

CENTER ICE

The Official Newsletter of The New York Islanders Booster Club



VOLUME 34 - NUMBER 4

Our 34th Year

MARCH 2006

Coach Brad Shaw (L) Ready To Shed 'Interim' From His Title The Question Is: Will It Be With The Islanders?

Brad Lukowich Shares His Stanley Cup Experiences



Both articles by Jim DiStefano

The meeting on January 23rd at the L.I. Marriott was supposed to feature Coach Steve Stirling. When Mike Milbury decided to make a change in the middle of the season, we didn't know who our guest was going to be. As it turned out, we still had the coach of the Islanders: Brad Shaw. He addressed many issues with the Booster Club. At times he was refreshingly candid. But what we got from Brad were very down to earth, detailed discussions about the Islanders, his analysis of problems and his philosophy on making the players and the team better.

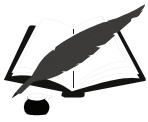
His devotion to the mental aspects of the sport was very surprising at first. It appeared to be quite a contrast from what you usually hear about motivating players. Perhaps this is the 'new age' of the next generation coach. You can physically prepare yourself for a game by working out, going to practice and eating right, but you need to have the proper attitude in your head in order to be successful. When I listened to Brad's words as the meeting went on, I heard a lot that reminded me of Peter Laviolette. But first we got some background from our interim coach.

He grew up in Kitchener, Ontario, which is a big junior hockey town. "I started skating when I was four and started playing hockey when I was six. My mom forged my birth certificate and got me in to play a year earlier. I skated at that level for two years then got caught up with my age group." He told us that he played minor hockey with Scott Stevens. "I dated Scott's wife in high school. He went in the first round in the NHL draft and I went in the fifth round. So I guess she decided to go with him!" It was during a trip to the country previously known as Czechoslovakia that he got the idea of going further in the sport. "I was in midget and we went to play some club teams in a tournament there. It was a great *continued on page 3...*

People make career choices based on many reasons. We learned why Brad Lukowich actually chose to sign with the Islanders after the lockout when he talked with us on February 9th at the Marriott. We followed his trail of being in the right place at the right time when he won his first Stanley Cup with Dallas and his second one with Tampa Bay. Incredibly, the Islanders were a factor in all of the above. But first, let's start at the beginning.

Brad was born in Canada, but lived in the U.S. for the first four years of his life. Then he moved to Cranbrook, BC. "My dad was a hockey player who played in St. Louis and Pittsburgh in the early 70s. My mom is from Vancouver. Cranbrook was ten hours away from my mom's side of the family and ten hours from my dad's side." He started skating when he was four years old. "My dad didn't believe that kids should have to wear helmets on the ice! I had a tough go of it for the first month (of his skating). He wouldn't let me wear a helmet." Eventually, though he relented, "and made me wear a helmet." Brad only moved an hour away when he played junior hockey at 14 for the Rocky Mountain Junior Hockey League. Known as "Rocky Hockey," Brad said, "It's was a tough league and basically you learned how to fight! I had 480 penalty minutes that year." He was called up to Kamloops (WHL) at the end of his first year, was in the playoffs and stuck with the club. The following year "I won the Memorial Cup in Laval, Quebec. The next year we won it at home in Kamloops, which was two years in a row. The next year we lost in the finals. We would have been the first team to win it three years in a row, but we blew it."

"I turned pro in 1994 and I was drafted by the Islanders. Things were going really well when Mike came in and got rid of me! Bet you heard that one before." He was traded to Dallas and played for Michigan of the now defunct IHL. "This was a great learning experience and I played with a lot of great players. *continued on page 4...*



President's Message.....

So much has happened since our last Newsletter that I don't know where to begin.

January brought the inevitable solution to the team's poor performance; Coach Steve Stirling was fired and Brad Shaw was promoted to interim coach. Coincidentally, Stirling was to be our guest at the January meeting so Brad Shaw replaced him as our guest. Wow, he did a great job! He talked honestly about the team and his plans for the balance of the season, and, he won the support of all those in attendance, hands down. The team also seems to be responding to him and we wish him all the best, whether he continues with us next year or not.

