

Hurricane Warning

Vol. 7, No. 5

The official newsletter of the Carolina Hurricanes Booster Club

January 2004

Tippins working to fill seats at RBC Center

Despite an appearance Dec. 22 by American Idol sensation Clay Aiken, the Carolina Hurricanes are still singing the blues when it comes to attendance.

After a seven-game homestand and with half of the team's 41 home games already played, the Hurricanes trail only the Mario Lemieux-less Pittsburgh Penguins in attendance this hockey season, drawing an average of just over 12,000 fans to games at the RBC Center in Raleigh, according to the National Hockey League. Take away the team's second sellout of the season – that pre-Christmas game where Aiken sang the National Anthem and three other songs during the two intermissions – and the average is closer to 11,650. That's slightly more than 20 percent below last season's average attendance of 14,845 (according to the NHL) and a full 25 percent under attendance figures as calculated by the team in the 18,370-seat arena.

Fans have filled only about 65 percent of the seats at the RBC Center so far this season. Only the struggling Chicago Blackhawks (67 percent) and the Penguins (70 percent; it'd be significantly higher if the injured Lemieux was playing) are in that range in a league where average attendance, despite being down 3 percent, is hovering at around 82 percent of capacity.

But despite a poor record, a shaky economy and unofficial league figures that suggest otherwise, the Hurricanes are still in the middle of the pack in attendance. That's according to Scott Tippins, the director of ticket sales for the Hurricanes. As new

Head Coach Peter Laviolette continues to work on the on-ice product, Tippins and his staff work off the ice to draw fans and fan support. I spoke with Tippins over the Christmas holiday about attendance and his effort to increase it, about the impact of corporate ticket sales and the possible lock-out that threatens the 2004-2005 season.

Attendance was up last season, despite a losing record. So how did renewals go, and where is the season-ticket sales base right now?

Scott Tippins: With the run to the Stanley Cup Finals we had

tremendous growth in our fan base and average attendance for the 2002-2003 season. The excitement that was evident in the Triangle community after that run translated directly to ticket sales in all categories: full season tickets, mini season tickets, group sales and individual ticket sales. Unfortunately, with the injuries and other factors that led to a disappointing record last season, coupled with the continued soft economy, we have felt the effects in our attendance this

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Scott Tippins, director of ticket sales for the Hurricanes

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Next CHBC meeting: Tuesday, Feb. 18th • 7 p.m., RBC Center

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Newsletter deadline:
Friday, January 30th
For the
February 2004 Edition

President's Message / John Gallagher

December was a dramatic month for the Canes where fans witnessed the departure of Paul Maurice and welcomed new Head Coach Peter Laviolette to the franchise. It was the first coaching change made since the Canes came to North Carolina. I was saddened to see Coach Maurice leave under the circumstances, but I have every confidence he will resurface as a head coach in the NHL at some point. His mark on this franchise will always be one of great joy when we reminisce about the 2001-02 season. No one has taken the Hurricanes to such heights...

Peter Laviolette may be the spark that can turn this season around for our team. Coincidentally, Coach Laviolette served as the head coach for the Wheeling Nailors of the ECHL during the 1997-98 season. Wheeling is my hometown and it is the place where I started to become a fan of the game of hockey. During my college years from 1991-1995, I served as the parking attendant at the Wheeling Civic Center, where I saved front row parking spots for the players' wives and families. The guys were always kind to me and gave me tickets so I could get into see the games after I filled up the lots. The world really is a small place!

The Booster Club and Hurricanes event calendar

Sunday, January 25th – Booster Club Kids Party with Stormy starts at 12:30 p.m. sharp prior to the Buffalo Sabres game and is open to Kids of the Booster Club ages 10 and under. Admission: \$10 per child – must be a member (paid admission includes a parking pass). The kids will get a slice of pizza, soda, and cake along with a Stormy and Booster Club gift pack. Please have your paid reservation in by Sunday, January 18th, for the Kids party.

Sunday, February 8th – CHBC Annual All-Star Party at Playmakers Sports Café across the street from Meredith College. We will have several raffles, prizes, and trivia contests to entertain while we watch the 2004 NHL All-Star Game.

