

Franklin High School Varsity Hockey

The First 25th Years

1970/71 - 1995/96

The Record

This record was compiled by George Brennan, a friend of Franklin hockey, who researched as best he could from various local newspapers, micro/films at various libraries in the area. Researchers and newspapers are quite human and as such, do make errors in reporting. It is felt that the record is a fairly accurate record of the events of the first 25 years, but, it is not error free.

The Early Years

Franklin, like many start up teams, had a rough time for the first 3 or 4 years into the program. The school accepted the program but would not provide any funding. The cost of funding a team that had to use a commercial rink in a distant town was probably the determining factor in their decision. The team raised their own funds and joined the Southeastern Hockey League and **started their first season in 1971**. The "Four Seasons" ice rink in Walpole would be their home ice. They leased the 5 practice sessions per week, all at 5am, at a cost of \$50 to \$75 per session. They would not share any gate receipts as the rink kept the gate as payment for game ice time. The games were poorly attended and wouldn't have provided much of a share anyway. This did not deter them however. They raised their own funding, got up in the middle of the night to attend practice times, 5 times per week, and did this for 3 straight years.

The team had very little success during these years, which was quite understandable under the circumstances, but things started to turn around starting in 1974. The MDC had built a state operated rink in Franklin and it became home ice to 5 or 6 local teams. Franklin would get daytime practice sessions at \$25 per session and also receive a share from their home game receipts. The school committee impressed with the new arrangements, and with the determination and spirit of the team, voted to fully fund the team. The JV teams were pretty much in place, and youth hockey programs were beginning to provide quality players into the system. The coach, Ralph Olsen, had retired from the team and Robert Luccini, a local lad, was selected as new head coach. Bob was a talented hockey player from an adult hockey team. He was very knowledgeable about hockey and the Franklin team.

The local papers had to sit up and take notice of the newly established local teams. They realized that hockey was now a major sport and could no longer be ignored as in the past. They started covering the games in 1974, but, it would take them until the end of the decade to perfect their reporting system with better accuracy.

A new rink, a new coach, and the easing of financial burdens on the team, plus, the greatly reduced physical demands on the players and coach raised the team's morale considerably. These factors were the reasons why the team had their first winning season in 1974/75. They ended the season with a 10-8-2 record. In those days they did not qualify for the playoffs (This record would qualify a team for the playoffs under the present MIAA rules). Bob Luccini, and his teams would never have a losing season.

Franklin did make the playoffs the next year, lost in the 2nd round and finished with 17-4-1 record.

North Attleboro came on line in the 1976-77 season. They were the sixth Hockomock team with a hockey program. The Southeastern League had grown to 12 teams, and the Hockomock teams were mostly too strong for the league and the league broke up. The Hockomock teams split off and formed their own league. Each team would play each other 3 times and try to schedule 5 non-league games for a 20 game schedule.

Franklin closed out the seventies with a 9-6-3 record, the second year of the rebuilding program. It was a respectful record but it was not good enough for the playoffs. The next season, (1979/1980), the record was 12-5-2, but, they were still denied a playoff berth.

The Eighties

Starting with the 1981/82 season, Franklin had a 5 year run of great teams that featured many of their greatest players to date. Two teams during this period could be called Franklin's greatest team. The team of 1982/83 that won Franklin's only championship probably deserves the "Greatest" title, but, others may say that the 1983/84 was the greater team. This team scored a record 196 goals in a 23 game period. The first line tandem of Center/Senior Chris Spillane, and wings Sophomore Tommy Le and Junior Brian Assad was the greatest scoring line, ever. Their line scored 95 goals with 103 assists that year. Chris Spillane had 30g's and 49a's=79pts. Brian Assad had 41g's and 32a's=74pts. Tommy Lee had 24g's and 22a's=46pts. The team went all the way to the semi-final game against Wilmington and lost 4 to 5.

The graduation of Chris Spillane and six other starting players did not seem to affect their scoring ability the following year. In 1984/85 the team scored 189 goals in only 21 games. This team scored an average of 9/goals per game for the year, another record. This was the year that gave Franklin its worst defeat. Franklin was undefeated in 20 games and was seeded #1. They were to play Oliver Ames in the first round. Oliver Ames was a Hockomock team that Franklin had beaten three times by large margins during the regular season. Oliver Ames barely qualified for the tournament and was seeded last. All of this went for nothing as Oliver Ames won the game 6 to 5. Franklin had made too many defensive errors and Oliver Ames goalie played a great game stopping Franklin's usual barrage on net. Franklin fans were stunned, big time. This would be the last of the great teams in the eighties. The next year the team started to slip back to a 15-6-1 record. This team had 16 seniors on the team that would require the greatest rebuilding job for at least two years. In 1986/87 the team started out with a horrendous record of 2-7, unheard of in Franklin, but the team started to come together and went 7-2 in the second half of the season to finish up at 9-9 for the year (Saving Bob Lucinni from a losing season). The next year, 1987/88, they improved their record to 13-7-1, went to the 2nd round in the playoffs and lost to Canton. A new prosperity started up the following year, (1988/89). In 1988/89, a talented freshman, Doug Williamson, (9g's/10a's), joined with a sophomore, Jay Kenny (15g's/7a's) and a junior, Jason Goguen (27g's/36a's) to form the next great scoring line. They were young and inexperienced, but they performed like talented veterans.

