



RED HOCKEY - Scott LaFave, Coach Keith LaFave and Andrew Gorman ...

Snow Belt Bantam Red Players Pull Together To Overcome Adversity

By Summer Spanish

The grass is turning green early this year, but some people can't get their minds off the joys of ice. Or, more specifically, the snow belt. One of our local hockey teams, the Snow Belt Bantam Red, are still playing hard. There are two Lansing eighth grade teens on this team, Scott LaFave and Andrew Gorman.

Andrew and Scott have practice every Monday and Thursday at the RINK. Their long, hard work is put to the test each weekend when the team plays as many as three games. It's tiring for the teens, but as Andrew says, "It's really fun and a lot better than school."

The team is coached by Scott's father, Keith LaFave. When asked how it is playing for his dad, Scott replied that, "It's not bad because he doesn't yell because he's my Dad." However, rumor has it that Keith may not coach next year.

Last year the Snow Belt Bantam Red was almost undefeated. However, the team took a turn for the worse this year. Coach LaFave says the team has a "not so pretty" record because it's a small, young team that's suffered quite a few injuries this season.

"The team plays more for the fun of it," he said. "They don't get frustrated and enjoy themselves whether they win or lose."

The team started the season with five straight losses but has since bounced back to win about eleven games. Scott enjoys playing against Lysander because the Snow Belt always wins. "We started out a little rough," laughed Scott. "There were some losses that hurt our league record."

"We're doing a lot better now," added Andrew who noted that the team's performance has steadily improved.

The highlight of the season is simply that the kids got along well. "No one really knew or had played with one another before," said Keith. "It was really nice to watch how they've become so close and supportive."

Last year the Snow Belt Bantam Red won the Batavia tournament. This weekend they're scheduled to return to the scene of their '96 triumph to tempt fate and try to bring home the bacon again.

Summer Spanish is a special correspondent to the Lansing Community News and a senior at Lansing High School.

An original short story specially written for readers of the Lansing Community News:

BLIZZARDS



By Sam Neno

What the TV weatherman called the biggest storm of the century had hurled itself at the northeast. We knew it was coming, and no matter how much it huffed and puffed and blew at us, we were thrilled and watched out the windows to see what a blizzard really looked like. Unfortunately for me and my sister, Betsy, most of the storm hit during the night. The next morning we hoped to find the snow up to our necks, but it didn't even cover the top of the dog's house.

The plow went by, and with its passing the excitement we had felt about the storm disappeared like wood smoke in the sunny morning. A few minutes later Grandpa called to tell us he'd heard on the scanner that the plow had hit a snowdrift it couldn't get through on the other side of the hill. The driver was going to back up to the other end of the road a quarter mile back. And sure enough, here came the plow, like a pit bull that had chomped into iron and now staggered backward with its head ringing.

Not long after Grandpa tramped down the road to our house with Grandma to tell Betsy and me about a blizzard when he was a boy.

"How much snow did you get?" Betsy asked.

Grandpa raised a finger and said, "I'll tell you the whole story." Dad sat back in his chair and crossed his arms. Grandma snorted, and Mom filled the teapot and put it on the stove.

Grandpa swung his chair around and spread his knees so we could sit on them, and he began: "Your great-grandpa—I always called him Pappy—worked in the mine. He was home the night it started snowing. He said to my brothers and me, 'Boys, it's nice to be above ground on a pretty evening like this.' Before dark, though, when we had half a foot, he said he didn't really like snow after all.

"The next morning, the wind was banging the shed door, so I told my mother I was going to close it, and she said absolutely not. She even let our dog, Chestnut, in the house. Animals weren't allowed in the house. And then Pappy told us about a blizzard in Montana when he was a boy. Snow piled higher than the phone lines. When the snow melted, he found a neighbor frozen to death right in his tracks between his house and barn.

"We played checkers and chinese checkers and listened to the radio like we watch TV today. Finally, Chestnut wanted to go outside or she'd mess in the house.

We let her out, but she never came back. Pappy said she was fine; she was a smart dog and probably found a warmer, quieter place to ride out the storm.

"It snowed all that day, and the wind slapped the shudders all that night. Come morning the snow was to the upstairs windows. Pappy crawled out his bedroom window, and Mom told him to be careful not to get buried. Uncle Billy asked if Pappy was going to sink like in quicksand. When Pappy took his first step, he dropped out of sight with a yell. Mom ran to the window, but Pappy was joking, and he stood up laughing. After she went downstairs, though, us boys saw Pappy fall in up to his waist. We watched him crawl the rest of the way to the shed. He got his shovel and tunneled back to the house."

"What happened to Chestnut?" Betsy asked.

Grandpa smiled and winked at Dad and said, "Well, come April we had one snowdrift left, and what do you think was in it?"

"Chestnut, all froze up?" Betsy asked.

"Chestnut, but not all froze up. She'd learned how to warm the ground with her body and make the worms come up. She'd lived on worms and grass until we dug her out. After that whenever anyone said anything about getting worms to go fishing, she ran and hid in the shed."

"Oh, my word, father," Grandma said.

"Now that was the storm of the century," I said.

"It was all of that," Grandpa said.

"So this storm was really nothing at all," I said.

Dad stood up and said it was time to shovel out the driveway.

Grandpa patted me on the head and said, "If I have to shovel, it's something more than nothing."

Grandma helped Grandpa with his coat, and Mom helped me and Betsy tie our hoods up. We pelted Dad with snowballs until he put us both in a snowbank, and then we played while he and Grandpa dug out from the latest snowstorm of the century.



Sam Neno is a lifelong resident of Lansing. He lives in North Lansing with his wife and three children.



"MAY WE HAVE SOME MORE?" - Lansing's firefighters took the heat in the kitchen Saturday, March 8 as they served endless spaghetti and meatball dinners to raise funds for March 29's Easter egg hunt.

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