Friday, February 13th – See the **Lowell Lockmonsters** play in Norfolk, Virginia! Cost is \$30 per person, which includes bus trip and ticket to the game!

Please contact Cheryl Mulhern at cherylm@hurricanesboosters.org if you are interested in volunteering at the Booster Club booth located behind section 110. We need some assistance with recruiting new members and selling CHBC merchandise.

Our next membership meeting will not be until Tuesday, Feb 18th, at the RBC Center. Enjoy all the hockey in January! There's a lot of it!

We'll see you all at the All-Star Party! And that's hockey to me...

Carolina Hurricanes Cool Bar Stops

Wednesday, Jan. 21 - Canes @ New Jersey 7:30 p.m.
Scooters Grill and Bar, 1911 Sego Court, Raleigh. (919) 954-2171.

Saturday, Jan 31. - Canes @ Detroit 7 p.m.
Sunset Grill, 5850 Fayetteville Street, Durham. (919) 544-8585.

Monday, Feb 23. - Canes @ Montreal 7:30 p.m.
Vincent's, 3911 Capital Boulevard, Raleigh. (919)876-6700.

*Please support the Hurricanes when they're on the road by attending.
The Canes provide the excitement with raffles and contests!*

Changes will take time under new coach Laviolette

With the Hurricanes off to a slow start under new coach Peter Laviolette, I think it's important to bear in mind just how hard it is to change the habits of almost nine years. Paul Maurice had some success as the head coach of the Carolina Hurricanes, mostly as a result of a very defensive approach to the entire game. Forwards were drilled to put caution before attacking on the priority chart, and every possession revolved around defensive positioning. The Canes managed to take that system all the way to the Cup Finals in 2002, but were simply unable to score enough goals to make a recovery from the doldrums on the 2002-03 season.

Enter Peter Laviolette, who's only stint as a head coach in the NHL was with the New York Islanders from 2001-2003. He steered the Isles to playoff appearances in both of his seasons in Uniondale, but early round exits in the playoffs were his undoing. Under Laviolette, the Islanders played a fairly aggressive game in all zones, preferring puck pressure to the trap, generating goals off of turnovers caused by a fierce forecheck.

That's about 180 degrees from the mindset that the Hurricanes have had under Maurice, and while so-called systems in hockey really aren't all that different team to team, changing the way a team approaches something as fundamental as the forecheck clearly will take some time.

Here's an illustration for those of you who play tennis. As a young man I played a great deal of tennis and had a big, but flat serve. When my timing was on, I could pressure an opponent with my first serve, but when things weren't clicking, I didn't really have a reliable and effective second serve upon which to fall back.

I took a series of lessons over the course of a week at Hilton Head Island with a good teaching professional. She recognized my problem right away and taught me how to control a spinning serve that was more adaptable a variety of conditions. The habits of my entire young life made this change problematic, but after about six months of playing like garbage I was able to take my game to a new level.

Golfers will also recognize this syndrome, as often what little grasp we have of our golf games can go awry after a lesson with even the best teacher.

Point is, often times things get a bit worse before they get better when we set out to make even necessary changes in sports.

Expect the Hurricanes to eventually "get" the style that Coach Laviolette prefers, but also expect

some growing pains as they adjust to a new approach.

Change the NHL Game?

I've seen an awful lot of articles in hockey publications lately spouting off a multitude of ideas about how to change the game at the NHL level to produce a more flowing, offensive brand of hockey. What the heck? I've got this forum, so I might as well pitch in my own two cents.

First and foremost I think that the NHL needs to undo a change they made mostly to accommodate the game of Wayne Gretzky. The three feet that was added behind each goal line to provide more room for guys like Gretzky and Francis, unfortunately took six feet out of the neutral zone. This had the unintended consequence of allowing neutral zone traps to have to cover six less feet of ice, making it easier for defensive teams to get to the passing lanes as the team with the puck breaks out of their own zone. More passes are required to break down the defense and that led to a style of play where more far offense is generated from turnovers than from rushes up the length of the ice. Obviously, more turnovers mean less flow to the game. Restore those six feet in the neutral zone and I think you'd go a long way towards helping the game recapture some of its flow.

