

## Saint Ignatius Hockey's Quest to be the Best: A Proud Mom Reflects on Stellar Club Sport Season

By Karen Layng

The Wolves on Ice started their quest for the championship in September with 6:00 a.m. practices every Monday and Friday and 4:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. Although hockey is listed as a "winter sport" at Ignatius, the reality is, these dedicated athletes compete from September to March. They all toll 80-plus practices and power skates, three exhibition games, 20 Varsity and 21 JV regular season games, along with five more games in the St. Louis Shoot-Out Tournament. And then, there were five JV Catholic League playoff games, but we are skating too far ahead...

Wolfpack hockey is in its sixth season and was coached by Mark Weber, father of senior captain and all-star Josh Weber, and assisted by the Frank DiSilvio, father of sophomore Frankie DiSilvio. Saint Ignatius hockey vied for the championship all season long and was, in Coach DiSilvio's words, "a team to contend with."

The regular season began at Johnny's Ice House on September 15, 2007 against St.

Lawrence JV team. In what became the theme of the season, the Wolfpack were short in numbers, but long in heart and intellect. St. Lawrence skated out with more men because Ignatius had skaters out for football, Model U.N. and golf. It did not matter. As was true of the whole season, the Wolves played hard from the drop of the first puck to the final buzzer and won 7-1.

Through October, November and December, the JV Wolves broke out from the Pack and took the lead in the Catholic League Conference. Sophomore Franz Schuck was leading the league in goals and Junior All-Star defenseman Enrique Ayala was a leading point scorer (combined goals and assists) making his presence known in every game with teeth-shattering checks and his patented rocket slap shots. On Varsity, Josh Weber fought in the corners. Both he and senior Michael Chimenti exhibited tremendous leadership and spirit.

In January, the combined Varsity/JV squad packed up their light lilac and white

had other teams wondering if there was a lid on the net. The only low points of the whole weekend were junior Nate Lesiecki's season-ending injury and the continual play at the rink of Ozzy Osbourne's "Crazy Train" every 15 minutes. The team even attended Mass at the beautiful St. Louis church but having not showered between games, were not certain the other parishioners were so happy to welcome them.

From January to the end of February, the boys continued to lace up their skates through blistering weather and travels to rinks far and wide (Joliet to Aurora to Crystal Lake), leading up to the playoffs.



Photograph by St. Louis Digital

"Hugs & Kisses" bus (seriously, that was the very intimidating name and logo of the company) and traveled to St. Louis for the nationwide Shoot-Out Tournament. The Wolves were so hot, they melted the ice and easily defeated every opponent before winning the championship. As was also true all season, in the tourney, the sure-handed goal-tending of sophomores John McConnell and Jonathan Gavron

Varsity won their first playoff game ever against St. Charles North and stayed in it until late in the third in their next round game against a combined Guerin/Nazareth squad.

The JV Wolfpack did not want to settle for anything less than the championship, however, and through their workmanlike approach, they succeeded. Having won so many regular season games, they were

seeded third in the first round to take on Marist in the best of three series. The Red Wings had their wings clipped early, and never came back. Ignatius won the series 2-0 and advanced to the championship against the perennial powerhouse Mount Carmel.

Although Mount Carmel (we swear it means “more cowbell” please because their fans ring them so loudly in the stands) had their way with most of the league, it was not true of the Wolfpack in the Championship. Notwithstanding the facts that the Caravan had two players to each Wolfpack, had ten plus fans to every SICP parent or sibling at the games, and far more noisemakers, no one had more heart than the Wolves.

Brothers Michael and Thomas Javorski (the “bash brothers,” as they are affectionately called) played with a vengeance. The “fab four” on defense led by Ayala and including Tony Iuliano, Nick Collins (also one of the League’s leading scorers) and Alex Layng, stymied the Caravan fast shooters. On offense, T.J. Boulger, Schuck, John Fitzgerald, Michael Heldak, Frankie DiSilvio, Max McDonald and Nick Donata passed extremely well and exceeded the Caravan’s shots on goal for the tournament. But for the simply incredible goal-tending of Carmel,

Ignatius would have brought home the JV Jr. Kennedy Cup. Instead, they came up just short, losing the series 2-1 but ending with a very strong second place finish in the League.

As Coach Weber aptly described the season, “This team lived Saint Ignatius’ mission all season; they worked together, every man for each other. We had a team winning season but, each of these men were victorious in his own effort, heart and commitment to be the best. I am proud to be their coach.”

Although Coach Weber will retire this year, Coach DiSilvio will take over at the helm. And by the time this magazine goes to print, the Wolves on Ice will be mid-way through “spring” play, which actually goes from March to July (who said hockey players know their seasons), but only after recognizing their junior and senior academic all-stars, Michael Javorski, Michael Chimenti and Chris Rubey. For summaries of all the team’s games and links to the Suburban Life articles covering the team, check out the hockey Web site Game Day.



**Next time you’re in the gymnasium, check out the new state banners that have been displayed to recognize our state finishers through the years! The banners were hung in late February.**

