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OU skater to play with U.S. men's team in China

By Eric Reikowski, media relations assistant

OU senior defenseman and Division 1 team captain Jarrett Samp will represent his country as a member of the U.S. University Select Team at the 2009 Winter World University Games in Harbin, China. Also known as Winter Universade, the games have been held biannually since 1960 and feature student-athletes between the ages of 17 and 28 competing in a myriad of winter sports.

The U.S. men's hockey team comes to this year's games laden with some of the nation's premiere collegiate players. All hail from teams within the American Collegiate Hockey Association and were selected after a rigorous evaluation process that included a three-day tryout camp held back in August.

"After the application process, they invited the top 80 players for tryouts at a tournament in Plymouth," Samp explained. "I did well enough to be named to the team."

Though he initially made the team as an alternate, Samp was named to the 22-man active roster in mid-January.

"It's really an honor to be able to go," Samp said. "This is going to be very big."

Interestingly enough, this is not the first taste of international competition for Samp. While a member of the Central States Hockey League, the Troy native played in the International Pee Wee Hockey Carnival, an annual junior hockey tournament held in Quebec, Canada.

Samp hopes to build on that experience as he heads overseas to compete against some of the best young hockey players in the world. He noted that since many of these players have professional experience under their belts, he will need to play his best to be successful.

"I'm not the most skilled player out there," said Samp. "But I work hard, play really tough and that's been able to get me through."

A tenacious competitor, Samp helped lead the Golden Grizzlies to national titles in 2006 and 2007, racking up a career best 10 goals and 13 assists during his junior season. He credits his OU hockey career with teaching him to balance sports and academics.

"I was really young," said Samp, who recently turned 21. "I learned a lot from the other guys about how to approach the game of hockey and get through school."

Samp said he expects to graduate this spring with a business degree and is considering pursuing an MBA.

For now, however, he has his sights set on bringing home a medal for the U.S. men's hockey team, which finished eighth at the Winter World University Games held in Turin, Italy in 2007. And he has plenty of support behind him.

"Jarrett has developed as a player year to year and has increasingly improved year to year," said Sean Hogan, head coach of the OU men's ACHA Division 1 hockey program. "He will be a true asset to the U.S. University Select Team."

The team will gather in Chicago for a string of practices and exhibition games before leaving for China on Feb. 16. The Winter World University Games will run from Feb. 18 through Feb. 28.



Jarrett Samp is headed to Harbin, China to compete in the 2009 Winter World University Games.

SUMMARY

Jarrett Samp will play in the 2009 Winter World University Games with some of the best young hockey players in the world, many of whom have professional experience under their belts. A tenacious competitor, Samp helped lead the Golden Grizzlies to national titles in 2006 and 2007.

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