



The Vipers Pit...

JULY 2009

VOLUME 1, ISSUE 1

YOU KNOW
YOU HAVE
BEEN BITTEN
WHEN...

WHEN YOU
COMPLAIN
TO FRIEND
ABOUT A
6:00AM
GAME
FOLLOWING
A TWO HOUR
COMMUTE,
AND HE
TELLS YOU...

THEY LIVE IN
COLORADO
AND JUST
DROVE 4 HRS
ONE WAY,
TO
WYOMING
FOR AN
HOUR
AWAY
GAME.

Welcome to the Vipers Organization

A message from the President of the Vipers Organization

As summer begins I would like to welcome you to the *Vipers Pit*. This will be the Vipers monthly newsletter and will be sent to you via email.

The newsletter is designed to keep our Vipers players and families up-to-date on what is going on not only with all of our teams but with both the Hudson Valley League and NY State Hockey. The newsletter is also designed to be entertaining with trivia questions, action photos, and the highlights and accomplishments of both our players and their teams.



Photo courtesy Bob Wilson

The *Vipers Pit* is a project under the direction of our Vice President Al Felio and editor-in-chief Kurt Hanson, who has graciously offered to volunteer his time.

I want to thank Al for turning this idea into reality and to Kurt for his hard work in creating the style and look of the *Vipers Pit*. Kurt will welcome submission of articles and digital photos from both players and parents alike. Submissions should be sent to vipernewsletter@optonline.net.

The newsletter is going to be used for just that, news. Our **website** will be the place to go to find game or practice schedules.

By now you all should have received the summer practice schedule and the conditioning camp schedule. If you have not, please see our **website** at www.westchestervipers.org.

Our coaching staff is in place and our coaches and dedicated managers are raring to go. Before you know it, September will be here and we will be back in full swing.

As previously announced, there is a lot to look forward to this Fall, including our new power skating and defensive clinics.



Photo courtesy K Hanson

In order to get the season off on the right foot, we will also be holding our first annual pep rally to introduce all our teams to you in their new uniforms. This will be during the first full week of practice. As September draws near we will be emailing everyone with all of this exciting information.

On behalf of the Executive Committee I wish you all a great and restful summer and I look forward to seeing you all in September!

*Dave Mensi
President*



Photo courtesy of Bob Wilson

Some people skate to the puck.

I skate to where the puck is going to be.

Wayne Gretzky



Top 10 Signs You're a Hockey Parent

If you can answer "yes" to any or all of the following characteristics, you a member of a unique and very special fraternity and should check to make sure your family medical plan pays for psychiatric visits.

Illustrations By Mike Curti

10. You've had to use a grandparent to take kid No. 1 to a tournament because you were in a different state with kid No. 2 at a tournament and your spouse had kid No. 3 two states away in a third tournament all in one weekend.

9. You've received a letter from AAA Automobile Club and called for more info about tryouts.

8. You know every single kid on every single team your child has ever played on, but you don't have a clue as to who his school-mates are.

7. You've purchased a new \$135 stick because the old one didn't have any goals left in it.

6. You can rationalize spending \$159 on a hockey stick for a 9-year-old but you won't spend \$5 on a birthday card for your spouse.



5. You've planned the birth of next child so he has a good hockey birthday.

4. You hate sending Holiday cards, because the stats only show half the season.

3. You chuckle when a co-worker says his kids play soccer.



2. When someone asks how old your children are, you respond, "I have a 93 and a 90."

1. Your new baby's first word is Zamboni.



Photo Courtesy Bob Wilson

The Ref's Corner

Can you answer this correctly?

(Answer is on page 5)

A player who deliberately knocks an opponent's stick out of his or her hands will receive a minor penalty.

Is that penalty called;

- 1) spearing
- 2) slashing
- 3) interference
- 4) misconduct



How the Vipers got started...

By Coach Ron Caccavale
A founder of the Westchester Vipers

I was coaching Mites for the New Rochelle Lightning when parents were told that the following year would be the last year for the organization. Some parents were upset that the Lightning was folding.

One of the fathers on my Mite team, Frank Fusco, approached me and wanted to know if I would be interested in helping him put together a new organization. I told him I would. Frank and I did a lot of homework, contacting USA Hockey and learning what we needed to do to get things going.



Photo courtesy Bob Wilson

Our first year was the 1998-99 season. We had one team at the squirt level. We had received a limited travel status from USA Hockey which allowed us to play about 10 to 15 games that year against USA Hockey teams and to do a tournament. We also put the team in the WSA metro league.

