

Nearly died in hazing incident

Claremont's Evans happy with return to Kent State hockey

BRUCE STAPLEY
Correspondent

Tim Evans is a happy young man again.

The 21-year-old Claremont resident, who had a near-fatal reaction when forced to consume alcohol at a university hazing in the fall of 1988, finally got a chance to strut his stuff this winter.

Evans, a former top scoring left winger with the Pickering Panthers Junior B hockey club, led the Kent State (Ohio) University Varsity puck squad in overall scoring in the season just completed last weekend.

The smooth skating Evans compiled statistics that included 14 goals and 19 assists in a 30 game schedule against Division One Independent teams such as Notre Dame and Alabama Huntsville.

He even had his freshman status reinstated after the university cancelled its 1988-89 hockey program due to the initiation incident.

Evans was originally attracted to Kent State by the offer of a hockey scholarship, and the opportunity to be a part of a beefed up hockey program.

He enrolled in a Business Administration course, and settled in for three or four years, which he felt would determine whether he had what it takes to go for a career as a pro hockey player.

But after his near tragic experience, he found himself out of the hockey picture altogether, and would have left Kent with a very bad taste in his mouth if it weren't for his determination to help set things right.

"We wanted to pull him out right then," says Carolyn Evans, Tim's mother, recalling the fear she had felt when her son was hospitalized with a coma.

"But when he had recovered, he insisted he wanted to stick it out."

And all is well that ends well, as far as Evans and his family are concerned. While the Kent State team missed the playoffs, playing near 500 hockey this season, Evans says he had a great time, and that the future looks bright.

"We're trying to get into the Central College Hockey Association sometime within the next two years. Then, we can compete for the National Championships."

Evans explains that as an independent university team, the Kent State squad would have had to have finished first in order to advance this season.

"We came a long way for our first year. And we're a young team, with 14 freshmen. It's been a fun year, and I got to go to Colorado, Boston, Alabama. I covered a lot of the United States."

He's modestly proud of his personal output on the ice. "Yes, I guess I had a pretty good season, leading the team in scoring as a freshman."

Has the hazing fiasco left any painful memories?

"Not really," he said candidly. "It really pulled the team together. Some of the hazers left the university, but I've become quite close to several of the ones who stayed."

Evans maintains that like himself, the local citizenry and the media have agreed to forgive and forget. "It's all gone now. The public is coming around, the

people who were hesitant are coming back. The press coverage has been positive, and the school has really supported us."

Evans says he plans to play on the Kent State team for at least another two years, after which he may look into the possibility of playing hockey in Europe.

But for now, he's just happy to be an important part of a budding university hockey program.



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