



HAWKEY TALK

January 2009

President's Message

It's almost hard to believe that we are well past the halfway point of the season and with February and March running so close together with games, we will be busy for sure! I'd like to offer a quick thank you to all who attended the Kent bus trip on January 24. It was a great deal of fun and we are trying to set up another one for February 28. That game may be very important if the team is to be playoff bound. The Boosters are now selling older "photo cards" that were available from 1994/95 to 2002/03 at the Booster table. Some are autographed and some aren't. You will probably find a few NHL players in there and of course a few favorites. The money from these sales will help to preserve some of the other "archives" that were in the Winter Hawk offices and we will make them available to be seen by Boosters at future meetings. Also by preserving them, we might make some available to the Oregon Sports Museum which would be a nice touch as well.

As you know we were supposed to have had 4 players at the January 26 Stark Street Pizza event, however, a situation showed up for the Hawks that Coach Johnston couldn't resist and for the players, it marked a real fun idea, but also extra work for them too. We hope to have some photos of the event in the next issue. However, the Boosters were very pleased to have had President of the Portland Winter Hawks Mr. Doug Piper come in for a Town Hall meeting. The discussions, I am sure, have answered many questions and also given everyone an insight to where the franchise is heading. Thank you to all who attended.

We are scheduled for 2 additional player pizza events on February 23 and March 9 at Stark Street Pizza and those should proceed without fail. It is very interesting to note that with the changes in place, how quickly events can get set up and run. The Skills Challenge was another one and barring a microphone issue, the players did very well on their skills. In this edition, are two really interesting interviews with the Mick brothers, Sawyer (a current Hawk) and Troy (former Hawk). Luke Walker sent us a note on being selected Player of the Month for December and Coach Mike Johnston sent in a great article as well.

Letter from the Editor

Hawks Fans, welcome to another edition of Hawkey Talk! This is a packed issue with our first chance to hear from new GM and Head Coach Mike Johnston. We have the first brother Q&A in Hawkey Talk history and something from both Chris Francis and Luke Walker.

Earlier this month the Hawks felt the loss of Dave Francis, father to 3rd year Hawk Chris Francis. This was sent to us from Cindy and Chris for this month's issue;

Chris and I would like to thank all the members throughout the Portland Winter Hawk organization, booster club, Player families and all the FANS who have reached out with their love and support during our time of sorrow. Your warm thoughts and kindness have helped comfort us through the most difficult times in our lives and will never be forgotten. The wonderful stories and memories shared with those of you who knew my loving husband will stay within our hearts forever. Chris and I will take comfort in knowing how many others cared and remembered.....

all our love, Cindy & Chris Francis

RIP Dave "Super Dave" Francis, 1948—2009

VISIT OUR NEW UPDATED WEBSITE
<http://www.pwhbc.com>

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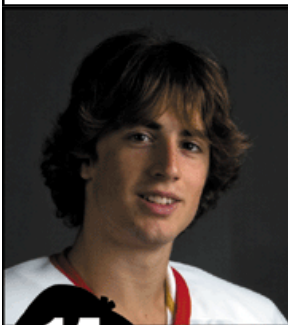
Player Action Photos	Bryan Heim
3 Stars Photos	Cathy Kemp and Richard Thomas



BOOSTER CLUB MEETING DATES

<u>Day</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Venue</u>	<u>Time</u>	<u>Speaker</u>
Saturday	October 11	Memorial Coliseum	5:00 PM	Jerry Moss
Saturday	November 15	Memorial Coliseum	5:00 PM	
Saturday	December 13	Memorial Coliseum	5:00 PM	Andy Kemper
Saturday	January 17	Memorial Coliseum	5:00 PM	Mike Johnson
Saturday	February 21	Memorial Coliseum	5:00 PM	no speaker—Nominations
Saturday	March 14	Memorial Coliseum	5:00 PM	no speaker—Elections

