

Haydar named to AHL first-team all-star squad

As if there was any doubt. Adding to what's been one of the best individual showings in recent American Hockey League history, 27-year-old Miltonian Darren Haydar was named a first-team all-star Thursday.

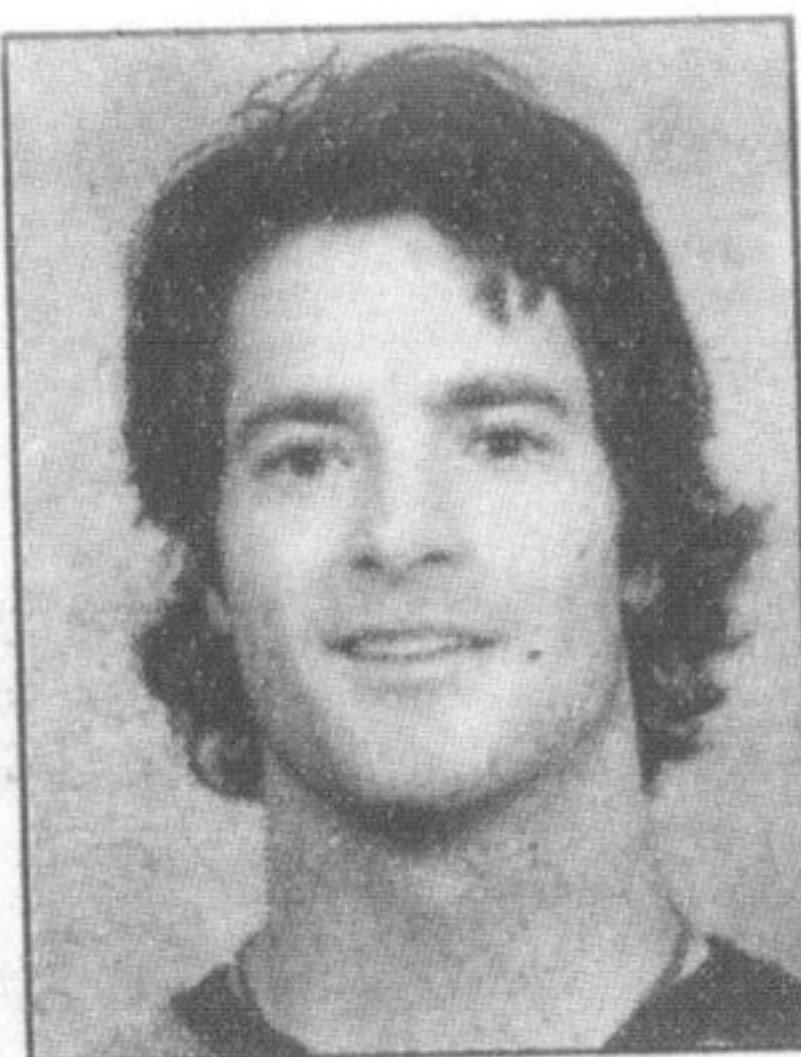
To say the least, his selection was an obvious one — with the AHL veteran right winger sitting firmly entrenched atop the league scoring race with 39 goals and 77 assists in 70 games with the Chicago Wolves.

About the only thing that kept him from making a serious run at the all-time single-season point record — which stands at 138 — was a 10-day call-up to the Atlanta Thrashers in February.

Considered by many to be a shoe-in for the AHL's MVP award, expected to be announced sometime this week, Haydar delivered his latest offensive outburst against his former Milwaukee Admirals Friday night.

His 39th tally of the season came just 21 seconds into the game, and from there he helped set up three other goals to edge the Admirals 5-4.

The AHL scoring leader has gotten on the score-sheet in eight of nine games against his former team this season, recording three goals and 10 helpers along



Darren Haydar

the way.

Saturday evening he drew an assist in a 5-3 decision over the Grand Rapids Griffins that kept his now 44-24-3-6 Wolves in position to snag top spot in the West Division away from the Omaha Ak-Sar-Ben Knights, whom they'll face in the season finale Sunday.

With less than a week remaining in the regular season, Haydar — who recorded at least one point in each of his first 39 games, the longest streak in AHL history — is poised to win the scoring race by at least 15 points.

Price makes strides in rookie season

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onship on a 13-game winning streak and, once there, securing a second period lead — and accepting such a high-stakes and narrow loss goes from tough to damn near impossible.

"We certainly had the team to do it," offered Price, whose perennial powerhouse squad reached the finals with a wild 6-4 victory over North Dakota Friday night, during which seven goals were scored in the last seven minutes.

While not exactly focused on much beyond Saturday's defeat, Price's heartbreak was tempered with at least a certain degree of personal satisfaction — regarding the significant strides made during his rookie season in Division 1.

Sitting out the first several weeks of the season, the former Milton IceHawk no doubt questioned if and when he'd be able to shake his healthy scratch status with the talent-laden championship

contenders.

The answer to those internal queries began presenting itself around late fall, when Price finally cracked the lineup. Once doing so, the young Eagle slowly but surely began boosting his stock — as part of a rather effective checking unit with juniors Matt Greene and Pat Gannon.

By the time the playoffs rolled around, the Boston College rookie had obviously proven his value, seeing as an injury to his left wrist and forearm — sustained in practice — didn't result in a quick return to the sidelines.

Playing with a cast over the past few weeks wasn't exactly an ideal situation, but the fact that Price was still in the lineup at less than 100 per cent speaks volumes about the favourable impression he'd made on seasoned Eagles skipper Jerry York in a relatively short period of time.

"I guess it does say something positive," suggested Price, who's schedule to have his wrist re-examined today. "With the adrenaline of the playoffs, it really only hurt after the games, but let's just say I'm glad that (Saturday) was our last one."

So how were the Division 1 newcomer's nerves playing in front of nearly 20,000 fans this past weekend?

"Obviously the crowd gets you going, but then every game's intense once you get to the elimination round. And if you can't get up for the playoffs on your own, you probably shouldn't be out there."

While still immersed in championship heartbreak, Price and the Eagles have plenty of cause for optimism. Boston College loses just two regulars from this year's team, and has 14 players eligible for 2008/09 play.

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