Our February guest was Brad Lukowich, who was another terrific guest. Originally drafted by the Islanders, he grew up calling Lorne Henning, "Uncle." He was happy to be signed this summer by the Islanders. He answered our questions honestly but his frustration with his team's performance was evident. He also expressed his feelings about our fans who "boo" when things are not going well and how the team tightens up when the crowd boos. (I said in my last message "No one is encouraged by negativity!") One of the most interesting discussions brought up during his visit was about his experiences when he had the opportunity to take home the Stanley Cup. One thing that impressed me about Brad is when he compared having a child to the thrill of winning the Stanley Cup. That says it all! It just shows what kind of a person Brad really is.

The Olympic break brought the snow and hampered the travel plans of our Olympians, but they arrived safe and sound. From all reports they thoroughly enjoyed their experience even though no one came home with a medal. A disappointment for USA as well as Canada, but we send our congratulations to Sweden, especially Kenny and Jorgen Jonsson who took home the gold.

Also during the Olympic break, many members ventured over the Sound to Bridgeport. We were challenged by the Sound Tigers Booster Club to play Broom Ball in between periods. No one had a clue, including the Sound Tigers, how to play, but who cared? We rolled two lines of five and played for about six minutes hoping to win "The Golden Broom!" It was an aggressive game, but no one was able to score. We'll have to try again. Looking at pictures taken during the game, everyone had big smiles on their faces as they were playing...they had a ball and can't wait to play again! Kudos to the Sound Tigers Booster Club for the idea and to the Bridgeport organization for coordinating the event.

March began with a real bang, and the excitement of the 1980 Stanley Cup Reunion. Season ticket holders had the opportunity to meet almost the entire team; players that we haven't had the opportunity to see in so many years: Al Arbour, our beloved coach, Bill Torrey, the architect with his bowtie; and to MC the event, Jiggs MacDonald. We were able to get some photographs and autographs within the limited time allotted. The biggest thrill was the opportunity to walk in the parade from the Marriott. Several Booster Club members, as long time season ticket holders, were chosen to participate in this parade. While waiting for the event to begin, we were invited by Mike Milbury to come into the cocktail party and "schmooze" with the players. We then carried large signs with the player's number and walked from the Marriott to the Coliseum, downstairs and into the arena, across the ice and into the locker room area. What a thrill to see how loved these players were and still are, and how gracious they were, acknowledging the fans and stopping along the way to sign so many autographs. There will never be a team like that one again.

Fresh from the high of the reunion weekend, we were brought back to reality by the trade deadline. We lost Mattias Weinhandl on waivers and Mark Parrish and Brent Sopel to LA. Then we lost Brad Lukowich to New Jersey! and Oleg Kvasha to Phoenix. We wish them all our best and hope that the new kids, Denis Grebeshkov and Jeff Tambellini, fill the void. Let's hope the changes propel the team to climb up in the standings. Time will tell!

Don't forget to mark you calendars for Sunday April 23rd and our Chinese Auction meeting. It is being called a "mini" Chinese Auction, but if you know Rose Muller, then you know she is working non-stop to get donations. Believe me when I say it will not be a "mini" auction. Please make every effort to attend, you won't regret it.

Claire ("no longer LeCompte") Harding

New York Islanders Booster Club 2005-2006

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Printed by: On The Spot Printing
1916 86th Street, Brooklyn, NY 11214
(718) 259-8200

Center Ice, the official publication of the New York Islanders Booster Club, is published monthly during the hockey season and once during the summer. Opinions expressed in articles printed in this newsletter are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position of the Booster Club or of the New York Islanders. Submissions should be sent to:

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ATTN: Newsletter

Deadline for an issue is the preceding month's membership meeting.

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Special mention to Scott Coates who redesigned the "shooting puck" logo now featured on our masthead.