Now, with those six feet restored, let's add another six feet by widening the bluelines and the center ice redline to three feet. This proposal is already approved to be tested in the AHL next season, and while it might look a bit goofy at first, wider lines will allow for additional room in the neutral zone without whittling away any more space from the offensive zone. It's a difficult concept to explain without a visual aide, but since neither a player nor the puck enters a new zone in hockey without fully crossing any of the lines, making the lines wider effectively stretches the zones in two directions at once. I strongly feel that the additional space in the neutral zone would make it more difficult for trapping systems to bog down the flow of the game, and would allow forwards to once again generate speed on the attack. That would lead to more offensive chances, which seem to me to be the entire point of the discussion.

Other proposals like bigger nets, larger ice surfaces and smaller goalie equipment should be put on hold until the dimensions of the neutral zone are maximized.

'The Goal: Bobby Orr and the Most Famous Shot in Stanley Cup History'

by Andrew Podnieks & Harry Sinden

Published by Triumph Books; 44 pages, \$16.95

This is a book with a lot of pictures. In fact, every photo is the same event from a different angle. Sound like a boring book so far? Not if you are talking about the legendary Bobby Orr and the famous Stanley Cup-Winning Goal of 1970!

The Goal, by Andrew Podnieks and published in November 2003, is a book every hockey fan should own. It reads like a 5-minute press conference with every player, coach, referee, and photographer that had a great view of a moment that defines the drama that goes with winning the Stanley Cup. The admiration these individuals have for Bobby Orr is captured by their comments.

Former Blues Defenseman Noel Picard, who got his stick caught around Orr's ankle to propel him through the air, said this of the Orr goal: "If you're going to get scored on, I don't mind as long as it's Bobby Orr. To my mind, he was the greatest hockey player in the world."

The legend of the Bobby Orr goal carries a lot of mystique, which I can't begin to imagine because I was not born at the time. My guess is because Boston had not won the Cup since 1941 prior to 1970, a pretty long wait. Orr also won the Art Ross Trophy with 120 points that season, an impossible feat for a defenseman (or any NHL player) by today's standards. It also has a lot to do with the way Orr played and changed the game with his talent.

There's a wonderful foreword by Harry Sinden, who coached the 1970 Stanley Cup Champion Bruins. He describes the Bruins' performance for that game as sub-par and that the game never should have gone into overtime in the first place.

A few disappointing things around this goal that bothered me was learning that the Bruins were already heavy favorites to win and the Blues had

been to the Finals three seasons straight and lost each time. In 1970, Orr's goal gave them the sweep. I had a hard time with that because I always believed this goal was so special and those facts almost cheapened it for me.

However, remembering the 1996 Finals where Colorado defeated the upstart Florida Panthers in overtime in Game 4, I recall some drama around that win for the Avalanche. That is hardly a close comparison, but it is all I can relate to in 15 years of watching NHL hockey.

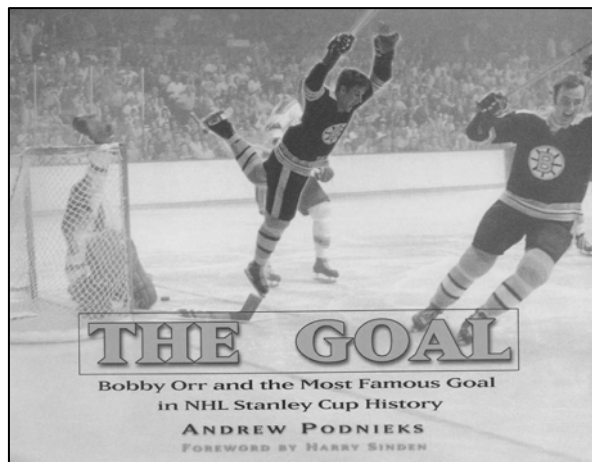
I won't give away too much of what I learned, but the most fascinating part of the book was how photographer Ray Lussier nabbed the famous shot (his is the one most often seen). Lussier had been assigned a

stool in the east end of the rink, but the Bruins attacked on the west end during the overtime period.

Lussier ended up with a prime spot to take the photo all because another photographer got up to get a beer. The guy who sat there came back right after the goal was scored and demanded his seat back.

