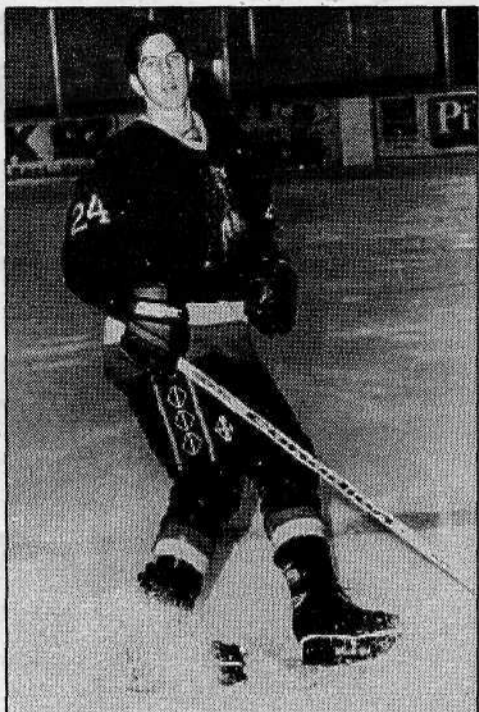
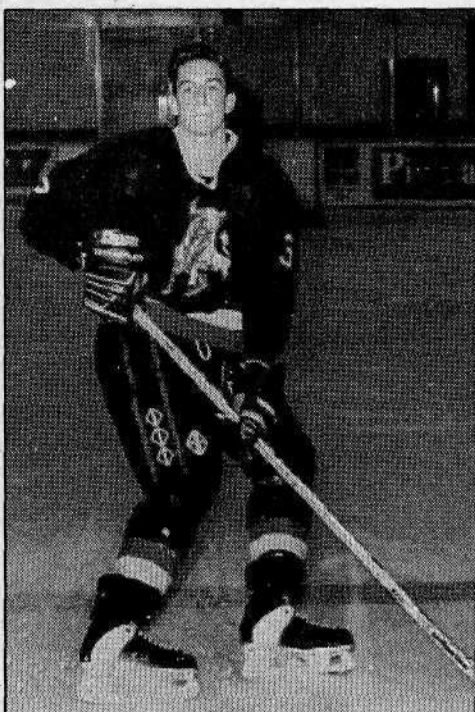


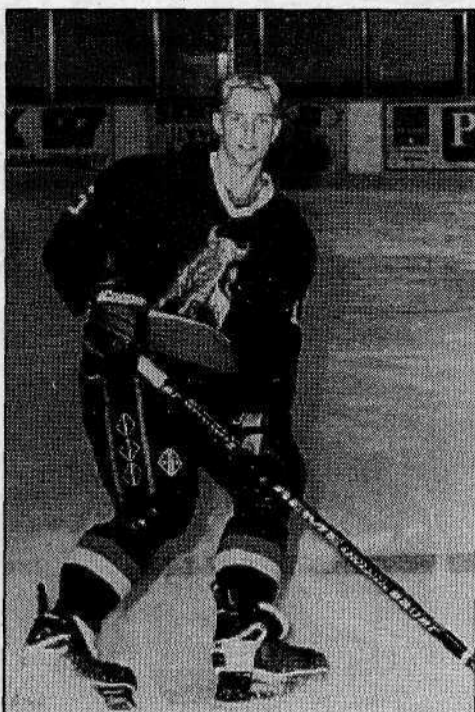
Justin Papineau, F, #7



Mark Chaplin, F, #24



Nikos Tselios, D, #3



Chris Stanley, F, #13

Bulls counting on talented rookies

By Paul Svoboda
The Intelligencer

Where they finish and how they fare in the playoffs are questions that are yet to be answered as the Belleville Bulls open the 1996-97 OHL season.

But one thing is for sure — these guys are young.

Bulls were built for the playoffs last season with a handpicked veteran team led by the likes of Craig Mills, Joe Coombs, Andrew Williamson and Richard Park.

Those grizzled OHL campaigners are gone. Replaced by names like Chris Stanley, Justin Papineau, Nikos Tselios and Mike Cirillo.

With only a handful of veterans returning from the 1995-96 roster, Bulls general manager and head coach Larry Mavety travelled to the 1996 OHL Midget Draft in Kitchener with plenty of priorities.

Number one, replace the de-

parted players with talented youngsters. Secondly, answer a need for size and toughness that Mavety felt was lacking in Bulls' semi-final playoff eviction to Guelph.

If pre-season outings are any indication and if height and weight charts are accurate, Mavety met those needs. Of course, off-ice expectations and on-ice production are often two different things.

The real answers will come in the next few months.

Here's a brief look at some of the rookies who could emerge as key players in a rebuilding Belleville lineup:

JUSTIN PAPINEAU, centre.

Bulls' first round pick from the Ottawa Senators Tier II club where he scored 31 goals and created headaches for opposing teams like the Pembroke Lumber Kings, whose general manager Kevin Ready is the father of Bulls sophomore Ryan Ready. "Papineau is the real deal," says the elder Ready.

CHRIS STANLEY, centre.

Bulls gambled a 10th round pick on the 10th-rated player in the '96 draft who had informed OHL teams he was opting for college hockey in the U.S. But the Bulls convinced the Metro League's East Division rookie of the year last season with Wellington to come to the OHL. "He's an impact player," says former Duke coach Greg Royce.

MARK CHAPLIN, centre.

Rated in the second round at the '96 cattle call, Chaplin was an undrafted steal for the Bulls, thanks in large part to the influence of fellow Newfoundland native Daniel Cleary. A nifty playmaker with excellent speed. "Cleary says he wouldn't have been a bad first round pick," says Bulls owner Dr. Robert Vaughan.

NIKOS TSELIOS, defence.

A cousin of Chicago Blackhawk star blueliner Chris Chelios, Tselios was impressive in the pre-season with his steady play and physical

presence. At 6-foot-2 and 185 pounds, he'll only get bigger.

RYAN CROWTHER, defence.

"I like to fight," said Crowther at the '96 OHL draft. "In fact, I love to fight." That scrappy nature was part of the reason Bulls used their second round pick to nab the Orillia Tier II grad, described by one OHL scout as "someone who wants to do everything for the team, even drive the Zamboni." Bulls hope his work ethic makes him a stalwart on the rear-guard.

MIKE CIRILLO, forward.

A big, hardworking winger from the Fort Erie Junior B's, Cirillo combines size (6-feet, 200 pounds) with toughness and talent. Could be a fan favorite.

SCOTT MURCHIE, forward.

The feisty Fort Erie Junior B winger bears a striking resemblance to ex-Bull Brian Secord. If he possesses similar potential, Bulls have a good one. Had over 150 penalty minutes last season.



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