Moving? Make Sure **Center Ice** goes with you! Please notify the Membership Committee of both your new and old addresses. **Have an e-mail address? Let us know that, too!**

All Photos by.....Jim DiStefano
(unless noted otherwise)



Vinny Paradiso (standing) chats with Brad and Claire Harding

More Brad Shaw:

- **"Another thing we talked about was being a 60 minute team. Unless you have a good first five minutes, you can't be a 60 minute team."**
- **"It took me seven, eight years to figure it out (visualizations). I'm going over what I want to do by talking: 'Skate heads up, keep it simple, pass the puck, hit the net,' and repeat it. My goal, every shift, was to be the best defenseman on the ice. That was my simple goal. Talk about long term-short term. That's all that I thought about (during a game). All these things are skills that I didn't learn in junior. They're self-taught."**
- **"Kids. They've given us energy in almost every game. You get into a routine and stretches when they don't play and sometimes it's hard to put them out there. If you sit long enough, your legs just don't work quite like you want them to. I agree they deserve to get more minutes."**

experience. It opened my eyes to how good we were. We had a good team and we knew it. It kind of planted the seed of thinking that maybe I could be a hockey player."

The next summer, he was drafted by the Ottawa 67's of the OHL. "I went there at 158 pounds and was a pretty good skater and a fairly smart player." But he was really small and wondered if he would make it. "The coach liked me and liked what I did. It was fortunate for me it was Brian Kilrea." Brian came to the Islanders right after Brad finished in Ottawa. "I played three years there and won the Memorial Cup. I was the captain of the team. Just by happenstance, the tournament was in Kitchener, my home town. That was a great thrill for me to win, carry it around, and do it in front of a lot of friends and family."

He was drafted by Detroit in the NHL, but was traded to Hartford without ever playing for the Red Wings. He played four years in the minors (Binghamton, AHL) where "I was best defenseman in the American League in my third year and runner-up in my fourth year." Luck smiled on him again when then Hartford GM Emil Francis "did me a huge favor" by giving Brad a one way contract. This was during the days when it was very difficult for a player who went up and down in the minors to get one. "I went into camp the next year and stuck." He played the next 6-1/2 years in the NHL for Hartford, Ottawa (in the expansion draft where he was the player rep during the last lockout in 1994), and had stints with Washington and St. Louis before finishing his playing days in the IHL (Atlanta Knights and the Detroit Vipers), a total of 15 years. He went to Tampa Bay as an assistant coach the next year.

Brad has seven years of coaching experience in the AHL, IHL and now the NHL. "I had talked to Steve (Stirling) and Mike (Milbury) at the draft in Carolina. Then the lockout happened. Nothing really came of it. In May, Steve called and asked if I was interested in becoming an assistant coach. Anaheim already told me I wasn't going to be back so it was an easy decision for me. I had a great desire to get back at the NHL level."

Then he addressed the coaching change. "It's never easy when the players don't perform for you. As a coach, as part of that staff, you always carry some culpability. I was called into Mike's office and was told first, that Steve was going to be let go the next day, and second, he would like me to be the interim coach." While Brad doesn't make rash decisions, "The more I thought about it, the easier the decision was. It was still a real tough day walking out on the ice without Steve, knowing how much he had poured his heart and soul into that job, and how much he had worked his whole life to get there. It was a real emotional couple of days. The guys over the last five games have

somewhat bought in (to Brad's strategies). I know we still have a long way to go."

He's trying to change the fundamental mentality on the team. "The key is getting to the point that you expect to win, not only believe you can win. For us, because of the inconsistencies of the year, it's been very hard to develop that. We recognize where we dropped the ball as a group, players and coaches." Brad's idea is to get better by taking some pressure off the defense by forechecking better, spending more time in the offensive zone, and simplifying what they do in their own zone and on the penalty kill.

And what about this 'interim coach' label? "We're not treating it as a temporary job. We're trying to do the best we can as a staff. We know we're getting measured like anybody else in this league. We know the reality of the situation as well. There's a 95% chance that none of us will be back. There's a 95% chance that we're going to put our work in and it's going to be an audition for somebody else." Brad gave us the difference between an assistant coach and a head coach: "The assistant coach has time in the day to do other things. The head coach works from when he wakes up to when he goes to sleep. Our job day to day is to make these guys play as well as they can. Make our team as successful as we can." You could see the fierceness in his eyes. He really believes what he says. "Every guy that gets to this level as a player or as a coach hates to lose. I admit I'll cheat in Monopoly to try and beat my kid!"

