

Hello friends!

Unfortunately it appears that the season is now officially over. I was going to wait until after The Hasek's Hero Awards to write this, but I'm not sure that will be happening this season.

It's been a great year and I am now glad we were able to fully finish our 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season and participate in States. It wasn't the outcome we were hoping for as Williamsville lost a tight Championship Game to Clinton in the NYSPHSAA Regional Finals at Herb Brooks Arena in Lake Placid.

Lancaster/Iroquois/Depew was super strong all season and finished at the top of the standings in Kevin Miller's first year as head coach. Niagara County made some serious strides and looks to be a team on the rise. Williamsville repeated as Section VI Champions for the 2<sup>nd</sup> year in a row, narrowly defeating Kenmore/Grand Island in OT. They also took top honors in our Federation Tournament as well. Monsignor Martin and FLOP once again had strong teams and we saw some encouraging competition from the young CASH Team and HEWS, who had a stunning upset in the Federation Tourny.

One of the best things to me is that six young women from this year's graduating class will be playing Division 1 Hockey this fall. By far the most we have ever had. A tribute to the growth of Womens Hockey and the dedication of their parents and travel coaches along the way to help them achieve success. A tip of the toque to Brooke Becker – Providence, Jersey Phillips and Mary Kromer – Mercyhurst, Erin Roland - RIT , Mia Wendell - Yale, and Abby Blair – St Anselm. To all of the seniors leaving us, thank you from the bottom of my heart for giving it your best. Your contributions to the continued success of Girls Varsity Hockey were appreciated.

To coaches Jeff Orłowski of KenGI and Rick Hopkins of Williamsville congrats on hitting the 200 games coached milestone this year. Congratulations to Coach of the year Kevin Miller of LID for the awesome job in your 1<sup>st</sup> year as head coach. I want to acknowledge the awesome job Matt Miller has done with advanced stats and record keeping, which will be more integrated into our website. To my daughter Laura Pavone, who rearranges her busy schedule to help me when she can playing music at playoff games, you rock. She is way better than I am.

A special thanks goes out to all the parents and other people who were are part of the Girls 4 Varsity Ice Hockey group, getting this league going for your school districts. All your help, large or small, was truly appreciated. We were able to recognize many of you with ceremonial faceoffs at the 1<sup>st</sup> home games this year. Mr Brett Banker, Director of Athletics for Ken-Ton Schools was this year's selection for the Dr James Rusin Memorial Award and stood with me at Lincoln for the ceremonial faceoffs. His support and experience was key to getting this going 10 years ago and continues to be so. Thank you sir!

Lastly, to all the wonderful people I've met through hockey, thank you! Especially Mark Clark, Tom Nelson, Chris Roberts, Dr Rusin, Randy and Janet Schultz, the media, my friends at the Tonawanda Lightning as well as the the Ken-Ton Schools and most of all Rick Hopkins for having the conviction to ask me and several others to help get this thing going back in 2007. It is time for me to take a step back now. I work hard in the summer so I can have more time for hockey and with the pandemic, this may hurt me financially so I may need to restructure my life a bit. I will still be involved with the website and sharing news on social media when possible, but can no longer devote a lot of my time attending games, tweeting game results and the many other tasks you don't see. My daughter Laura played the 1<sup>st</sup> 2 years and I continued to help because quite frankly, it was the best thing I've ever been involved with and I wanted it to succeed in the worst way. We got there. 10 years. I gave it my best. This is not goodbye. Thanks for your support.

Much Love,

Bill Pavone 3/24/2020