



United States Hockey League

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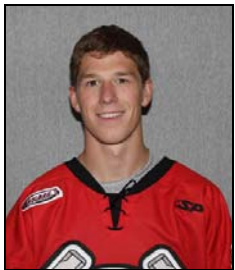
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USHL NAMES 2008-09 AWARD WINNERS

GRAND FORKS, ND: The United States Hockey League is pleased to announce its award winners for the 2008-09 season. Following the 60-game USHL regular season, one which is a grind physically and mentally, the USHL has honored six players, as well as the coach, general manager and executive of the year. One team has also received the honor of organization of the year. In addition, the league has named its All-USHL first and second teams as well as its all-rookie team.

“What an extraordinary group of award winners,” said Commissioner Skip Prince. “Congratulations to all of the players – Andrew, Louis, John, Mike Lee and Mike Walsh, and Jeff – on your individual accolades. To earn top honors in a League as talent-laden as we’ve been this year is a tribute to your collective hard work and intensity. Special congratulations to Dean Blais and Jon Cooper – not only have you guys been selected as the League’s outstanding coach and general manager, respectively – but you did it in your rookie years, and your respective teams reflect your excellence. To Jim Pflug, it’s our privilege to have you on board with the Lincoln Stars, and your Executive of the Year award is well-deserved. Finally, thanks as well as congratulations to Ace Brandt and his vision in returning Fargo to the USHL – not just as a team, but as a Force to be reckoned with, and our Organization of the Year.”

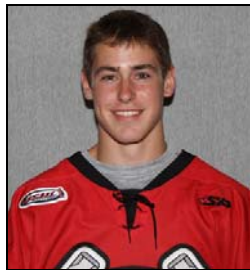
The player awards, as well as the all-league honors were determined by a vote of the league's coaches. The coaches also determined the winners of the coach and general manager of the year awards. The executive of the year and organization of the year awards were voted on by the individual team presidents.



Miller



Leblanc



Moore



Lee



Walsh



Teglia

Andrew Miller – Chicago Steel

B2 Networks USHL Player of the Year

CCM USHL Forward of the Year

Miller has been out front in the league's scoring race all season long, setting the pace early and never looking back. Miller is one of just five 30-goal scorers in the league and broke the 80-point barrier, a mark that has been reached just three times in the last six seasons. In 58 games this

season, the native of Bloomfield Hills, Mich. has scored 32 goals and added 50 assists totaling 82 points. In addition to leading the league in points, Miller also led the league in assists.

“Andrew has been the player that has carried the offense for Chicago all year long. He has shown time and time again that he has been the best forward on the ice in almost every game this season,” said Steel Head Coach Steve Poapst. “Not only is he a great offensive player, he is a true leader on and off the ice, and a deserving recipient of these awards.”

Miller is committed to Yale University.

Louis Leblanc – Omaha Lancers

The Collegian Group USHL Rookie of the Year

Many players made a mark in their first USHL season in 2008-09, but none more so than Louis Leblanc. Leblanc netted a hat trick in his sixth USHL game and had back-to-back three-goal games in February. The Kirkland, Quebec has scored 28 goals and 59 points in 60 games for the Lancers. The Lancers' most valuable player has a potential future in the NHL, as he is ranked 18th among all North American skaters.

“Louis had a terrific first season in the USHL that saw him establish himself as one of the better and most tenacious players in the league,” said Omaha Head Coach Bliss Littler. “He has an outstanding stick and a nose for the net. His work ethic is unmatched and he truly understands the meaning of the word ‘team.’”

Leblanc is committed Harvard University.

John Moore – Chicago Steel

ProGuard USHL Defenseman of the Year

Moore entered his second USHL season as one of the up-and-coming stars in the league. By the mid-point, he was the highest ranked skater in the league according to NHL Central Scouting. Moore scored 14 goals and 39 points, tying him for fourth in scoring among USHL defensemen. A native of Winnetka, Ill., Moore's offensive prowess and skating ability complement his often overlooked defensive abilities. Moore is ranked eighth among all North American skaters for the 2009 NHL Draft, to be held in Montreal in June.