"We're never satisfied. We know we can play better. I know that every player on that team can play better. We feel the simplest way to do that is to focus on the work ethic, to focus on believing, and to focus on confidence." Brad asks his players to think about their best and worst performances ever and compare the two. "It's the same player physically. Mentality is the difference. It's the attitude and the confidence. The skills don't change much. For an athlete, you don't change the way you play very much, maybe over a 20 year span, but not over a three or four year period." Brad's idea is to try and get the players to do enough little things well that "we can feel good about what we're doing in practice every day and we can feel good about doing enough little things to win games."

Brad mentioned a recent game in Chicago that the Islanders won, but he was still disappointed with the team. He overheard that some players were surprised the coach was upset after a win. "We didn't play well. I wasn't upset, but I wanted them to recognize the reality that we're trying to get them to play to their best level, not to the level that's going to win the game."

A coach must take the personalities in the dressing room into account when trying to energize them. "This is a very diverse collection of players we have here. It may be the widest cross-section I've ever seen as far as psychological profiles and what makes them tick.

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Brad signing autographs at the end of the meeting

More Brad Lukowich:

- "Brad Shaw told us that up to the (Olympic) break, I'm going to judge you. When you come back, it's going to be a different look. There's going to be different guys playing in different situations. He put Godard on the penalty kill the other night and he did a good job. He got a bigger role and I think you'll see more of that."
- "Speaking of the Olympics, this break couldn't have come at a better time. Basically the players should just forget about it (hockey) for a couple of weeks. Go home and re-fuel. There are only 26 games to the end of the season. We've got to put on a big show. Of the teams we're chasing, if we win those battles, we believe that we can get to the playoffs."

The rookies got their heads shaved monthly. It was pretty old school, but it was fun and I wouldn't trade it for anything. In 1999, I was called up at the trading deadline. I was the eighth defenseman." To give us a little history of the time period, he added, "Darian Hatcher decided to remove Jeremy Roenick's jaw that year. I kept playing because then coach Ken Hitchcock liked my feistiness and kept me in the lineup. That year we wound up beating Buffalo in the finals and I got to win the Stanley Cup. It was a dream come true. I was in the right place at the right time, all thanks to Mike Milbury!"

Life wasn't all trouble free though in Dallas. While he met his wife there after playing for a few years, he was actually traded to Tampa Bay on his wedding day. "I didn't get a chance to talk to her and see if she still wanted to get married!" But she warmed to the idea of living in Florida, and they both went there. The birth of his child gave him a measuring stick to compare winning in hockey. "If there is anything better than winning the Stanley Cup, it's having my daughter!" It's the only way to compare both special events. Nothing else comes close.

Of course, when in Tampa, Brad now faced the Islanders in the first round of the playoffs that year. "They (the Islanders) had our number all year. It was a very tough series." When he got the phone call from Mike Milbury to sign with the Islanders after the work stoppage last year, the playoff series was the deciding factor to come to New York. "I was talking to a bunch of other teams then. I just signed on the spot. I never called them back. It was a no-brainer. I was always an Islanders fan. Lorne Henning was my dad's best man at his wedding. Henning was the guy who called me when I got drafted. It was like it was meant to be."

Things changed during the lockout though. "Many players (from that playoff series) signed with other teams. It was very unfortunate because there were a lot of very good character guys like Dave Scatchard and Jason Weimer. It was literally a list of guys I hated playing against. You could never count them out."

This year has been tough. "Any time you remove your coach, you're now rebuilding halfway through the season. When other teams are going full bore, you're trying to start new. I know it's frustrating for you guys and for us. I know we can pull this out. Searching for another guy (coach or general manager) is a distraction. A running joke at the morning meal is, 'Who's our new GM?'"