December Player of the Month #14 Luke Walker

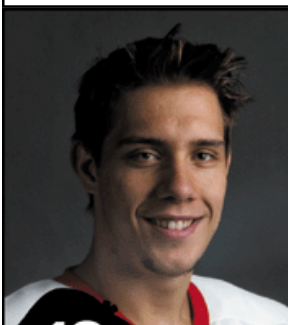


Position	Center
Shoots	Right
Height	6'-1"
Weight	174 lbs
Hometown	Castlegar, BC
Birthday	2-19-1990
Age	18
NHL Status	Free Agent

14 Luke Walker

Thank you to all the fans that voted for me for player of the month and to all the fans that continue to support us throughout the games and the years. Despite our record this year, we are still in a playoff race. We are 6 wins out right now to Prince George, but with the streaky nature of PG
(Continued on page 9)

November Player of the Month #12 Chris Francis



Position	Left Wing
Shoots	Right
Height	5'-9"
Weight	189 lbs
Hometown	Las Vegas, NV
Birthday	3-30-1989
Age	19
NHL Status	Free Agent

12 Chris Francis

To all the fans and team players of the Portland Winter Hawks organization , I want to say Thank You What an honor its been to be a part of your history and to have met so many great people here in Portland. My experience and opportunity to grow as a player for the last three years will be something that I will remember for the rest of my life !! And For Mr. BILL , Coach Mike and Travis Green ,me and the guys can't thank you enough.....I look forward to the second half of this season with good things to come , Happy New Year everyone !!!!

Chris Francis

Pizza Blast Update Shows!

Pizza Update Shows
Stark Street Pizza

October 13th

Players— #1 Keith Hamilton, #14 Luke Walker, #18 Brad Ross, and #21 Colin Reddin

November 10th

Players— #6 Brett Ponich, #12 Chris Francis, #17 Riley Boychuk and #22 Scott Gabriel

December 8th

Players— #2 Troy Rutkowski, #3 Travis Ehrhardy, #5 Joe Morrow and #18 Brad Ross

January 26th

Players— Team President Doug Piper

February 23rd

Players— TBA

March 9th

Players— TBA

Hosted by Andy Kemper, Jerry Moss and the Winter Hawks Boosters!



The Stretch Run

By Andy Kemper

As I write this, the Portland Winter Hawks have 26 games remaining in a 72 game schedule and they find themselves 13 points out of a playoff spot in the WHL's Western Conference.

A tall order, indeed, to get into the postseason, but that remains the focus of the team.

They are down 13 points to the Prince George Cougars, but they have four games in hand. Even if the Hawks could win the four games in hand, there will still be five points to be made up in the standings to reach the postseason.

Everyone is pointing toward the two-game series between the Winter Hawks and Cougars in early February in Prince George as must-win games for the Hawks. To me...the playoffs start now. I am approaching the rest of the season as five different five-game series. If the Hawks can win the majority of the series 3-2, I think they'll make the postseason. Time will tell...

It has been an interesting month for the Winter Hawks...

It started with a weeklong trip to BC that led up to the trade deadline. The deadline had many of the veterans concerned about being dealt, with Kurtis Mucha and Travis Ehrhardt being the two most discussed in trade rumors.

In the end, both players remain with the Hawks and the only roster change the Hawks made was to add 20 year old German Import Max Brandl. Brandl has appeared in two games as of this writing, picking up one goal.

Brandl is excited to be here and I think he will play a huge role for this team down the stretch.

The other big happening in January was the team's trip to the small, rural, Northeastern Oregon town of Enterprise.

Enterprise is located in a valley surrounded by mountains and is one of the most scenic places I've ever been. The weather was cold (-15 the night we were there) and there were snow flurries flying, but it will be a trip that I doubt anyone who was there will forget.

The players got a chance to visit the local school and interact with the elementary age students – reading and talking about physical fitness and safety – before getting a chance to run a practice on the local outdoor rink.

For many of the players, it was a return to their youth – playing on a frozen rink outside with the snow falling – while for others, it was their first time to skate outside on a handmade rink.

