



Friday, September 28, 2001

Ice hockey club joins new league, begins season

By **Jeff Samoray**, OU Web Writer

The **Oakland University men's ice hockey club team** hopes to build upon its past successes by joining a highly competitive league and focusing on strong defensive play.

OU has joined the newly formed **Great Midwest Hockey League**, which is associated with the **American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA)** Division II. League members include the University of Michigan-Ann Arbor, Michigan State, Ferris State, Indiana and Miami of Ohio. All those teams qualified for the ACHA national championships last season, including OU.

"It's essentially the most competitive league in Division II," said Head Coach Anthony Jalaba. "No other league is made up solely of teams that qualified for nationals. We're in a league of teams generally recognized as powerhouses. The difference between this year and last is that now every one of our league games will force us to play at our best."

OU opens its season with a home game against Toledo at the Onyx Rochester Ice Arena on Friday, Sept. 28, at 8:30 p.m.

Last season, OU qualified for the ACHA Division II playoffs in only its second season. The team went 1-2-0 in the tournament and finished with a 20-13-1 record.

This year, the team plans to focus on its defensive skills, said Jalaba.

"Our defensemen, goalies and forwards will all emphasize defense this year," Jalaba said. "We have some talented forwards and guys who can break it open and score, but we want to approach our games with defense as our priority. We control our own destiny. If we play well and play smart, we'll have a successful season."

The team has a core of 16 returning players to go with nine first-year players. Among the returning starters are forwards Ron Koliito and Scott Marlinga, defensemen Carl Borgquist and Steve Jalaba, and goaltender Shaun Zeldes.

"Koliito is one of our leading goal scorers from last season and Marlinga is a solid two-way player," coach Jalaba said. "Borgquist has a big shot from the point and is a big physical player with good offensive talent. All of our defensemen are very physical. Zeldes has been very solid with us over the last two seasons and will probably be our number one starter in goal."

Among the key additions this season are defenseman Rich O'Connell, forward Geoff Acree and goaltenders Ryan DeLiso and Brian Urban.

"We've got six guys on the team now for a third year and have been here since the program began," Jalaba said. "Our core has returned and we have a good number of additions. With our new league and schedule, they'll be put to the test. There's no room for slacking."

In addition to its tough league schedule, OU will host the second annual OU ACHA Showcase, which is Oct. 5-7 at **Great Lakes Sports City** in Fraser. In this highly competitive early-season tournament, OU will play its first game against a varsity team when it faces Humber College (Ontario).

OU also will play Oct. 19-21 in the Peter Maybury Cup, a tournament held in Toronto featuring three Canadian varsity teams.

"The early tournaments are a good way to kick off the season and look at our competition," Jalaba said. "And this is also the first season in which we'll play any varsity level teams. We're definitely looking forward to that."

OU plays its home games at the Onyx Rochester Ice Arena, 52999 Dequindre Rd., (248) 601-6699. Most games begin at 8:30 p.m. Tickets are \$4 for adults, \$3 for students and children 12-under are free. Visit the **OU men's ice hockey club team** Web site for a schedule, team roster, statistics and more information.

SUMMARY

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