Lukowich actually played against Brad Shaw (as a coach) when he was in Michigan. With the Islanders, Shaw is in a tough situation. "He's got to mount an attack with a team that's under-achieved all season. It's not an easy duty. I give him a lot of credit for jumping in that situation knowing that Mike's still hands-on. He's done an incredible job with what he's got."

As every player will tell you, Brad hates losing. "I don't care if you lose 20-1 or 2-1, you lost. When you're down with ten minutes left, you throw everything you can at them." He sees the tradeoff, but it's a necessary one. "You have guys jumping up the ice doing little things that they wouldn't regularly do. You're giving them (the opposition) an opportunity. If they stay on their course and play a defensive game and chip it by you, they get the odd number chance. That doesn't always happen when it's a closer game or a tie. Then, you're playing your regular position and not taking those extra chances." He recognizes that we need that big save or that big hit to help the club. "You have to do what got you here in the first place. Consistency is the missing ingredient." Brad thinks this will come.

One thing that really peeved Lukowich is "getting booed at home. I've never played on a team ever, that had been booed at home, regardless of where I was playing. It's called home ice advantage." He recalled when he came here to play the Islanders in the Lightning playoff series, "We couldn't talk to each other on the bench because it was so loud. They (fans) supported that team hard. Now when we come out for a power play and even if we out-work and out-play the other team, if we don't score in the first thirty seconds, the fans are booing us. Guys look at each other as if to say, 'This is real supportive.'" We heard that Brad senses the feeling on the bench. "The guys are tight. If someone makes a bad pass, you can look around waiting for it. All of a sudden, you hear the boos." While Brad is entitled to his opinion, others think that fans have the right to boo if the performance warrants it. That is called paying the price of a ticket. The boos will turn to cheers when play improves and when the players act as a team and the effort is there. As professionals, players have to step up and earn the fans' respect and cheers.

So do you feel there's hope? "Absolutely! We're only seven points out. We have to play those teams above us two more times. You go head to head with them and climb up the ladder. I believe we are in the toughest division. We have to play New Jersey, the Rangers and Philly eight times. Carolina gets to play Washington, Atlanta and Florida."

Brad continued with a belief that many of us shared. "If you have a salary cap and it's not going away, you need a more structured schedule where you play every single team in the league home and home." This was the opening salvo for a more important point. "We travel on the road only three times a year. We don't become a team. Our furthest city this year was St. Louis. When I played in Dallas, we went to L.A., had three days off, went to Anaheim, took two days off, then back to L.A. But the days in between were almost as important as the games. The teams bond." The players get to know one another and really play for each other. "It helps you overcome the little things, which I think is a big thing."

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BROOMBALL

NYIBC vs BSTBC 2/19/2006

By Gary Harding

BRIDGEPORT CT - It is the Olympic Break... What better thing for Islanders fans to do, but take the ferry over to Bridgeport to see the Sound Tigers play. On this cold but nice Sunday afternoon, over 50 Boosters got in their cars, or in the case of this reporter, walked onto the ferry to take the trip over the Sound.

Oh yea - the CHALLENGE.

The Bridgeport Sound Tigers Booster Club offered a challenge to the NYIBC of a Broomball match in between periods of this game. President Claire Harding (yes - we finally did get married!) sent out some notes and assembled a team of worthy players.

The AHL game, which featured the Sound Tigers and the visiting Norfolk Admirals (Chicago Black Hawks), provided lots of action and goals (the Sound Tigers cruised to a 6-3 victory. However, for the Boosters, the "Game" was the reason for the trip, and the "Golden Broom" was to go to the team that won. Would it be Bridgeport? Would it be Long Island?

Check out the pictures on the Booster Club website and see if you recognize our hard working broomballers. A larger version of the picture is available on the site by clicking on it. **Newsletter pictures courtesy of Rich Steiglitz of the Sound Tigers. George Schutz also contributed four pictures to our website.**

The hard work of both teams, resulted in a scoreless draw. The Golden Broom will stay with the Sound Tiger organization until the next contest (hopefully on Long Island next year).