Lussier gave the man his seat back and told him: "It's all yours. I got what I needed."

The Goal attempts to capture a defining moment for one of the greatest to ever play the game: Bobby Orr. While the series already belonged to the Bruins and the poor play by the Bruins in Game 4 set up the overtime drama, the book does a great job describing how Bobby Orr bailed out his team by getting the game-winner, something great players do regardless of circumstance. That is how Legends are made.



THE GOAL focuses on the story – and the photographs – of Bobby Orr's Cup-winning goal in the 1970 finals.

Maurice is out and Laviolette is in: what do you think?



Can't say I know much about Peter Laviolette so I am not sure if he is a good choice to replace Paul Maurice. I am not too sorry to see Maurice leave after the last season and a half, even though he was the longest tenured coach in the NHL and had a few winning seasons with the Canes. I am not a hockey-coaching expert so I can't say why we haven't scored more goals and won more games while we are 3rd in the league in shots on goal and are pretty respectable in goals against. Maybe Maurice should have tinkered more with style of play rather than line combinations. Bottom line is I want to win and if Laviolette can do that, kudos!

Ken-iac LaFlamme

In response to coach 'Mo's firing...I have to say that it was long overdue. Don't get me wrong I liked coach 'Mo, but he didn't motivate the guys enough. I was there at the game and I saw the team play with more heart, than they had played since we played in the playoffs. I think Coach Laviolette is going to do just fine here in Carolina.

Angela Wood

Laviolette is not GREAT, and Mo is not BAD. It merely may have been time for a fresh point of view. End of story.

Terry Byrne

I think it was time for a change. Paul Maurice has done a great job for the Hurricanes, but the production was not there. Peter Laviolette will bring more excitement to the game with his up-tempo style and in turn, bring this team to the playoffs.

Brett Ciancanelli

Coach Mo was a great asset for the Canes. He was as important a part in the run to the finals as any player. However, he said it himself, sometimes your message stops getting through to the players. While I don't think the players would consciously agree with this, I believe this is exactly what happened. In addition, I think that Coach Mo will coach again in this league and given the right situation, will be very successful. Solid coaches sometimes get fired, or are asked to leave...just ask Scotty Bowman. Coach Laviolette definitely brings an air of aggressiveness to this team, which I think is good. We are solid defensively, which I think should allow us to open things up a bit more and take more risks in the offensive zone. I think that by pushing the puck up the ice, and aggressively attacking the net, this team will get more quality chances. Playoffs or not, this should be an entertaining team to watch!

Nick Gregory

■ **CanePoll**

Which of the following statements do you agree with the most?

- Peter Laviolette will turn the Hurricanes around because he's a great coach.**
(8 votes)
- The Hurricanes could have brought in a cardboard cut-out of Scotty Bowman and they'd get better. ANY change would have resulted in the team coming alive.**
(5 votes)
- The Hurricanes' record won't improve that much with a new coach. It's not Mo's fault, it's the players.**
(3 votes)
- Watch for a backslide. The Canes will fall apart and their record will get worse as the season progresses.**
(0 votes)

Calgary hockey trip from A-to-Z

Awesome. The only word to describe spending four days and nights in Calgary in western Canada, taking in two Flames games with Darrell Spain, my best friend from high school – one game between the Flames and my Hurricanes and the other between the Flames and his favorite team, the Colorado Avalanche. What made the trip especially awesome, though, was spending time with Martin Gelinás, the former Cane winger who is now helping lead the Flames toward the playoffs for the first time in seven years.

Banff. The only non-hockey part of our time in Alberta was a day trip to this resort in the Canadian Rockies about 90 minutes outside Calgary. Seeing the Rockies grow taller as we traveled west on the Trans-Canada highway was spectacular. And the gondola ride 2,200 vertical feet up to a mountain top was a thriller.

Canada. Where hockey isn't just the national pastime, but a national obsession. Best of all was finding hockey games, highlights or hockey talk on Canadian television just about any time during the day or night. The day we arrived, the Flames were front-page news (complete with a picture of Marty) in *The Calgary Sun*. "C" also stands for cold, which it was when we arrived – about 17 degrees Fahrenheit that first afternoon, although it did "warm up" to around freezing by the weekend thanks to a Chinook.