The city embraced the team and it was great to meet and talk with so many of the locals who were overjoyed by the team's appearance. Even the General Manager of the local radio station inquired about broadcasting Hawks games on their station – we'll have to look into that.

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The Stretch Run

By Andy Kemper

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As this part of the season is often times referred to as the “dog days”, the excursion to Enterprise was a breath of fresh air (figuratively and literally) for the team and hopefully that will spur them on as they begin the drive for the postseason.

I’ve said it before, but thanks again for being such great supporters of this team and this franchise. It was great to see so many of you at the ShoWare Center in Kent on your bus trip. Keep the faith, and as always...

GO HAWKS!

The Hawks in Enterprise at the Outdoor Rink. ↓



Mucha, Curtis and Hamilton after their workout. ↑



← Coach Johnson explaining the next drill the team will work on while skating on the outdoor rink in Enterprise, Oregon.

Photo's courtesy of Andy Kemper and afterthewhistle.wordpress.com.



Question and Answers with A new Hawks Player each month!
With Sawyer Mick

Lets get started... Sawyer thanks for taking a few minutes with us and Rookie Q&A.

HT – Sawyer, what was the first thing that came to mind when you got the call to join the Portland Winter Hawks?

SM—What a great opportunity it is to learn from the new superb coaching staff and how lucky I am to be a part of the best junior hockey league in the world.

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HT – Since your older brother played here, did it make it any more special, or did it really matter what team you played for?

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SM—It obviously makes it a little more special to be a part of an organization that knows the Mick name, it makes me feel a little more at home right away with having people coming up to me, telling me stories about back in the day when my brother played here.

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HT – Sawyer can you tell us a bit about growing up and following in Troy’s foot steps? Did Troy ever give you any advice or help you get ready to come to Portland?

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SM—Troy has always been there for me helping me out in anyway possible. He gives me advice and helps me out with any big decisions that come with the hockey life.

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HT – Besides hockey, are there any other sports that you have played, or still play in the off season?

SM—When I was younger along with hockey I played, soccer, lacrosse and still in the off season I like to play baseball and golf.

Q

HT—Can you tell us a few things about your family?

SM—My family consists of my mother Katie, step father Ron, my father Pat, sisters, Taryn, Kailea and Kali, and brothers Troy and Jordan.

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HT—What type of town in Vernon BC?

SM—Vernon is a smaller city of about 50 000 people. It is a beautiful place surrounded by 3 lakes and a very popular ski resort, Silverstar.

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HT—How is school going for you? What subjects are your favorites, and what give you the biggest challenges?

SM—School is going great for me. I currently have enough credits to graduate already and if hockey doesn’t work out as planned I will attend university doing something in the medical field. My favorite subjects are biology and history, and math is the course which gives me the most challenges.

HT—What are your non sports related interests or hobbies?



Hawkey Talk is now reaching out to former Hawk players and catching up with them, in this month's issue we catch up with Troy Mick

Troy, thanks for taking the time to be a part of our Q & A

HT—What was it like to join the Hawks as a 16 year old and play here for the next 4 years?

TM—It was one of the best times of my life playing for the Hawks. It had the best coaches, staff, billets and of course THE BEST FAN support in any league. It was an honor to play for the Hawks and I will always remember my time there.

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HT—What were some of your most memorable moments in a Hawk uniform?

TM—When we beat the Blazers in Portland during the regular season I had 7 assists and Dennis Holland had 7 goals in 1 game. Also when Dennis and I would score we would do our skate to center ice and low five each other and the fans loved it. The loonie scramble I thought was awesome when Portland did it especially when 10,000 people are screaming and watching the contestants fall all over the ice. (Dash for Cash) Winning the West title but losing to the Hat in 7 games. Doing lots of charity work in the region really made me feel good and the Winter Hawk fans skate were amazing with bow many people would show up....I can go on and on with all the great things that happened in Portland but you would never have enough space for it.