Thanks to the following Boosters who participated in the match:

Evan Blonder, Brendan Buck, Larry Davis, Sal DelGenio, Wendy Liu (yes - one brave woman!), Tom Liodice, Tommy Rosati, George Schutz, Chris Wall and Tom Wall. Thanks for representing the NYIBC proudly. Hope to see you at the next game. •



Charities Report

By Rose Muller

I would like to thank **Virginia Gebert** for donating her 50/50 winnings of \$59 back to the Booster Club for our charities at the Brad Shaw meeting in January. You are one special lady.

I would also like to thank **Jill Kozik** for donating her 50/50 winnings back to us for the Leukemia Foundation Fund at our Brad Lukowich meeting in February. Thanks again, Jill.

We received a letter from **Big Brothers/Big Sisters** thanking us for the donation we made in January to them. The board games and arts and crafts kits came in very handy for the after school programs. Thanks to all of you for your donations.

We will be collecting liquid detergent, fabric softener and dish detergent for the Ronald McDonald House at our April 6th meeting.

Also mark on your calendar that we will be hosting a mini Chinese auction of sports items and restaurant gift certificates.

**This is our last meeting of the year
at the Marriott Hotel**

Date: Sunday, April 23rd

Time: 1:30PM

Non-Members must pay \$5 at the door.

Members - Please bring your membership card with you for entry.



After 13 years Claire LeCompte and Gary Harding were married February 14, Valentine's Day, at their Town Hall. Congrats from the Booster Club. Photo by Ron Kind.

Brad Shaw...final part

When you have that, it's really hard to hit all the right buttons at once. We're trying to get a collective mentality and motivate them as a team." Some guys do need special attention. "There are some guys on every team, and especially here, that need to hear the right words to come out and play well."

Brad keeps hammering away in practice what he wants done, but how much is sinking in? He mentioned Mike York. "He was much maligned early on here. God bless him. I love his work ethic. He's a leader because he consistently does what we're asking him to do. This guy after a meeting will ask a question. To me, that means he not only listened, he digested the information and he formulated a question." Brad thinks that some players have trouble digesting everything in practice.

The trick is to raise that percentage by getting them to visualize different situations. So when they are in a game, "They have already visualized it in the afternoon or after the morning skate. They pictured themselves in the situation they're going to be in. Now I'm talking about the mental aspect of the game. To me it's a skill. Yogi Berra said 90% of the game is half mental." Brad wants his players to do mental exercises as well as physical ones to get better. "You can bench press your weight forty times, skate fast, and shoot the puck. That makes you valuable in the scout's eyes. It's tangible. But put this guy in a situation and make him make a decision quickly. Without that mental ability, you're not an athlete. You're a high performance kind of robot. Hockey, if it's not the fastest sport, then it demands the quickest reactions, especially on defense. Unless you're equipped with those (mental) skills, you can't go through the process."

Coach Shaw bought a book, "Mind Gym" by Gary Mack, and gave it to everyone on his team his last year in Cincinnati. It deals with visualization exercises like imagining your best and worst performances. "To me, that's a hook. If you really think about it, that's what athletics is. You're taking your physical skills and you're going to test them against an opponent. It tells you how to get the most out of yourself as an athlete. There needs to be that synergy between how they're thinking and how they're reacting." Mental exercise will help do that. The trick is to change the behavior of players by making them take these mental preparations.

Brad's biggest surprise is how hard it is to get them thinking as a single entity. "I thought the (coaching) change would meld them together a little bit. The players still have wide variations from shift to shift and period to period. That up and down has been a hallmark of our year." There has been improvement though. "Miro (Satan) actually battled much harder (than given credit for). His line has carried the flag for us." Jason Blake, who has always had a great work ethic, "is actually making an effort to play smarter and to be more responsible. He already has the skill package; he doesn't have to change much."

Brad would like to bring in a sports psychologist. He employed one where he last coached. "He talked about discipline and he talked about motivation and how lasting motivation was self-motivation. Larry Brown (Knicks' coach) said it the other day, 'You can't coach work ethic. You can't motivate these guys and pump them up every day. The work ethic has to come from the heart. It has to come from the passion you have for the game.' We try and guide it. Sometimes you have to control it." So that means playing within yourself. "When you try to do more, beyond what your abilities can do, you end up getting frustrated and actually accomplish less. There's so much to the mental side!"