Dinner with Chuck. How about two hours of great Italian food and hockey talk with Chuck Kaiton, the voice of the Hurricanes? That was the highlight of the night Darrell and I arrived. Chuck graciously accepted our dinner invitation and regaled us with stories of some of his experiences from more than a quarter-century in the game. There's no question he's the best in the business.

Erratic. My driving on Calgary's confusing numbered streets and avenues. I almost got us killed coming into the city from the airport when I missed a turn and drove our Ford Explorer onto a sidewalk just above the Bow River. Thankfully, there were no pedestrians (or policemen) nearby at the time.

Finally! After years of seeing "Tim Hortons" on the dasher boards of Canadian (and some US) rinks, I finally got to go to one. Darrell and I started off each morning with a two-block walk to a Tim Hortons

for coffee and donuts. Who needs Starbucks? As a long-time fan of the late Tim Horton, the great Maple Leaf Hall-of-Fame defenseman, it was a thrill. The French vanilla cappuccino was the best I've had.

Great Greetings. Marty worked it out for us to attend pre-game skates on Thursday and Saturday prior to the games against Carolina and Colorado, and everyone really made us feel welcome. The security guards in and around the Saddledome, after realizing we were friends of Marty's, rolled out the red carpet for us whenever they saw us. "Yeah, you guys are friends of Martin's, come on in!"

Hardware. You can accumulate a lot of it over a long NHL career, and Marty has plenty. But the silver stick he got from the Flames for his 1,000th game – the traditional gift when a player reaches that milestone – was spectacular. And heavy.

Invitations. Darrell and I were invited to Marty's house for a post-game party on Thursday night, following the game against the Hurricanes. All the Flames players, and their significant others, were there, along with some Flames team officials, friends of the Gelinás family from Calgary and Vancouver and some of the folks who worked for Gelinás Construction, Marty's off-season business venture – about 60 people in all. We left at around 12:30 a.m. (along with most of the crowd) and got another surprise invitation on the way out the door: could Darrell and I come back for dinner Friday night, Marty asked? You bet. So on Friday, Darrell and I joined Marty and his wife Jane, two of the Gelinás' neighbors from Cary, Marty's parents and Jane's mom for a great spaghetti dinner and wine from Marty's wine cellar. Jane cooked, Christmas music played in the background, and we had a wonderful night overlooking Calgary's bright lights.

Jane Gelinás, Marty's wife, was a gracious host and made us feel very welcome, like part of the family. She was the perfect host.

Krzysztof Oliwa, the well-traveled enforcer who signed with Calgary as a free agent over the summer, gave Darrell and me plenty of memories at the party on Thursday night. This guy is crazy. We talked to Oliwa about fighting and his take on the toughest guys in the NHL ("You mean besides me?" he asked. "I go out there every game convinced that



Bill Horner (left), Martin Gelinás and Darrell Spain after the Flames/Avs game

I'm the toughest guy on the ice." No question about it: he loves to mix it up.

Lafleur, the Flower, as in Guy Lafleur, who called Marty to congratulate him on his milestone. Lafleur, the great Montreal Canadiens' Hall-of-Famer, was Marty's idol growing up in Quebec.

Mr. Wonderful. Jane bought one of the "Mr. Wonderful" dolls for herself for Christmas and showed it to us, generating lots of laughs. Mr. Wonderful is a doll for women that they can squeeze to make it say all these wonderful things men don't usually say, like – "Here, you take the remote. It doesn't matter what we watch as long as I'm with you," and "Let's just cuddle tonight." We all got a big laugh about it, and the guys let Jane know which sayings they'd never, ever make themselves. (My wife Lee Ann and my sister got a big kick out of this story, but it wasn't as funny on Christmas morning when Lee Ann opened a "Mr. Wonderful" from my sister.)

Never, or hardly ever...during our four-plus days in Calgary, we saw only two policemen and never saw a funeral home. What do they know up there that we don't?

One-thousandth game stick. Following Saturday's game against Colorado, as we made our way downstairs with Jane to tell the Gelinás family goodbye, Marty emerged from the locker room with a stick – one of eight he used during his 1,000th game. "This is for you," he said, handing it to me. I was stunned. It'll occupy a special place on my "Gelinás wall" in my basement.

