

Sports

Gannett Newspapers/Tuesday, June 9, 1998

Roller hockey team has big goal

Dream becomes reality with forming of Westchester Phantoms

By Leslie Beth Feffer
Staff Writer

With the goal of competing in various NHL-sponsored Breakout roller hockey tournaments, Valhalla's Ron Borodenko and Mamaroneck's Mark Perillo joined forces to form the Westchester Phantoms.

"It started three years ago with the Ice Dogs at the RollerDome (in Larchmont)," said Perillo, a computer consultant who works nightly on the Phantoms' web site, trains the team's statisticians and is an assistant captain. "I played against Ron last year, before we decided to form the team."

Fierce competitors who knew each other through the league at Hommocks Ice Rink in Larchmont, Borodenko and Perillo finally sat down this past January and discussed creating their own dream team.

"We put together the best of his team with the absolute best players we could find in Westchester," said Borodenko, the team's public relations director and assistant captain. "We wanted to create a team that we could take around the country and play real serious hockey. Right now, we're at stage one. We've put together what we feel is going to be an explosive team."

Members of both the U.S. Inline Hockey Association and the U.S. National Hockey Association, the Phantoms will be competing in Hommocks' 12-game league and then will work their way into a few national tournaments, including NHL-sponsored ones in Boston and Philadelphia. They are the only Hommocks league team entered in NHL Breakout events.

"A team philosophy based on defense, positional play, passing and unselfish teamwork is looked upon to be the key to success not only in interleague play, but in national NHL Breakout tournaments as well," says the Phantoms' web site.

Despite the team's ambitions, the Phantoms are geared

Internet expands interest

By Leslie Beth Feffer
Staff Writer

Roller hockey is a grassroots sport, not dominated by any organization or governing body.

Participation varies, from kids playing pick-up games on asphalt, to adults who join amateur indoor leagues that compete at roller rinks, to those who play in elite, nationally sponsored tournaments.

So how would a person interested in learning more about roller hockey or in finding a local team or league find information? The Internet.

There are two Internet newsgroups — alt.sports.hockey.rhi and rec.sport.hockey — where net surfers can ask questions or just "lurk" and learn.

The next cyber-stop is the World Wide Web and the Roller Hockey Web Ring at www.webring.org/cgi-bin/webring?ring=rollerhockey;list. For those unsure of where to begin an Internet search, a web ring is a good place to

start. Although the quality of the sites listed in a web ring vary, you can usually find at least a few good web pages.

Of the 48 sites listed in the roller hockey web ring (each with a hyperlink that takes you to the corresponding site), some are online versions of roller hockey magazines, many are nothing more than advertisements, and still others are geared toward updating news in roller hockey. Some sites are created and maintained by people who play, and others by publications or specific leagues.

Some roller hockey web sites to check out:

■ www.inlinehockeycentral.com/index.htm — informative and updated fairly regularly.

■ www.usacrs.com/roller.htm#lhook — comprehensive information by and about USA Roller Skating.

■ And, of course, the home page of the Phantoms, at www.crazywebbys.com/phantoms to follow the team.

toward the community — especially the children. Borodenko made a point of lobbying Hommocks to schedule the Phantoms' games at family-friendly times. They plan to charge a minimal admission fee and go to great lengths to provide a fast-paced game without the violence common to hockey.

"If we can get our feet off the ground and get people knowing us, we'd like to see if we could work with the local towns and do free weekend hockey clinics with the kids," said Borodenko.

The Phantoms are a dedicated team, comprised of hardcore players, most of whom played ice hockey in high school and college.

Before securing practice time at Hommocks, they took to a nearby rink in Larchmont, where they skated and worked out three or

four nights a week for two or three hours per session — usually from 9:30 p.m. until midnight or later, taking advantage of the lighting provided there.

"We want this to be the kind of thing where people can come out and take their kids to see a great new sport. It's a nice night out, with no fighting, nothing like that," Borodenko said. "The game is just as fast and intense as ice hockey, but you're on roller blades instead."

The Phantoms played their first game last week and lost 9-7 to the Hawks. Borodenko believes that with the high expectations and pressure they put on themselves, nervousness is the best of them.

"The loss brought a lot of us down to earth," he said. "But our next game is on June 13th at the RollerDome."