So, is there any one tip that you can give the players that would physically improve them? "We had discussions with a lot of players and one of the things we feel we don't do well is keep our heads up. We have a lot of guys who skate with their heads down! You can't make good decisions when you don't see the ice. You can't execute when you don't see the ice. You can get hit real hard when you have your head down." Sounds like a simple thing to change, but it's not that easy "because it takes 21 days of conscious effort to change a habit. You have to acknowledge the bad habit, acknowledge you're going to change it and why it will help you. Then you do an assessment of how to change every day." A well thought out solution. Heady stuff.

He wasn't afraid to give us some opinions. Showing a little 'old school' beliefs, he said, "I think that every player should be in the minors for a year. When you're in the minors, you're playing three games in three nights. You're not staying in \$300-a-night hotel rooms and you're not getting \$185 in meal money. You're being a real person." A lot of players never had to go through adversity to make themselves better. "There's nothing like a dose of reality riding the buses."

Brad also appreciated us having him here. "I've played in seven or eight states. I've lived in a lot of different cities in this country. In the 22 years I've been in hockey, 20 of them have been in the U.S. Some of the best people I've met have been the true hockey fans. It's easy talking to you guys because you tend to stick with us through thick and thin. The fans that turn their back fairly easily are the harder ones to talk to. I appreciate your loyalty and what you mean to the Islanders."

Brad gave us thoughtful answers to all of our questions. He is not a coaching neophyte. He is well prepared and experienced. He shared his thoughts and reasoning with us as if we were at a team meeting in front of the players. And he wasn't afraid to name names. He put in simple terms what a work routine is like for a player compared to a fan with a 'real' job. He put a human face on players who have fears for their job just like you or I might have. And like a good boss, he understands that an eclectic bunch of people have to come together and perform well on the job.

He talked about accountability, and perhaps that was lacking in his predecessor's dealings with the Islanders. He talked about our players' weaknesses, their attitudes and their careers. It was always an objective look. It was never demeaning; it was always constructive. Could this have been Brad's audition to a future general manager for a coaching job? Certainly. Wherever Brad Shaw ends up, either here with the Islanders or somewhere else, he will be a formidable coach. It was great getting to know him. •

Remember, you will be voting on April 6th for the Booster Club Constitution changes announced at the meetings and in the newsletter

Brad Lukowich...final part

Fallout from the lack of long roadtrips is less communication between players away from the ice. Brad asked once if they could stay out on the road after a game. "Put us in a lockdown so we don't go to a bar. Rent a TV and a backroom like this one (like the Marriott meeting room), and let us hang out together, sit there and become a team!"

Brad was asked his opinion of the new rules, a popular question we ask all our guests. "I'm not a big fan of the new rules. I think the hooking rule is a good rule, but you have to call it all the time and be consistent with it. You can't let certain players get away with it." Dumping the puck over the glass was another sore spot. So will the players let the NHL know about their opinions? The team had a meeting to nominate a player to the NHL's executive committee that represents NHLPA interests. "We nominated Ricky (DiPietro) because he's such a mouthpiece! He was just begging to get on this committee because there weren't enough guys to stand up for the players on the committee. The main thing is his age. He's a young guy. He's one who will play under the new rules for the next 15 years. So we felt it was better to have the youngest guy with the loudest voice go in that room and present the issues the players have."

So after winning the Stanley Cup two times, describe what you did with it when you had your turn. "It's 24 hours with the Cup. People flip out at the airport when you take it out of the case. The minute you open it up, you're taking pictures. It's a lot of fun. I went to all the little places that I used to go and hang out in. I took it to where my dad works. I took it to city hall, the fire chief, and the police station. I had a party that night so I figured the police might eventually be there. I did an autograph signing downtown at a friend's restaurant with the Cup. I also gave it to my dad to do whatever he wanted with it for an hour. The one thing I wanted to do was give him that opportunity. Then at night we had the Stanley Cup party and over 65 of my buddies showed up. I think the Cup left at seven the next morning."