The Nineties

In 1990, Jason Goguen closed out his fourth year of varsity stardom with 28 goals and 35 assists, (65pts). Doug Williamson, now a sophomore, had 27 goals and 28 assists, (56pts). Junior, Jay Kenny had 18 goals and 17 assists, (35pts). Jason and Doug were 2 of the greatest scorers for either a single year or a 4 year career total.

In the 1990-01 season, Mike Kinsley, a sophomore who spent his freshman year at a private school, joined the team and filled the slot left vacant by Jason Goguen. They were big skates to fill, but Mike was equal to the task. Mike, Doug and Jay ruled the ice when they were on. Mike Kinsley, with 26 goals and 18 assists went on to become one of the top career scorers in Franklin's history. Had he played his freshman year at Franklin, he might have finished up as No. 1

The 1991/92 team had three of its all-time greatest players on hand, there was Doug Williamson (Sr.), Mike Kinsley (Jr.), and the newest member in the club in Dave Marchand (Fr.). Mike and Dave would become the third dynamic duo in Franklin for the next two years, and also joined the "greatest" ranks.

In 1992/93, Mike Kinsley, (Sr.), had 25 goals, 28 assists=(53pts), Dave Marchand (So.) had 29 goals and 24 assists=(53pts). They were joined by another promising freshman, Neil Haskell. Neil had 15 goals and 16 assists=(31pts). Neil would also finish up his four year career among the scoring leaders.

In this last season of the first 25 years, (1995/96), Franklin had a mixed flavor to the season. Yes, they had a great year. Yes, they were a very good team, but still it seemed they underachieved. It was true that they no longer had a go-to player, or a spiritual leader to look up to when the going got tough, but they did have a very experienced team with lots of talent at all positions. The three lines of offence and two lines of defenses were inter-changeable. Seldom has any hockey team had as much balance with

three and four year regulars making up the body of the team. To their credit, however, it must be noted that Franklin played one of its toughest schedules in years. All in all, more than half of the schedule was with top clubs in three divisions.

For the coming season, Franklin must undergo another huge rebuilding project. They lost 12 men to graduation, the six best forwards on the team, and the three best defensemen along with their #1 goalie. If the past is any indication, however, it shouldn't take too long to get the job done and be back to its usual high level of operations. The nineties reflect a new concept in scheduling, they reshuffled the league games to two encounters, freeing up more non-league games so that the stronger teams, (Canton and Franklin), can schedule more games with teams that can challenge them and the weaker teams avoid 2 games with power teams and can reschedule teams more to their needs.

Tribute to a favorite son: The Olympian

Peter Laviolette is Franklin's most celebrated and honored hockey player. Peter was under contract with three National Hockey League teams and twice chosen to play for Team USA, in the Olympics of 1988 and 1992. Peter played professionally for 10 seasons, mainly in minor leagues, but played 12 games with the New York Rangers in 1988-89 season. Peter had to work hard for each move he made up the ladder of success. It took most of his high school career for Peter to show the level of play he was capable of performing. This was recognized by his team mates when he was named, "Most Improved Player." The coach would use him as a swingman, either as a forward or defenseman. From this small obscure, division 2 high school, Peter went on to play for a small, obscure college team (Westfield State). From there, Peter signed up with the Minnesota North Stars and was assigned to one of their farm teams. While there, his coach became impressed with Peter's work ethics and willingness to play any team roll asked of him. Peter was a coach's dream type of player in this respect. Peter's coach was a friend of the newly named Olympic coach and convinced him to give Peter a try-out. Peter with the North Stars blessing, became a member of Team USA. The network's broadcasters had good things to say about Peter, pointing out that he was the only "pure" defenseman on the team, who always seemed to be in the right place at the right time, in contrast to, his fellow defensemen that seemed to be offensive-minded to the detriment of the sound team defense. The team failed as a result.