Pengrowth Saddledome, where the Flames play in Calgary, is a unique building. We sat directly behind the Flames' bench, up against the glass, for the game against the Canes and in the corner three rows up for the game against the Avs. There are no security guards patting you down – everyone's there to watch great hockey. My favorite part of the arena was just outside the locker room, where the players gather before taking the ice – many reminders of the Flames' Stanley Cup season and some motivational reminders of what it takes to hoist the Cup.

Quash, as in putting to rest, the trade rumors involving Jarome Iginla. I had the chance to meet Iginla last year in Atlanta and again this year, and I can tell you that he's a quality individual who puts up goals in large quantities. It would be quazy to trade him.

Rene and Lize, Marty's parents, who made the trip from Shawinigan in Quebec for the week. A delightful couple who are clearly proud of their boy.

Sign here, please. Flame practices are open to the public and players sign going on and off the ice. I didn't see a single Calgary player turn down a request, though Carolina and Colorado players weren't as accommodating. I'm sure there were more than a few dealers and eBayers there – some of the folks we saw at both practices had quite a system worked out for getting cards and pucks autographed. Darrell got all of the Avalanche players he wanted and I got a few Flames' pucks signed. But both of us felt funny asking Marty for autographs. "Pass the spaghetti sauce, and, while you're at it, would you mind signing this?" I did talk one of the Saddledome employees



Bill and Rene Gelinás with Marty's 'Silver Stick'

out of two practice pucks when the Flames came off the ice on Saturday, and Marty signed those for me. His son, Matty, also got two pucks – but Marty would only sign one for him.

TSN, Canada's equivalent of ESPN. The hour-long "Sports Center"-type broadcast has 48 minutes of hockey and 12 minutes of the minor sports – football, baseball and basketball. Heaven!

Under-rated, under-appreciated. I was disappointed the Calgary fans didn't give Marty more of an ovation during the 1,000th game ceremony. But I can assure you the fans of his former teams – specifically Carolina and Vancouver – made a lot of noise for him.

Villain. Darrell wore his Avs' sweater to the game on Saturday, but no one gave him a hard time – except Marty, who good-naturedly teased Darrell when we took a few pictures after the game.

Wine. Marty's very nice wine cellar contains mostly Cabernet, so we picked up a few bottles of an Australian cab en route to dinner.

Xenophobes. Nope, everyone in Canada treated us foreigners like friends during our time north of the border. Some people we met had a hard time believing we came all the way up there for hockey, though. (Obviously they weren't fans.)

Yes, I'd definitely go back. The trip (through Minneapolis) wasn't bad at all – about five hours' flying time. Calgary's beautiful and friendly, and I highly recommend the hockey.

ZZZZZs... I returned home and slept well, thanks to a great trip (and not having Darrell's snoring to keep me awake!).

Weekes in the lead as Fan Favorite balloting heats up

With the holiday passing us and good cheer being spread all over, the fan favorite race is heating up as many boosters supported their favorite players by voting for their fan favorite. We saw the lead change hands three times in a four-game period, with the leader for most of the season Danny Markov, Mr. Consistency on the ice, losing the top spot to one of last years contenders, Kevyn Adams, who just exemplifies the hard work and dedication while bringing a smile and joy to each game. He was unseated by our goalie that has kept the Canes in many a game and is having an all-star caliber season, Kevin Weekes. Shady 80 is second in the league with four shutouts and his minuscule GAA(goals against average) of 1.97 is third in conference behind only Martin Brodeur and Robert Esche. –

Fan Favorite Standings

1. Kevin Weekes
2. Kevyn Adams
3. Danny Markov
4. Eric Staal
5. Ron Francis

Member Focus / PATRICK DROLLINGER

Patrick Drollinger, CHBC Vice President

Patrick Drollinger is a Booster in every sense of the word. He has been a member of the club since October 1999 and is currently serving his 3rd consecutive year on the Booster Club's Board as the Vice President.

Patrick can often be seen holding a clacker, yelling about the power of sevens, and out in the parking lot rallying the troops for a tailgate. In my opinion, he is often the glue that holds this club together on some nights. He is always quick to man the famous Booster Club Booth behind section 110 when a certain President is running late trying to get his kids in the car to get to the game.

