

St. Ignatius College Prep Hockey Thriving

“BE PROUD OF YOUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS AND THEN STRIVE TO DO BETTER” *Jack Nicklaus*

High school junior varsity hockey is thriving at St. Ignatius College Prep.

The St. Ignatius hockey program began through the inspiration of one student, Michael Koren who wanted to play hockey for his school. His father, Alan Koren took the lead in organizing a meeting for potential hockey players for the 2001-02 season. Eight interested players turn out, including a goalie. Alan felt they needed at least ten skaters to make the program work. Active recruitment among the student body uncovered three more players including a brother and sister pair, Steven and Bridget Cavanaugh. The goalie was Patrick Doherty and his father, Michael Doherty was pressed into service as an assistant coach working with head coach Alan Koren. Despite the recruiting problems, the team went 10-10 in the first season.

After the first season, Coach Doherty established the Pat Gipson Award for Courage. Pat had played the entire 2001-02 season while undergoing chemotherapy for Leukemia which is now in remission. Also established was the Alan Koren Award for Leadership.

Successful from inception, the Wolfpack have never suffered a losing season. The team's second season in 2002-03 resulted in a 16-6 record and an Illinois

Suburban Hockey League (ISHL) division championship. Last season, the team went 13-12-2 including league playoffs and the state tournament.



The Ignatius Wolfpack remain a member of the ISHL and regularly play rivals such as Fenwick, St. Rita and Mt. Carmel. The St. Ignatius hockey team is now deeply into its fourth season. This season, through October 22, the team is 4-1-1 and led by senior co-captains Michael Schuster and Nick Cassini.

Hockey has become a part of the decision making process for eighth graders evaluating high schools. Now a sophomore, winger Michael Birnberg made his

final decision to attend St. Ignatius when he discovered the school had a hockey program.

The school is fortunate to be located only a few blocks from one of the premiere hockey rinks in the Chicago region, Johnny's Ice House.

For the 2004-2005 season, twenty-one players are members of the team. The success and growth of the program is clear. Eight freshmen joined the Wolfpack this year. Several freshmen and upperclassmen also participate in other hockey programs. While classified as a club sport by the school, hockey is now under the St. Ignatius athletic department and players receive school letters and other recognition.

The success of the Ignatius Hockey Club is symbolic of the growth of hockey in northern Illinois and of interest in the sport within the city. The Wolfpack have aspirations to field both junior varsity and varsity teams in the near future. Ignatius players and coaches are proud of their past accomplishments and are striving toward future success.

For more information on the St. Ignatius hockey program, contact Howard Birnberg, hbirnberg@rcn.com, 312-664-2300 or Michael Doherty, doherty@sig.com, 312-435-4245.

“I SKATE TO WHERE THE PUCK IS GOING TO BE, NOT TO WHERE IT HAS BEEN.”-WAYNE GRETZKY