @ 11:30am. Both games will be played at the Prince William Ice Center.

Buffalo Stars seeking answers at the midway point



The **Buffalo Stars Empire Junior** team are officially at the half way mark in their 2011-2012 season schedule. With a league record of 7-12-3, the Stars find themselves 2 points out of a playoff spot, sitting in 9th place in the tough Western Conference.

After a slow start, the Stars found themselves picking up momentum as they went through a 2 week period where they won 5 of 7. It began with the marathon bus ride to Potomac that saw the team stranded on the side of the road for 5 hours as their bus experienced mechanical problems. "The team seemed to just come together after that" said Stars Associate Coach Jerry Wheeler. The team finally arrived at the rink 2 hours late but the gracious **Potomac Patriots** team (which also owns the rink) shuffled some schedules around to make sure the game got played. "They even provided us a quick bite to eat before we took to the ice" added Wheeler.

On that night Buffalo fought hard and managed a 3-2 overtime shootout victory. The next day they came back again and handed the Patriots a 7-4 defeat. In that one, rookie Brian Ruff exploded for 6 goals leading the Stars to victory.

Later in the week, Buffalo traveled to Rochester to take on **Maksymum** and won that one in overtime 3-2. With 3 in a row under their belt the Stars seemed poised to continue. A slight roadblock in the form of **Applecore** would end the streak for the Stars but they came back the next weekend handing the visiting **Frederick Freeze** a pair of losses and suddenly the Stars had some momentum winning 5 of 7 in a period of 16 days.

Since that time, the Stars dropped 5 of 6 including 4 to **Syracuse**. "The fluke of the schedule just killed us" stated Stars GM/Coach Pete Preteroti. "Syracuse is one of the best, if not the best team in the league. Having to face them 4 of 6 games was a killer"

With mostly rookies on this team, the Stars are still learning the ropes. "Inconsistency is the biggest factor. The team still has yet to learn how to play 3 full periods of hockey" stated Stars VP/Assistant GM Ed Gajewski. "Once they do that they will start to string some victories together"

The Stars have certainly had some bright spots so far this season. **Buffalo Sabres Coach Lindy Ruff** has run 3 practices for the team this year including one 2 hour session at HSBC Arena. "It is not every day that an NHL Coach comes to run your practice" stated Stars Co-Captain Tommy Leistner. "It was a great experience"

The Stars have also found that they can play with the big boys. They gave the league leading **Florida Blades** everything they could handle and played a really solid game against Syracuse even though losing to both. The victories over Potomac also showed the heart and determination this team has and the OT win in Rochester proved the Stars can win at crunch time.

The Stars have also found some offensive punch in the line of Luke Swimline, Chris Moses and Brian Ruff. Together they have put up 56 points of offense in 20 games.

Another all rookie line, the "Gold Line" weighs only a collective 437 lbs but they pack a potent punch. Comprised of Robert Finn (5-6); Brandon Boyle (5-5) and Patrick Schmelzinger (5-5), this gritty bunch of forwards has become a fan favorite.

"They are gritty and tenacious and never stop working" says Preteroti. "They don't back down from anyone and will hit anything that moves. They are totally fearless".

Other Buffalo Stars lines that are starting to learn the way of Junior hockey includes Jimmy Ford, Bradley Jones and new comer Jeremy Wyse, who along with Paul Gugino, Dakota John, John Loree and injured Kevin Mackrell make up the rest of the forwards.

Defense is led by Co-Captains Cody Selbert and Tommy Leistner, who together with Mike Harris, Zach Stamates, Angelo Sarro, Jake Bystrak make up the blueline.

Spencer Koeppel and Kyle Gannon are the teams versatile players as they are called on to function in both forward and defense roles. Rounding out the team are goaltenders Nic Pagano and Alex Willis.

The Stars look forward to a solid second half of the season. Included in this part of the season are games against the Jersey Hitmen, Jersey Wildcats, Potomac Patriots, Philadelphia Revolution, Frederic Freeze and Applecore. The Stars also have 4 more games against Maksymum and two more against Syracuse.

Visit the Buffalo Stars on line at: www.buffalostars.com



Applecore Moving



In a meeting with **Apple Core** players, team owners Bob and Steve Santini announced that the EJ team will be moving up to the Brewster Ice Arena for the 2012 season and beyond.