The team consisted of players from WSA and players that did not make the New Rochelle Lightning team and a few that skated on both. It was a great season and everyone wanted to know what we were going to do next year. Frank and I sat with some of the parents on the team and developed a strategy to get us to the next level, which was getting full USA Hockey status and getting into the Hudson Valley league. We had a lot of work ahead of us.

First we needed a name. I played on an adult hockey team with Phil Forzaglia. The name of the team was the Vipers. Phil's son Matt played on our squirt team and when we were looking for a name Phil said we should name it after our adult team. Everyone liked the name. Frank Fusco had a friend who was a graphic artist and he drew up the logo and made the jerseys. We had a name and a logo. We then selected a Board and I became President.

To get a charter from USA Hockey we needed ice time. Frank, myself and two other fathers went to procure the ice time. It was required by the rink that we pay the season in full, which was a lot of money. The fathers pulled out their wallets (their credit cards) and we had ice time. We did a lot of fundraising that year!

We went to the USA Hockey meeting and Frank and I presented our plan for the Westchester Vipers. We got the charter with the stipulation that we had to grow the organization.

***The Westchester Vipers
were born***



The last piece of the puzzle was getting into the Hudson Valley League.

It wasn't easy but we got in with the requirement that we add more teams.

The full first travel year as the Westchester Vipers was 1999-2000. The roster changed a little, but we went into the Hudson Valley League as Squirt A's. It was a great year. Every game was close and we were always in the game. We either won or lost by a goal and had plenty of ties. That year we went to the HVHL finals and won the championship 3 to 2. The Vipers reputation as being champions began that year.

With the help of the parents and Westchester Skating Academy the following year we went from one Squirt team to four teams at the Mite, Squirt, Pee wee and Bantam levels. Everyone worked hard to raise money and get the organization off the ground and to expand to where it needed to be. WSA chipped in with one of the hardest things to find -- Great Coaches! Qualified coaches who didn't have kids on their teams but who loved the game and could teach it.

Each year the organization grew. After a few years it was hard to be President and coach and I stepped down and just coached. Each President that has followed me has stepped in and worked long hard hours to get the Vipers to where we are today. Bruce King, John McMahon, Rich Abramo and now Dave Mensi have all helped to make the Westchester Viper into one of the best youth hockey organizations in New York State.

The Vipers now have 17 teams and has moved up to tier II. We have also added 4 girl's teams (one with Tier I status). It was not easy to get where we are today. There were a lot of obstacles and long nights in the beginning but it was well worth it.

I look forward to seeing the Vipers program continue to grow from our humble beginnings, to becoming the dominant Hockey program in the Tri-state region.

The Laura Stamm Power Skating Staff to bring Power Skating to the Vipers

Mark Pecchia, Erik Kallio, and Laura Peechia, three respected Viper coaches, will be leading the Vipers' new power skating program starting in the Fall.

As many of you know, Mark, Erik, and Laura have for many years led the Laura Stamm program for the East Coast. Many successful Vipers have taken private lessons and honed their skating skills under the expert guidance of these instructors.

The Vipers want to spread the wealth

and, as Dave Mensi has said many times in meetings with the 2009-2010 Vipers families, "There is no reason why the Vipers should not be the best skating organization in New York, if not the Northeast, with Mark, Erik, and Laura running our power skating clinics."

Mark, Erik and Laura will tailor their instructional training with techniques specifically designed for the skill and ability levels of the players they are working with. These may include; Balance, Backward

Skating, Powerful Strides, Skating with Pucks, Explosive Acceleration, Agility Maneuvers, Quickness Training, Resistance Drills, Lateral Mobility & Tight Turns.

The power skating clinics are included in the tuition and are provided at **no additional cost!**

**A big Thank You!
to the Laura Stamm
Power Skating Staff**



Hockey Trivia

So you think you know Hockey? Lets see...

- 1) How many lines on an ice hockey rink cross fully across the ice from side board to side board?
- 2) Who broke the NHL's color barrier in 1958?
- 3) Who is the only father-son duo to win the Hart Trophy?

If you think you know **some or all** the answers let us know at;

vipernewsletter@optonline.net

Please add **Hockey Trivia** in the "Subject line".

Welcome to the *New Vipers Pit* Enewsletter

We are delighted to produce this, the first of our new

Vipers Pit Enewsletter

As the Viper Organization expands and grows we would like to grow in all areas. Along with the addition of new hockey players and their families, we know we need to keep communication clear, fast and reliable.

Recognizing that communication is key to keeping everyone informed and that providing information in a timely and interesting

way, the Directors of the Vipers organization have taken the next step, to build this Enewsletter.