For the Tampa Stanley Cup win, Brad took it to his house that he was building on a lake in Canada. "I invited all my friends out and also had a family re-union. We hung out from 10-3 and had a good time. Then I took the Cup to some family members who were in bad health. I'm glad I did." He later went to a local bar with the Cup. Brad owns a music management company. Some of his bands showed up at the bar to play heavy metal music. "At 2:00am, I looked over at the door and saw a huge guy walk in with a four foot Mohawk!" It was his band, Three Days Grace. "They drove 32 hours from San Jose, California to the bar to celebrate the Cup with me. We took it on their bus, took pictures, and brought it back to their hotel. I have a picture from behind the guy with the Mohawk holding the Stanley Cup over his shoulder walking down the middle of Main Street at four in the morning. It was an incredible experience."

We had a very productive meeting with Brad Lukowich. When you have a player who has won two Stanley Cups, you like to hear what he has to say. He was very positive in that he believes that we have a legitimate shot at making the playoffs. But everybody needs to raise the level of their game. "You have to be able to change 'I wasn't very good tonight' into 'I'm

LI Ducks Group Tickets

Back by popular demand, we have group tickets to Division Champion Long Island Ducks this coming summer. This year we were able to get tickets for three games, two of them include a pre-game picnic.

We will start taking reservations now. Tickets will only be held for you when payment is received.

The Games

Sunday, July 9 - 5:05PM (picnic)

Sunday, July 30 - 5:05PM

Saturday, Sept. 2 - 7:05PM (picnic)

Plessers' Pre-Game Picnic

90 minutes before the start of each game. The picnic includes an all-you-can-eat buffet of hamburgers, Nathan's hot dogs, chicken, Pepsi beverages, cookies, snacks, watermelon, potato salad, and macaroni salad. New for 2006: all picnics will offer ribs, roasted corn, tossed salad and potato chips.

Cost:

Picnics - \$30 per person (\$23 children 9 and under)
July 30th Game - \$10 per person

We also have the opportunity to buy personalized T-shirts with the Booster Club logo screened on the back of a white Ducks logo T-shirt for \$12 each. Please let me know if you are interested in a shirt when you reserve tickets (we need a 25 shirt minimum).

Please visit the Club at any remaining game, call the hotline or download the order form from the Booster Club website.

I can be reached at NYIBC2@aol.com or on the hotline: 631 547-NYIB (6942)
Claire (LeCompte) Harding

working as hard as I can.' But there's a saying, 'If you work stupidly, you're being stupid.' You can't just skate around and not get anything done. You have to work effectively." He thinks we can get to that level.

So whether Brad was answering a question on how to check Jaromir Jagr ("He's so strong, it's better not to. He just runs you over. It's better to check his stick!") or whether his ex-Tampa Bay buddies give him a little extra zest when they pound him into the boards when we play the Lightning ("Fedotenko got me on the nose. That was nice of him."). We appreciated the personal moments he shared with us. He said the look in his family's eyes was special when he brought home the Stanley Cup. "You know you accomplished something when you can make your dad cry. And my dad doesn't cry." Brad carried a great message to our meeting. Let's hope that all our players have similar feelings.

Booster Club Meetings.....

Thursday, April 6th - Hall of Famer **Pat LaFontaine**

We will be collecting liquid detergent, fabric softener and dish detergent for the Ronald McDonald House at this meeting. Please be generous.

Sunday, April 23rd Time: 1:30PM - Mini Chinese Auction
Featuring Sports Items & Restaurant Gift Certificates

- All meetings will be in the downstairs amphitheater at the Marriott across from the Coliseum. Call the Hotline or visit the website for up-to-the minute details about meeting locations.
- Meetings start at 7:30PM.
- The Booster Club Booth at the Nassau Coliseum is located between Gates 3 & 4, and is open before every home game. The booth closes 10 minutes before game time, and reopens between periods.

You Can Reach Us On Our Booster Club **HOTLINE: (631) 547-NYIBC (6942)**

OR Our **WEB-SITE:** <http://www.nyiboosterclub.org>

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