Apple Core owners, **Bob Santini** and **Steve Santini** announced the move of Apple Core's Eastern Junior Hockey League team from Long Beach, NY, to Brewster, NY, at a meeting of all Apple Core players. The decision to move the EJ team was made for several reasons. The Brewster Ice Arena is the Santini family business and the availability for billeting, gym, and ice slots is easier when you own the rink. The EJ team, which has been at Long Beach since its inception in 1999 has had a great run on Long Island and hopefully this will continue up in Brewster. The Brewster Ice Arena is a double sheet facility along with a studio rink for practice. The team will have access to the Iron Man Gym in the facility along with a great Pro Shop, Sports Restaurant, ability to use the Studio rink for practice whenever it is available and cheaper ice and billeting expenses. "It just makes sense program-wise and financially" stated **Steve Santini**.

The team will remain Apple Core and will still be part of the three Junior team Apple Core organization. **Director of Operations / GM Henry Lazar** will continue to run all three programs. The **Empire team** and the **Eastern States Hockey League team** will remain in Long Beach.

The EJ team will run tryouts in Long Beach and Brewster as well as possible other locations.

The Coaching Staffs will remain basically the same. **EJ Head Coach Frank Bretti** will return as Head Coach with **Steve Santini**, a former Division I player at Maine, heading his assistants. For the Empire team, **Jon Sandos** will take over the team from **Coach Lazar**, who is retiring from the bench after 25 successful years at the helm. **Brian Johnston** will work as the Associate Coach. In the ESHL, **Tom Carroll** and **Ron Scall** will return for their sixth year.

"The only change at all will be the location of the EJ team. No other part of the current operation will change" added **Team President Bob Santini**.

Brewster is approximately 65 miles from Long Beach. Players from Long Island will either billet with a family in Brewster or car-pool for the drive and live at home.

The Apple Core tradition runs deep and the organization, which has sent (7) players to the NHL and over (200) players onto College Hockey, and Apple Core will continue to provide development and excellence in the New York area.

If you have any questions related to the 2012-13 season or the move of Apple Core's EJ team, please call **GM Henry Lazar** at 718-332-4555.

Shiniest Stars Belong To Syracuse



The battle of the Stars (Syracuse & Buffalo) continued this past weekend this time in Cicero with Syracuse looking to extend their three game winning streak, two of the those wins over Buffalo.

In the first game on Saturday night the winner was the Syracuse team, 4-1. Buffalo took their only lead in the game on a second period unassisted goal by Spencer Koepfel. Syracuse then scored two goals from Josh Sova and a power play goal from Jeremy Marginsky to take a 2-1 lead into the second intermission. Syracuse then padded their lead with two goals from Alex Tuch, his second one being an empty netter to seal the game.

In the final weekend battle between the two Stars games the shiniest Stars again belonged to Syracuse as they defeated Buffalo 9-1. Leading the way for Syracuse was Luke Kirwan who had a hat trick and a pair of goals from Jeremy Marginsky and Anthony Angello. Also picking up single tallies were Alex Fukes and Jesse Farabee. The only blemish the Syracuse team had was a Buffalo goal from Robert Finn. Syracuse has now defeated Buffalo in four games with two games still to be played later in the season in Buffalo.

With the weekend sweep of Buffalo, Syracuse improves their division leading record to 18-6-0. Syracuse will travel this weekend to the Fitchburg, MA area looking to extend their 5 game winning streak. They will play against the New England Huskies, Bay State Breakers, Florida Eels, and the Green Mountain Glades.

Empire South Report

Tampa Bay Juniors 10, Florida Eels 2

A five-goal first period send the Juniors on their way to the win. Nick Reed tallied 3 goals and 3 assists for Tampa Bay, while Brendan Nicholson had 2 goals and 2 assists, Michael Hirschauer had 2 goals, Dustin Disbro had a goal and 4 assists, David Cross 1 goal and 1 assist, Daniel Fritz 1 goal and Kyle Gertz 19 saves. For the Eels, Scott Perkins had a goal and an assist and Sean Gawel 1 goal, with Dylan Knox and Travus McDonald combining for 50 saves. Tampa Bay was 2 for 7 on the power play and 6-of-6 on the penalty kill.

Florida Junior Blades 9, Palm Beach Hawks 2

The Junior Blades scored 4 times in the first and cruised to the win. D.J. Thomas scored 3 goals in the first period and later picked up an assist, Jonathon Davidson scored 3 times, Ty Lasker had 2 goals and 2 assists and Robert Ruddle scored a goal. Joseph Keyser had 23 saves. Joe LaBonte and Jacob Fairchild scored for Palm Beach, Brad Rocheville and Sean Shriner combined for 40 saves. The Blades were 0-for-4 on the power play with 1 shorthanded goal against. Palm Beach was 1-for-5 on the power play with 2 shorthanded goals against.