He was especially saddened with the departure of Bates Battaglia last season, but Pat's favorite hockey player is Mr. Overtime, Niclas Wallin! He sticks by his picks even when that player is often the healthy scratch and he certainly takes a whole lot of punishment from his fellow Caniacs for this decision.

"He is a defenseman who can actually shoot hard on the net for this team and positional hockey on a team that many times is caught out of position," said Patrick. "He's never going to be an all-star, but he is a great 4th to 6th man defensive guy for the Canes."

Patrick's quick to latch on to the numbers, especially with all the 2-1 hockey games in the month of December, and he loves to talk about the power of the number seven. Sesame Street would love to have him, but the Booster Club refuses to give him up. He knows just the right one-liner to say when you've had a bad day.

Most important, I am proud to call Pat a friend. He is the kind of person that will be there for you when you need him the most. He makes being a Hurricanes fan and Booster Club Member a lot of fun.

- John Gallagher, CHBC President



Patrick Drollinger poses with Storm Squad Member Eliza at the RBC Center

TIPPINS

Continued from front page

season. Some of the fans who purchased ticket packages last season decided to purchase tickets on a game-by-game basis this year. With that being said, the Triangle community is still very interested in the Hurricanes. Our TV ratings continue to climb, and our website continues to receive a tremendous amount of page views. We currently have a season ticket base just over 7,500, which puts us in the middle of the pack of the NHL. This number includes full season tickets, full-season equivalents derived through mini plans and seats from luxury suites currently sold in the building on a full season basis. We are looking forward to a good second half to the 2003-2004 season, which hopefully includes a playoff appearance, and we'll be ready to capture that excitement with fans who want to rejoin the Hurricanes family with a season ticket package.

What impact has the recession had on corporate sales, and - given the apparent recovery that's now under way - what do you see ahead for the rest of the season?

Corporate ticket sales make up a good portion of our season ticket base and we really felt the impact of the soft economy this past summer. Though the economy started to turn at least two years ago we were able to maintain a strong sales effort through the NHL All-Star Crusade during the summer of 2001 and through the euphoria of the 2002 Stanley Cup Finals. After the Stanley Cup Finals, even though the recession was in full swing, many companies, and individuals for that matter, did not want to relinquish their ticket plans in the hopes that the Stanley Cup would find a home here in the Triangle the following season. That feeling changed, however, after our disappointing season in 2002-2003.

Over the last few months, as the economy has started to gain speed, we have had an uptick in ticket purchases by companies. This is most evident, at this point in the season, in our corporate group outings and party suite rentals. As the economy continues to grow we are optimistic this will help with season ticket sales for the 2004-2005 season.

What's the relationship between winning and ticket sales?

There is definitely a relationship between the two. Everyone loves to cheer for and see their team win. However, as a sales team, we cannot center our sales efforts around wins and losses. The message we promote is the overall experience of attending a Hurricanes game at the RBC Center such as the in-game entertainment, the cleanliness of the facility, a safe, family-friendly environment, and the

opportunity to see the best hockey players in the world. In addition, win or lose, a Hurricanes game presents fans a terrific opportunity to close business deals, thank and reward clients and employees, and spend quality time with family and friends.

The target of a season-ticket-holder base of 12,000 was the key to getting an All-Star game in Raleigh. Is that still on?

The NHL has confirmed that the Triangle area will be receiving the NHL All-Star game in the near future. They have not provided a specific date, but I feel the success of the NHL Draft, which will take place at the RBC Center on June 26-27, 2004, will be closely watched and could play a part in how soon we are awarded the All-Star game. The steady progression of other planned developments within the Triangle could play a part as well, most notably the proposed new Convention Center/Hotel project in downtown Raleigh.

What are your marketing plans for the spring, especially given the possible lock-out for 2004-2005?

We have just started to focus in our on marketing and sales plans for the 2004-2005 season. The timing of the expiration of the current Collective Bargaining Agreement (September 15, 2004) ensures that we will be actively seeking renewals and selling new tickets throughout the summer. So in that context, it will be business as usual for our sales staff...