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HT—After you ended your WHL career in Regina you went to the ECHL and IHL, what was it like?

TM—Playing in the minors was a good experience but it really helped me become a good coach and GM as I knew after my first year in the minors that I was not going to make it and I knew I wanted to stay in the game. I ended up getting 8 knee surgeries so my playing career in the minors was short.

HT—You then took your hand behind the bench as a head coach in the BCJHL. What was this experience like?

TM—The BCHL was an awesome time. We won 2 national championships during my time. 1 as an asst coach in 96 and then as Head Coach & GM in 99. To see these guys develop and move on to higher level was a great personal satisfaction that I was able to help them go from young teenagers to young men and be a positive role model.

HT—You then returned to Portland as an assistant coach, what was it like to come back to the Hawks?

Q

TM—To come back to Portland as an Asst Coach was really a dream come true. I owed so much to that organization from my playing days that I wanted to show my family wife Roxanne of 17 years and my daughter Tiffany 14 and son Logan 12 how awesome Portland was. When Ken Hodge & Mike Williamson hired me I was on cloud nine. We had a great year winning the West but losing to Red Deer in the final still hurts. Mike and I became great friends and Ping Pong addicts but showed the guys we cared for them when we said we would dye our hair blonde if we won the West and of course we did and Mike and I looked pretty stupid behind the bench as blondes but that showed you how close we were as a team that year.

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HT— You had the chance to be a WHL head coach both with Tri Cities and Kamloops, what was that like?

TM—It was like I was going full circle now that I was a head coach for Tri and Kamloops. Having been a player and now was a head coach in the WHL was incredible. I don't think there has been a lot of players who have played in the league and now have been a head coach too. So that was a very neat accomplishment but a great reflection on how awesome the WHL really is for these kids.

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HT—What caused you to leave junior hockey and turn to real estate in Mexico?

President's Message Cont

In our next issue we will be talking elections to the board with nominations at the February 21st meeting and a decision on the amount of the donation to the Major Junior Hockey Education Fund of Oregon.

Upcoming Booster Dates:

February 21 Booster Meeting US Plywood Room- Memorial Coliseum

February 28 Bus Trip Kent, WA \$60 Booster Members/\$70 Non Members includes ticket, transportation to and from game, snacks and water. Sign up at the Booster table.

Talking Hockey with Coach Mike Johnston

To open up the first newsletter of the New Year I want to touch on three things – consistency, team personnel and courage.

As everyone returned from the Christmas break the team showed new energy and focus and we climbed back into the playoff picture going 4-4-2 in the first ten games but recently have slipped back as Prince George continued to chip away with some unexpected wins. Unfortunately our team has been anything but consistent as we seem to put together streaks in both directions. At this time of the year if we focus on process rather than results I believe we will get to where we want to be which is in the playoffs. We have talked to the players a lot about “staying in the game” which means 1. making sure we don't get down when the opponent scores early 2. having the attitude that we need to chip away when we are behind rather than forcing the play and getting away from our structure 3. play with confidence when we have the lead 4. stick to the game plan regardless of any adversity that happens. If we are successful in doing these things you will notice that when the third period roles around that we are truly in the game and the game is on the line in the last 20 minutes. That is our objective for this important month of January. If we achieve it generally you will win 50% of the games. I am sure as fans of the team everyone was anxious over the trade deadline and what moves if any the team would take. Well as you witnessed we decided to stay the course with the only addition being Max Brandl who comes back to the WHL after playing professional hockey in Germany. Brandl had played very well for Prince Albert in 2007/2008 and was motivated to return to North America. It made sense to our team after losing Jonathan Milhouse when he made the decision to return to Victoria and play in the BCJHL. I believed it was also important to add one overage for the stretch run. By keeping all of our 1989 born players we are very excited that next year we will have some excellent overage options and all will be players from within our program and familiar with the expectations. Regardless of who signs a pro contract we will still have several tough decisions to make on forward and defense for those three spots.