Tampa Bay Juniors 5, Florida Eels 2

2 goals in both the first and third periods helped Tampa Bay to the win. Dustin Disbro scored twice in the first period and added an assist, Wade Simon had a goal and assist, David Cross and Chad Page scored goals, while Aaron Wise made 30 saves. Nick Cormeier and Joe Clemente scored for the Eels, Jacob Widmer had 38 saves. The Eels were 1-for-4 on the power play and 1-of-1 on the penalty kill.

Florida Junior Blades 11, Palm Beach Hawks 3

4 goals in the first and 5 more in the third spurred the Blades, which saw Blake O'Neill pace the attack with two goals, while nine other players scored one each. Joseph Keyser and Bryan Canter teamed to make 12 saves. Timothy Camden, Justin Andreson and Vince Cook scored goals, while Sean Shriner and Bobbu Dugan combined to make a staggering 101 saves of 112 shots faced. The Junior Blades were 3-for-5 on the power play, Palm Beach 1-for-3.

Buffalo Stars Annual Food Drive & Christmas Party



It is that time of year again when the **Buffalo Stars Hockey Organization** conducts their **Annual Christmas Party and Food Drive**.

"This is an Annual event that goes back to the founding of our youth organization 40 years ago" stated Stars President Pete Preteroti. "I was there back then and am still here now and it gets better every year".

This year's event will be held at the Stars Home Holiday Twin Rinks on Saturday, December 17th from 3-11pm. It is a fun filled day for all Buffalo Stars teams from Mites through Midgets, Girls, Women and Juniors. There is an Open Family Skating Party; a Chinese Auction; a Players Auction; Food and Beverage, Music and of course a visit from Santa. The event is culminated at the end of the day as the **Buffalo Stars Juniors** host the **Potomac Patriots** in Empire league action.

The highlight of the day is the Annual Food Drive. This year the beneficiary of the Food Drive will be the **Food Bank of WNY**. The Stars have set a goal of 5000 lbs of food. There is a challenge among all Stars teams to collect the most items. The team collecting the most food will be awarded a special prize yet to be announced.

In addition, the Stars are collecting personal care items, personal clothing items such as pajamas, socks, underwear and any other items that are appropriate. The beneficiary of this collection will be the **Jammies for GI's Organization**. So many of our wounded GI's arrive at their doors without their personal items. Our wounded warriors deserve better.

You can learn more about the Buffalo Stars at: www.buffalostars.com

SUCCESS IS A MARATHON: ONE SHIFT AT A TIME

Here are some good Junior Blogs to follow:

USA Junior Hockey: <http://www.usacollegehockey.com/cgi-bin/UBBCGI/ultimatebb.cgi>

A great board for Junior Hockey discussion. I post in here all the time and am a moderator.

American Junior Hockey: <http://www.americanjuniorhockey.com/>

Another good site I always post in.

Wrist Shot Hockey: <http://www.wristshohockey.net/>

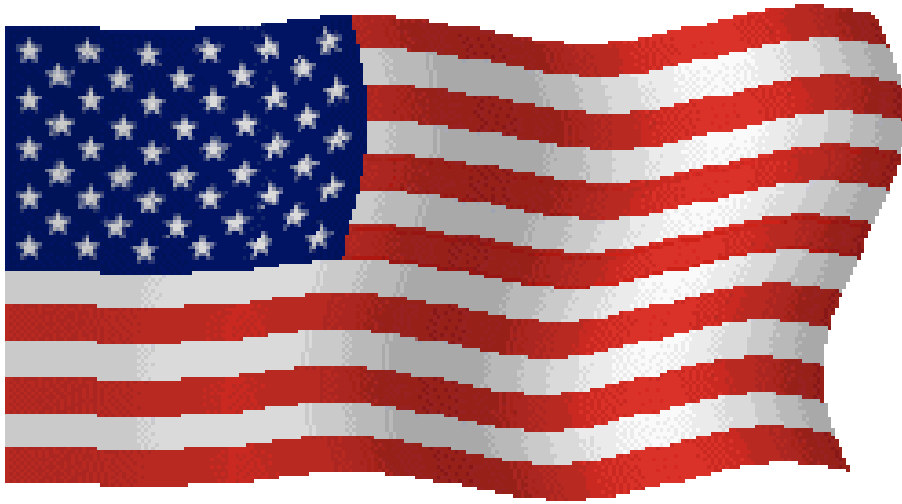
and of course our own blog at: <http://juniorhockeytalk.proboards.com/>

Please give us your feedback on this Newsletter and make sure to get it into the hands of your players and parents. This is only our first issue. It will only be as good as you make it. Make sure to keep news flowing in. sportsniag@aol.com

Pete Preteroti



AMERICA IS GREAT



GOD BLESS THE USA