



PITTSBURGH VIPER STARS

North Hills Amateur Hockey Association

Incorporated 1964

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For Immediate Release

Viper Stars Players Challenge for PA State High School Championships

Pittsburgh, PA – The 2009-2010 Pittsburgh Viper Stars AAA hockey program certainly has left a large imprint on the 2009-2010 PIHL High School Playoffs (Penguin Cup) and the Pennsylvania High School Hockey Championships.

Members of the Viper Stars Midget Major U18, Midget Minor U16 and Bantam Major U14 dot the rosters of teams that did battle for the Penguin Cup (awarded to the winning team in the AAA, AA and A divisions of the PIHL), as well as those teams who captured the Penguin Cup and will move on to face their Philadelphia counterparts in the PA High School Championships, which will be the final high school hockey games to be played in Pittsburgh's Mellon Arena. Several of these same players also filled many of the leader spots for final regular season statistics in the three of the PIHL's divisions of play.

The thrilling PIHL AAA contest for the Penguin Cup that went into overtime, between Seneca Valley and Canon McMillan High Schools, featured Viper Stars players on both rosters and behind the bench of Canon McMillan. Standout senior forward Tyler Messica (18U), senior defenseman Kaleb Schwab (18U) and junior forward Cody Siegfried (16U) skated for Seneca Valley. While senior forward Mario Delasandro (18U), junior defenseman Alex Baskarov (18U), freshman forward Carmen Delasandro, and freshman forward Blair Oldaker (14U), all skated for Canon McMillan, while head coach Yuri Krivokhija, also the head coach of both the U16 and U14 Viper Stars, guided his eight seeded team to its first ever Penguin Cup.

Mario Dalesandro scored the game deciding overtime goal to send Canon Mac into the PA State Championship game he also picked up an assist during regulation play. Oldaker also scored for Canon Mac. Messica set up both goals fro Seneca Valley.

The final regular season statistics for the AAA division, featured Viper Stars senior forwards Anthony Maroadi (18U), Norwin, tied for 10th (20G, 22A, 42Pts.) and Tyler Messica (18U), Seneca Valley, tied for 14th (20G, 20A, 40Pts.).

The high scoring PIHL AA contest for the Penguin Cup between Latrobe and top-seeded West Allegheny, featured two Viper Stars players on the Latrobe Wildcats roster. Standout junior forward Matt Batis (18U) and freshman sensation forward Noah Batis (16U). Older brother Matt led the way for Latrobe as he collected four goals to propel his team to its third straight State Championship game. Younger brother Noah chipped in three assists as the Wildcats won their third straight Penguin Cup.

Viper Stars dominated the final regular season statistics for the PIHL AA division, as senior forward John Miller (18U), Franklin Regional, led the league in scoring with (11G, 47A, 58Pts.). Matt Batis (18U), Latrobe, (28G, 29A, 57 Pts), Noah Batis, Latrobe, 18G, 38A, 56Pts), and Matt White (18U), Peters Township, (26G, 29A, 55Pts.), finished two, three and four in scoring.

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Page 2

The PIHL A contest for the Penguin Cup, a rematch of last season's championship between Mars and Serra Catholic, featured Viper Stars players on both rosters. Standout senior forward Erik Manetta (18U) led his Serra Catholic team. While sophomore forward Elliot Tisdale (18U), junior forward Robbie Sigurdsson (16U), sophomore forward Nick Blaney (16U), and standout junior goalie Tyler Stepke (18U) all skated for Mars as they earned their second consecutive Penguin Cup. Manetta (18U) picked up an assist on the lone Serra Catholic goal, while Tisdale (18U), led the way for his Mars Planets with one goal and two assists. Sigurdsson (16U) also scored a goal for Mars.

The final regular season statistics for the PIHL A division, as well as the overall scoring title, were led by Viper Stars forward Erik Manetta (18U), Serra Catholic, (32G, 52A, 84Pts.). Tisdale (18U), Latrobe, (23G, 32A, 55 Pts), finished fifth in scoring, while Blaney (16U) finished 21st (20G, 16A, 36Pts). Stepke (18U), led all high school goalies as he captured 20 wins, with a goals against average (GAA) of 1.274 and a save percentage of .924. He recorded seven shutouts during the regular season.

The Viper Stars are proud to offer western Pennsylvania and the tri-state area the only Tier I AAA full-season travel ice hockey program that encourages participation on both the travel and interscholastic levels.

"We have worked diligently with the member teams of the PIHL to ensure that many of the area's top players get a chance to play for their respective high school teams, as well as for top flight AAA travel teams," says Dave Kosick, AAA Coordinator for the Pittsburgh Viper Stars and head coach of the program's 18U AAA team.

"We understand the value of high school students getting to wear a sweater with their respective school logo, and playing in front of fans, peers, classmates and school supporters," Kosick added. "The Viper Stars have a proud tradition of working with the area high school teams and would never consider asking them to forego that experience as the area's other full-season travel teams mandate."

In addition to the Viper Stars who have advanced to the State Championship games or Penguin Cup finals, the Viper Stars also featured senior forward Matt White (18U) of Peters Township.

White, certainly one of the most highly recruited players in western Pennsylvania history, has received offers from several collegiate (including North Dakota and Vermont) and junior teams for next season. White has verbally committed to the University of Vermont, with a formal signing to follow in April. In addition, no fewer than 14 NHL clubs have scouted and talked with White about his future. He expects to be added to the NHL's Central Scouting list of prospective draft choices for the upcoming NHL draft and will wait to see if he is drafted in the next NHL entry draft.

The North Hills Amateur Hockey Association (NHAHA), western Pennsylvania's premier amateur ice hockey organization, has provided a memorable hockey experience to thousands of area youths since 1964. The organization provides top instruction to boys and girls of all skill levels through its Pittsburgh Vipers and Pittsburgh Viper Stars programs. Devoted to promoting the growth of amateur ice hockey on a local and national level, NHAHA is a proud member of the Pittsburgh Amateur Hockey League, Great Lakes Hockey League and USA Hockey and offers competition at the Tier I & Tier II (AAA, AA, A and B) levels, as well as in-house program and the USA Hockey Initiation Program (for beginner hockey players).

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