

Connecticut Polar Bears

1998-99 Connecticut Polar Bear Highlights

April 15, 1999

First things first--Our 1999 graduates excelled academically with these results:

Jamie Hagerman-Harvard University

Tiffany Hayes- University of Vermont

Kim Insalaco-Brown University

Gen Richardson-Boston College

Whitney Talbot-Brown University

Pam VanReesema-Harvard University

Midgets win third consecutive National Championship-Set new record

On April 11, 1999, the Polar Bear Midgets defeated the Minnesota Thoroughbreds 2-1 to capture their third consecutive National Championship at the 19U level. The Bears swept games against New York, Wisconsin, Michigan, Washington, Massachusetts, and Minnesota by a combined score of 30-2 to win the Championship. No other team has ever won three consecutive National Championships at this level. The last repeat winners at this level were the 1990 and 1991 Polar Bears teams, which featured future Olympic Gold Medallists, Sue Merz and A.J. Mleczko.

Two members of the Team, Jamie Hagerman and Tiffany Hayes, capped their careers by winning their fifth consecutive National Championship, two at the 15U level and three at the 19U level. Two others, Gen Richardson and Pam VanReesema, won their fourth consecutive National Championship.

Squirts win Bronze Medal at Nationals

The Polar Bears 12U Team went undefeated in round-robin play and advanced to the semifinals of the National Championship Tournament before losing to Michigan 4-2. Coach Elmer Laydon's team played well throughout the Tournament, and was the only team to beat the eventual champion, Chelmsford, MA.

Ninth National Title for Bears

The win by the Midgets gave the Polar Bears their ninth National Championship in fourteen years of national competition. Polar Bears teams have also finished second six times at the Nationals.

Twelve Bears Selected for USA Hockey National Camp

Twelve Polar Bears have been selected to attend the USA Hockey Development Camp at Lake Placid, NY this Summer. USA Hockey sponsors this camp to identify future prospects for the National Team and Olympic Team. The players are: Alana Bremiller, Julie Chu, Wallis Finger, Liza Golden, Jamie Hagerman, Kate Kogut, Kati Madouros, Gen Richardson, Gayle Shaloo, Renee Taylor, Nicole Uliasz, and Pam VanReesema.

Ten Younger Bears Selected for USA Hockey Bantam Development Camp

Ten of the younger Polar Bears have been selected to participate in the USA Bantam Development Camp to be held in Burlington, VT this summer. This Camp provides training and a competitive atmosphere to develop players with the potential to attend the Lake Placid Camp. The players are: Ashley Adler, Stacy Collins, Emily Grannon, Cristina Jankowski, Maggie Kennedy, Kerry Kiley, Becky Kushwara, Ellissa Popoff, Sarah Turbert, and Becky Zavisza.

Former Bears in the News

A.J. Mleczo will remember 1998 and 1999. Along with former Bears, Sue Merz, Angela Ruggiero, and Gretchen Ulion, A.J. won a Gold Medal at the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan. After traveling and training for more than a year with the Olympic Team, A.J. returned to Captain Harvard to both the ECAC and National College Championships in 1999. She received the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award, the top award in women's college hockey, was the Louisville/ECAC College Player of the Year, was named to the ECAC first team, was the ECAC Tournament MVP, and was the leading scorer in the ECAC, setting a new record.

A.J., a native of New Canaan, played for both the Peewees and the Midgets. Those players who feel that their talents have not been recognized by the hockey world might benefit from these words written by A.J.'s mother in the Spring of 1993 after A.J. learned that she had been cut at the development camp tryout: "A.J. was a bit disappointed not to have made the development camp. But she realizes she's in the big leagues now, and she's more determined than ever to work and make it next time."

Angela Ruggiero-Harvard 2002- was also named to the ECAC first team and was nominated for the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award.

Jess Tabb-Providence 2001- was named to the ECAC second team and was nominated for the Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award.

Five former Bears, Mleczo, Ruggiero, Tabb, Kathleen O'Keefe-Dartmouth-2000, and Jen Wiehn-Dartmouth-2001 were among the ECAC's top thirty scorers this year.

Last, but not least. Joey Alissi, a member of the original Polar Bears National Champion Peewees of 1985-86, will become Joanne Alissi, M.D. in June. Joey was an Honor Student and a twelve-sport Captain at the Kingswood-Oxford School before matriculating to Harvard where served as the hockey Captain for two years and played lacrosse.

The Polar Bears would like to congratulate all of the present and former players for their outstanding achievements. These fine young women serve as examples of what Polar Bears for years to come can achieve through persistence and hard work. Good luck to all those who may follow.

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