The Olympics brought Peter to the attention of the New York Rangers, especially the GM, Phil Esposito. They purchased his contract from Minnesota and assigned Peter to their top farm club. At this time, Phil was having problems with the ownership about the direction of the club and it worsened to the point that Phil was fired and the team set about correcting "Phil's Follies." Peter was swept out as a result of this action. Peter was not finished however, but joined his third NHL club, the Boston Bruins.

Peter had a couple shots at making the Rangers team and also had a few games to show his stuff in Boston, but when injured players came off the disabled lists, Peter would be back in Providence once again. Age was becoming a factor, Peter knew, realistically, that he had but a couple of years left to make the NHL. Those years came and went. In 1991, Peter would not re-sign with Providence even though he loved playing professional within twenty five miles of his home in Franklin. We wanted another shot at the Olympics in 1992. He didn't know if the P. Bruins would want him back after the Olympics were over, but he wanted the Olympics no matter what. He made the team for the second time. Team USA did not play well and failed again. Peter found out that Providence did indeed want the, "Captain" back. Just as Team USA loved the way young players looked to him for guidance and tried to keep up with him in practices, so to, did the Bruins want these qualities on their team. Peter, now in his thirties, has completed a four year fun since rejoining his team. Peter Laviolette's uniform number, #4 has been retired by Franklin High School Hockey.

The First 25th Years

“The Greatest” of the first 25 years

Bob Luccini, Head Coach: In twenty two years of coaching, Bob Luccini never had a losing season. He led his teams into eighteen tournaments, and should have made three more, (under current qualifications). Bob led his teams to three Division 2 State Finals, winning once.

The Great Teams of the Eighties: The teams in 1983, 1984, 1985 and 1986 won 83 games and lost only 8 games. The 1984 team scored a record number 196 goals in a 23 game schedule. The 1985 team scored 189 goals in a 21 game schedule, an average of 9 goals per game for the team that won the Division 2 Championship in 1983, perhaps, deserves the “Greatest Team” title. This was a team of tough veterans who could, and did snatch victory from the jaws of defeat. Spillane, Assad (Kenny and Brian), Duncan, Marchand, Nasuti, Foley, Williamson, Bissanti, McCarron, Tenney, Lee, Patterson, Chambers and Gatley are a few of the players from that team. They said it was a team that “refused to lose.” There were others who would make a strong case for either the 1984 or 1985 teams with their record breaking offenses, however.

The Panthers “Greatest Scoring Line/Greatest Scoring duo: Senior, Chris Spillane, centered a line with wings, Junior, Brian Assad, and Sopomore Tommy Lee, that produced 95 goals and 103 assists in the year ending in 1984. They averaged over 4 goals, and over 4 assists per game for the year. Chris Spillane graduated in 1984 and joined the Univ. of Mass at Boston hockey program where he won a starting position on their first line in his freshman year. He was joined by his Franklin teammate, Brian Assad, who also won a Freshman assignment the following year. Chris and Brian went three years together as UMass’s best scoring duo in their history. No other duo, in Franklin ever came close to Chris (79 point) and Brian (73 points) in the same year, 1984.

Franklin’s Fabulous Four, Franklin’s First Family: The Marchand brothers, Tommy, Billy, Jim and David were truly all outstanding Forwards of AllOStar quality for the Panthers. Tom (class of 76, twice had over 20 goals seasons. Billy (class of 82) was a 20 goal scorer, followed by a 20 plus goal season for his brother Jim (class of 83). David Marchand (class of 95) had two 20 plus goal seasons and missed a third one due to injury and illness. There had been at least one Marchand brother on the team for 13 straight seasons during the first 25 years. They provided countless thrills for Franklin hockey fans over the years. Such talent from a single family will not likely happen again.

Highlights of the First 25 Years

Jamie Downey, a four year starting defenseman, had a five goal game against Stoughton in his senior year in 1993. Jamie became only the second player to achieve a five goal game. In 1990, a sophomore **Doug Williamson**, scored five goals in a game against King Phillip. **Dave Marchand**, a senior in 1995 in a game against Stoughton scored a “hat trick.” This is not just one of the hundreds of “hat tricks” that Franklin has scored over the years. Dave had scored all three goals while his team was short-handed. A short-handed hat trick! **Chris Spillane**, a senior in 1984, had the greatest single year scoring of the first 25 years. Chris had 30 goals and 49 assists for a total of 79 points. **Brian Assad**, scored the most goals in a single season. Brian scored 41 goals in 1984. He followed up his performance the next year by scoring 34 goals (second highest total). Brian is the all-time career scorer. For three years of regular play, Brian had 88 goals and 86 assists, for a total of 174 points.