“John is a truly gifted defenseman who has worked extremely hard to reach the level he is at today. He is such a great kid on and off the ice and it has been a pleasure working with him and watching him grow as a player and person over the past two seasons,” Poapst said. “He continues to work on and improve his game each and every day he comes to the rink. He is a very deserving recipient of this award.”

Moore is committed to Colorado College.

Mike Lee – Fargo Force

Stauber's Goalcrease USHL Goaltender of the Year

Lee is the fourth highest ranked goaltender in North America according to NHL Central Scouting, and he has played like it. The backbone of the USHL's newest member, Lee has been one of the forces that have guided Fargo from expansion team to playoff team in a few short months. The native of Roseau, Minn. has carried the workload in goal in 2008-09, going 26-15-4 with a 2.40 goals against average, a .918 save percentage and three shutouts.

"I'm fired up for him because he's a great kid. Mike gives us a chance to win every night because of his mental preparation and consistency. He is fundamentally sound and is very coachable," said Force Head Coach Dean Blais.

Lee is committed to St. Cloud State University.

Mike Walsh – Chicago Steel

USHL Curt Hammer Award

The Curt Hammer Award is given annually to the player who distinguishes himself in the USHL as the most gentlemanly player, both on and off the ice. He demonstrates outstanding performance skills, pride and determination. The award goes to the individual who best reflects the goals of the USHL, his team and the organization. His performance reflects a desire to achieve success all within the established rules of the USHL and the accepted bounds of courteous conduct.

Mike Walsh was returning to the Chicago Steel for his third USHL season and as one of the team captains. He didn't even make it through half the year, however, as he suffered a shoulder injury that required season-ending surgery. Still, Walsh continued in his role as team captain, was with the team on a daily basis and did what he needed to do to help motivate his teammates. In addition, his injury allowed him further opportunity to participate in volunteer and community events, including visits to schools, autograph signings and working with the area's youth players. He was also active in the team's school and library reading programs.

"I am very happy for Mike to be honored with this award. It was unfortunate that his season ended with injury but his heart never left this team or the organization. He has been missed on the ice the second half of the season but has continued to be a leader within our locker room," Poapst said.

Walsh is committed to the United States Air Force Academy.

Jeff Teglia – Omaha Lancers

USHL Scholar-Athlete Award

Teglia receives the USHL Scholar-Athlete Award in the second year that the award was handed out. A first-year Lancer from Bloomingdale, Ill., Teglia has been a workhorse in goal for Omaha, appearing in 39 games and going 20-9-7 with a 3.00 goals against average and an .892 save percentage. Off the ice, Teglia carries a 3.5 grade point average while taking advanced pre-professional courses in law, finance and calculus in addition to his regular course load. Teglia has been taking his classes in a condensed, four-hour day, which has cut his amount of missed class time down to just three-quarters of a day this year.

Teglia has also been an active volunteer in the Omaha area, participating in activities that benefit the Alzheimer's Association, Special Olympics and Omaha youth hockey. He was also an integral part of the team's "Diaper Drive."

"Jeff is an extremely competitive goaltender that has an outstanding work ethic in all aspects of his life," said Littler. "He has shown a lot of growth and maturity on the ice this season while sustaining a solid academic record in school. He is a kid with exceptional character and a great pick for this award."



Blais



Cooper



Pflug

Dean Blais – Fargo Force

KwikRink USHL Coach of the Year

Coaching isn't an easy profession. The adage says that coaches are hired to be fired. With that in mind, there is likely no tougher coaching job than that which comes with guiding an expansion team. Dean Blais did just that. The head coach and general manager of the first-year Fargo Force, Blais came into the league with a young team, one that struggled to win games and generate offense in the early stages of the season, all the while spending the first month on the road while construction on their arena was being completed. Since that first month, however, the Force have taken off and not only qualified for Clark Cup Playoffs, but also sealed home-ice advantage in the first round. Not bad for a franchise still in its infancy.