Finally as I am sure everyone knows these last few weeks have been a tough time for the Francis family as Chris's dad Dave Francis passed away during our road game against Kamloops on Jan 7th. We were all amazed at how strong Chris was during this difficult time as he stayed with the team for the four games in five nights and not only did he stay but he played remarkable. Several of the staff and players were able to attend the touching ceremony for Dave in Vegas.

Team Notes: Brock Cornish who reinjured his shoulder in the New Years Eve game will potentially be back in the lineup by the end of January....Daniel Johnston seems to have fully recovered from off season surgery

Continued on Page 9

Talking Hockey with Coach Mike Johnston Continued

to remove a growth in his neck is back playing and will be gradually worked into more minutes and games as he gets comfortable with the pace.we will be the only team in the league to have five 16 year olds on our roster at this time of the year.congratulations are due to Brad Ross, Keith Hamilton and Troy Rutkowski for winning the silver medal at the World Under 17 Tournament over the Christmas break. ...Radim Valchar who played for the Czech Republic at the World Junior Tournament finished in fifth place. ...Tyler Wotherspoon played two games in late December as a 15 year old and was very impressive.

Luke Walker from page 3

(winning a few in a row then losing a bunch in a row) we still have a good chance of surpassing them and getting ourselves a playoff spot. Coach, Mike Johnson, had a meeting with us telling us that this is the time when we need to buckle down and claw our way into a playoff spot. We've been working extremely hard in practices and off ice workouts to get ready for the next string of games. We have also been focusing on our systems over the past while which will also help our playoff push. Max Brandl, 20 years old, arrived as our second Euro just a few days ago. He is a very good guy and very mature, he'll add veteran leadership as well as some needed scoring to the team. The focus on systems and hard work along with the 20 year old Euro we recently added should contribute largely in our playoff push. I would like to say thanks again to the loyal fans of the Winter Hawks.

Rookie Q&A Continued with Sawyer Mick

SM—I love to travel; I have been to 4 European countries and frequently travel to Mexico with my family and friends.

HT—Now that you have made the Hawks, and you are part of the rebuilding process, what things are the coaches asking you to work on to make your game more complete or better?

SM—The coaches encourage me to work on my foot speed. The coaches and I work on it after practices by pushing tires and doing sprints in between the blue lines.

HT—Last question, if you could tell all of the youth hockey players out there, one thing to help them make it to the WHL, what would it be?

SM—Work hard and do what you do best!

Alumni Q&A Continued with Troy Mick

TM—Our family moved to Mexico to spend more time together as the past 10-12 years has been very busy for all of us and as much as I enjoyed hockey it was time to step back and spend quality time before the kids are gone or wanted to spend time with us. I'm so proud of my family.

HT— There is quite a difference in age between you and Sawyer as brothers. Are there other siblings?

TM—I have 2 sisters named Taryn and Kailea who are older than Sawyer but of course younger than me. Our family is very proud of what Sawyer has achieved and he is a great person with a work ethic second to none.

HT—What were your first thoughts when your brother Sawyer was brought into the Hawks this year and did you ever relate any of your experiences while you were here to him?

TM—When they started talking to Sawyer about coming I was really excited but he had to make some tough choices about going NCAA or WHL. Mike and Garry (the head scout) did a great job in recruiting Sawyer and why he should come. When he chose to wear number 22 it made it that much more special to see. We went to Kelowna to watch him play and it was awesome to see that name bar with that number again. I had my son with me and hopefully he will wear that jersey too one day...no pressure though...hahahaha

HT—Last question. What one thing would you tell youth hockey players to help them make it to the WHL?

TM—The biggest thing I can say to kids now a days is to never give up on your dreams no matter what people or coaches say...you can't teach Heart or Desire and if you bring those 2 things every night good things will always happen for you.

Thank you very much to all Winter Hawk fans and to the organization for all that you have done for my brother and I during our time there. It will always hold a special place for the Mick Family!