We realize that people may be more hesitant to renew their seats or buy new seats given the uncertainty that lies ahead. In broad terms, I would expect our marketing plan to address that uncertainty, and I would expect a ticket refund policy that would alleviate concerns fans may have with renewing their seats or buying new seats for a season that may not take place.

In the final analysis, the changes that will be sought in collective bargaining will be sought in the best interests of the game and all those who are associated with it – including our fans and business partners. Our management and ownership are not concerned about, and don't expect, a backlash for trying to make things better. In fact, we are more concerned about what will happen with our fans and business partners if we do not address our problems. It is important for our club that we maintain the ability to be competitive, to be able to compete for the Stanley Cup on a regular basis, and to be able to do it in a way that makes business sense for our ownership. What that "system" might look like, I will leave to the people charged with negotiating the CBA.

With the arrival of 2004 comes new and exciting trading card releases. This month we will focus on a "sneak preview" of the new products on the market.

2003-04 SP Authentic

The SP Authentic set will include a 158-card base set. This will include a Future Watch and Signed Future Watch subset. Both will be serial numbered out of 900. In addition to the base set is the following:

Inserts - 10th Anniversary, Tribute, Breakout Seasons, and Tradition.

Autographs – Sign of the Times, Sign of the Times Duals, Sign of the Times Triples, Future Watch Patch Signatures, Special Cuts. *Each box will include two autographs.*

SP Limited Parallels – Base cards, 10th Anniversary, Tribute, Breakout Seasons, SP Tradition, Future Watch, and Signed Future Watch.

Suggested Retail Price is \$4.99 for a five-card pack and scheduled to be released in mid-February.

2003-04 Bowman/Bowman Chrome

The Bowman/Bowman Chrome set will include a 156-card Bowman base set and 156-card Bowman Chrome base set. This will include a 36-card rookie 10-card rookie autographed subset. In addition to the base set is the following:

Parallels – Bowman Gold, Chrome Refractors, Autographed Chrome Refractors, Chrome X-Factor, Autographed Chrome X-Factor, Gold Chrome Refractors, and Autographed Gold Chrome Refractors.

Relic Cards – Fabric of the Future, Fabric of the Future Patch, Future Rivals, Future Rivals Patch, Premier Performance, Premier Performance Patch, and Goal to Goal.

Other – Signs of the Future and Bowman Scouting Report.

Suggested Retail Price is \$4 for a seven-card pack and is scheduled to be released February 9.

2003-04 Upper Deck Honor Roll

The UD Honor Roll set will include a 191-card base set. This will include Students of the Game, Class Reunion, Head of the Class, Freshman Class and Dean's List Jerseys. In addition to the base set is the following:

Inserts – Grade A Jerseys, Grade A Triple Jerseys, and Signature Class.

Suggested Retail Price is \$2.99 for a five-card pack and scheduled to be released in early-February. *Each Retail Box will include two jerseys per box.*

2003-04 Crown Royale

The Crown Royale set will include a 136-card base set. This will include 36 rookies. Hobby pack singles have a gold foil highlight and retail pack singles have a silver foil highlight. In addition to the base set is the following:

Parallels – Blue Foil Vets, Red Foil Vets, and Red Foil Rookies.

Inserts – Game Jerseys, Patch Cards, and 100 Pacific Complete.

Suggested Retail Price is \$6.99 for an eight-card hobby pack and \$2.99 for a four-card retail pack. Scheduled to be released February 4.

2003-04 Upper Deck Series 2

The UD Series 2 set will include a 230-card base set. This will include 30 Young Guns. In addition to the base set is the following:

Inserts – Magic Moments, Tough Customers, Power Zone, Ice Icons, Highlight Heroes, and All-Star Class.

Memorabilia – Franchise Fabrics, Game Jerseys, Highlight Heroes, Ice Icons, Memorable Matchups, Signature Jerseys, Rookie Threads Signed, and Patch Cards.

Parallels – Canada Exclusives, Young Guns Canada Exclusives, UD Exclusives, Young Guns Exclusives, UD HG, and Young Guns UD HG.

Suggested Retail Price is \$2.99 for an eight-card pack. Scheduled for released in late-January.