"I couldn't be happier for Dean and the USHL as a whole as I think there were a number of new coaches who elevated the league to a new competitive high. And as good a crop of coaches the league had this year, Dean led the way," said Sioux Falls Head Coach Kevin Hartzell. "We all knew Dean was a quality coach coming in, still it was a new team and new league. His leadership and expertise both on and off the ice was incredibly valuable in getting this new franchise off to a great first year on every level. The constant improvement of the team is evident to us all. He's a great coach and an even better guy. It's great for Fargo and the entire USHL."

Jon Cooper – Green Bay Gamblers

JLG Architects USHL General Manager of the Year

A year ago, the Green Bay Gamblers were an afterthought. After trudging through a 13-win season, ownership decided to rebuild things. This included a new logo, new colors, and a new head coach and general manager. Enter Jon Cooper. Cooper guided the St. Louis Bandits of the NAHL to back-to-back national championships, and has worked the same kind of magic in Green Bay. Behind shrewd drafting and player development, Cooper took the Gamblers from rags-to-riches, putting them in immediate contention for the East Division title and the Anderson Cup.

"Jon has done a great job in Green Bay. He has assembled quite a team and his transactions have proved to be very, very good. Green Bay is and has been one of the best teams in the league all year and Jon has done a great job not only as the GM but head coach as well," said Waterloo Head Coach and General Manager P.K. O'Handley.

Jim Pflug – Lincoln Stars

Dave Tyler Executive of the Year

Since their inception in 1997, the Lincoln Stars have been one of the premier franchises in the USHL. Always near or at the top in league attendance and with an atmosphere that is second to none in all of junior hockey, the Stars not only survive, but thrive in a town known more for major college football than anything else. The man behind the operation – Jim Pflug. Pflug has been

the president of the Lincoln Stars from day one, bringing a continuity and professionalism to the team and helping make them a force in junior hockey. For his efforts, Pflug takes home the 2008-09 Dave Tyler Executive of the Year Award.

"Jim has been our 'executive of the year' for 13 consecutive years. We applaud the league for recognizing Jim with this well deserved honor," said Stars Owner Irv Dana.

Fargo Force

Highwood Rings USHL Organization of the Year

It's not easy being the new kid on the block in the junior hockey world, especially when you are dealt a hand where you have to play the first month of your season on the road because your arena is still under construction. No matter, not if you're the Fargo Force. The Force made a giant splash in North Dakota's biggest city when the first move they made was hiring Dean Blais, the legendary former coach at the University of North Dakota, to run the hockey operation. He took care of the on-ice product, putting together a team that clinched a playoff berth in their first season. Off the ice, the staff has made Fargo one of the league's best markets. And the fans responded. In their first year, the Force has averaged over 3,000 fans per-game at the sparkling new Urban Plains Center. For all of their efforts throughout the first year, the Force was the hands-down winner of the Highwood Rings USHL Organization of the Year Award.

"The Fargo franchise did an exceptional job rolling out of the gate, assembling an outstanding hockey department that would go on to develop a winning product to the off-ice management team that would fill the seats in a gorgeous, new facility. They certainly upped the image of the USHL and deserve the 'Highwood Rings Organization-of-the-Year Award'", said Sioux Falls Stampede President Jim Loria.

RBK First-Team All-USHL

Goalie: Brett Bennett – Indiana Ice
Defense: John Moore – Chicago Steel
Defense: Matt Donovan – Cedar Rapids RoughRiders
Forward: Andrew Miller – Chicago Steel
Forward: Mike Cichy – Indiana Ice
Forward: Craig Smith – Waterloo Black Hawks

Second Team All-USHL

Goalie: Kevin Murdock – Lincoln Stars
Defense: David Makowski – Green Bay Gamblers
Defense: Jake Newton – Lincoln Stars
Forward: Mike Seidel – Cedar Rapids RoughRiders
Forward: Stephane Da Costa – Sioux City Musketeers
Forward: Andy Taranto – Fargo Force

Center Trophy USHL All-Rookie Team

Goalie: Mike Lee – Fargo Force
Defense: Torey Krug – Indiana Ice
Defense: Brett Kostolansky – Chicago Steel
Forward: Louis Leblanc – Omaha Lancers
Forward: David Eddy – Sioux Falls Stampede
Forward: Stanislav Galiev – Indiana Ice
Forward: Alex Chiasson – Des Moines Buccaneers

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