***But remember it is your
Enewsletter as well!***

If you have an interesting story, anecdote, or funny recollection of a hockey event - Share It!

If there are items that you would like to see explored in an Enewsletter, let us know.

We will be producing this as a monthly edition beginning with the first issue in July 2009.

We need your help!

Please ask your teammates if they are receiving this newsletter. If they are not, do we have their correct email address?

They might also check their Spam folders or other security features that might interfere with its arrival.

***Lets us know your
thoughts!***

Please direct your comments to
vipernewsletter@optonline.net

**Want to
Unsubscribe
to the Vipers Pit?
(Or help clean up
our email listing)**

**Do so with an
Email to
vipernewsletter@optonline.net**

**Please place
UNSUBSCRIBE
in the "Subject
field"**

That's all!

Refs Corner...

The answer is;
Interference.



Little Johnny's Parents must face Reality

The following was excerpted from the **Buffalo News Sports**.

Buffalo Sabres defenseman Craig Rivet knows a thing or two about hockey. It certainly didn't take his teammates long to realize he was a voice of reason. Almost immediately, they embraced his credibility and named him captain. You can ask Craig a vague question, and he'll straighten you out with the honest answer. That's what made it so refreshing when he started speaking about delusional youth hockey parents.

Hockey parents for years have had a reputation for being over the top, but it appears to be getting worse. Patrick Kane's (Blackhawks winger) success could very well be the worst thing to happen to a growing population of parents who think Little Johnny is the next one.

This is for parents who believe they serve breakfast to future Division I players or NHL prospects without having a clue what it takes to get there. Here's an invitation to reality.

Twenty-two players from Western New York are playing Division I hockey. That's less than 1.5 percent, three of every 200. Basically, your kid needs to be one of the top players in his age group **across the entire region** to play D-I, assuming you didn't suffocate his passion before high school. By the way, of the 22, many were given only partial scholarships, some none at all. Less than one High School players in 300 will be drafted by an NHL team. More than 200 players are selected every year in the draft, but only about 40 will ever reach the NHL.

“The most important thing is, ‘Are they having fun?’ Use hockey to teach kids life lessons about discipline, effort, teamwork — qualities that can help them in the real world. The goal should be raising good people who love the game, not players to live for the game.

“My dad was the type of dad who sat in the stands, he was alone, he didn't say too much,” Rivet said. “He wasn't one of the screaming parents yelling at his kids to skate. The thing I remember after a game was he would say, ‘The effort needs to be there because if the effort isn't there, you're wasting your time and my time. I don't care if you score the big goal or make the big play. I want you to work.’”



Photo courtesy Bob Wilson

The best players are the ones who have an immeasurable desire for the game, who practice alone, who are blessed with off-the-charts instincts and an unbreakable competitive spirit. They possess the rarest of qualities that can only be found from the neck up, not the shoulders down.

Kane's father spent some \$200,000 on his son's career, allowed his son to leave home at age 14 and quite possibly had him on the ice more than anyone in youth hockey history. Kane who once had 100 goals and 200 points in one season as a kid, was the one in a million who didn't burn out. “For every Patrick Kane, there are 50 million who didn't make it,” Rivet said.

“If you think your kid is going to be one of 50 million, play the lottery. You have a better chance of winning that.”

Westchester Vipers Hockey Association

of Elmsford, New York

Over A Million Served not quite, but we're getting there!

Did you know that the Viper Organization runs 13 boys hockey teams, as well as 4 all girls hockey teams.

The Vipers host teams from 7 year old Mites to 18 year old Midgets. In many cases, with multiple teams in each age grouping,

that's a lot of Skaters to keep track of!

With...

About 18 players to a roster

That's 34 coaches and assistant coaches & helpers

20 + Team Managers to Manage

Of course, Referees & Officials

Over 306 Skaters

More than 50 tournaments to plan

Greater than..

816 games to schedule

And over 1,600 practices to account for

Want to trade refrigerator calendars?



If you are interested in girls hockey, you need to be here. To subscribe to "Play Like a Girl" visit USA-hockey.com. It's a USA Hockey Enewsletter.

We could use some HELP!

Anyone out here that would like to assist in the development of stories, funny hockey moments, amusing anecdotes, let us know.

Do you like to create Jumbles or Crosswords or would you be interested in managing our Weird Action Photo arena, let us know.

"I'd like to help" in the "Subject Line" and then off to

vipernewsletter@optonline.net
Let us know what you're good at!



"How would you like a job where, every time you make a mistake, a big red light goes on and 18,000 people boo?"

*Jacques Plante
Goalie*