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College hockey

Kreider, BC are kings of the rink

Boxford native scores goal in Frozen Four final

By Matt Williams
STAFF WRITER

The NCAA hockey national championship trophy found a comfortable home late Saturday night — the hands of Boxford native Chris Kreider.

The 18-year-old Boston College winger finished his freshman season in storybook style, helping the Eagles drop Wisconsin 5-0 in the NCAA title game played at Detroit's Ford Field.

"It was absolutely unreal. I was actually the last person off the ice and I carried the trophy off. I didn't want to let go of it," Kreider said last night after he and the Eagles returned to The Heights with the school's fourth NCAA hockey title.

"(I'm) unbelievably excited. Just an amazing feeling," BC coach Jerry York said in the postgame press conference. York has made the Eagles college hockey's premier program, winning NCAA titles in 2001, 2008 and 2010 while advancing to the title game in four of the last five seasons and earning a Frozen Four berth in five of the last seven.

The Eagles (29-10-3) were clinging to a 1-0 lead over the Badgers before blowing it open to start the third period. Just 1:18 into the final stanza Cam Atkinson finished an end-to-end rush to make it 2-0.

Shortly thereafter, Kreider put a serious clamp on Wisconsin's title hopes when he potted his 15th goal of the season and put BC in control, 3-0.

"Coaches always say a two goal lead is the worst in hockey," said Kreider, who starred at Masconomet and Phillips Andover and was Salem News Player of the Year in 2006-07. "We needed to keep pushing."

That's exactly what Kreider's line did. Defenseman Philip Samuelsson found Kreider's linemate, Jimmy Hayes, moving down the wing. Hayes centered the puck and Kreider got a stick on it to beat Badger goalie Scott Gudmanson.

"Jimmy has great wheels and great range. He basically blew by his defender and put it on the tape for me. He created the play," said Kreider, who wrapped up his first collegiate season with 15 goals and 23 points including 4-3-7 totals in eight playoff games.

The 2010 title game set a world record for attendance at an indoor hockey game at 37,592. The unique setting of playing where National Football League games are held was enjoyable for Kreider, who also skated in front of 35,000-plus at Fenway Park in January.

"The way they set up the rink was really well done. The crowd was right on top of us and the

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WHAT A YEAR

Chris Kreider's time line between his 18th and 19th birthdays is nothing short of incredible

- **April 2009:** Evaluated as the best high school player in the country and ranked 14th among North American skaters in the NHL draft's final rankings
- **June 2009:** Selected 19th overall by the New York Rangers in the NHL draft
- **July 2009:** Attends New York Rangers prospect camp
- **January 2010:** Aids Team USA in winning a World Junior Championship gold medal
- **January 2010**: Skates against BU at Fenway Park
- February 2010: Scores highlight reel goal as BC wins the Beanpot
- **March 2010:** Named to the Hockey East All-Rookie team and helps BC win the league title
- **April 2010:** Scores a goal as BC wins the NCAA title at Ford Field

Inside Sports

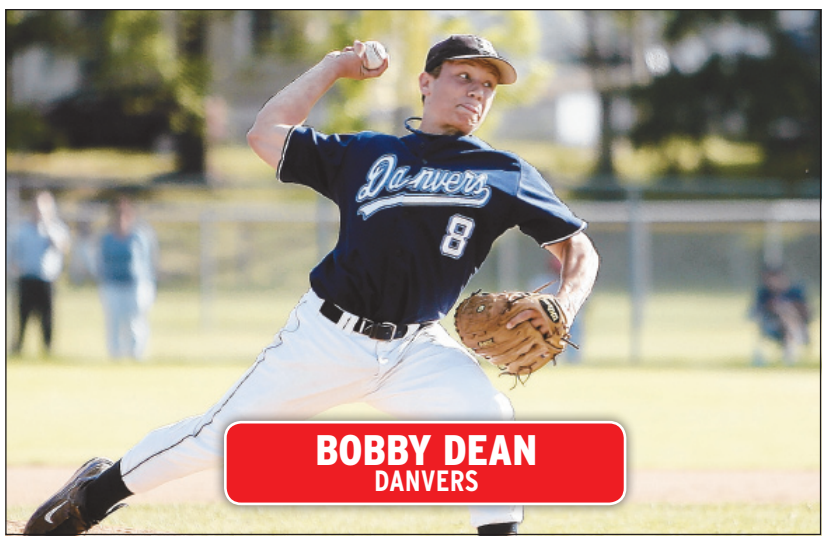
Sophomore slugs Crusaders to victory with walk-off bomb

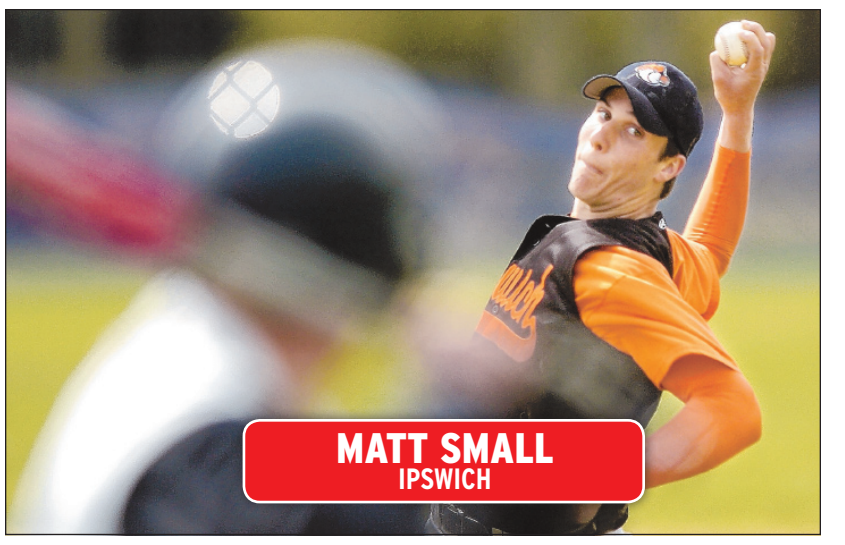
Bishop Fenwick tops Wakefield on a walk off two-run home run by sophomore Abby Curran. **Page 12.**

Karate Kids

Mark Warner's Professional Martial Arts Academy recently graduated 21 of its students to Black Belt ranking. **Page 15.**

TEAM FOR THE AGES







North Shore's best baseball players for the last decade

Around the Horn

Matt Williams

It warrants repeating that high school baseball bears the most talented fruit on the North Shore.

There are twice as many young men who call this area home getting paid to play baseball than any other game. Log on to the athletic Web site of any nearby college, and you'll likely find at least one local on its baseball roster.

This cornucopia of talent made picking an All-Decade diamond squad for the Salem News' coverage area a difficult task. There are some very good ballplayers that were difficult to leave off, and we welcome debate.

For our money, these are the best 20 ballplayers that played the bulk of their careers from the spring of 2000 through 2009. The only qualifier is that they graduated from an MIAA school in our coverage area.

Catchers

LARRY DAY, ST. JOHN'S PREP: This Amesbury native graduated from the Prep in 2003 and was everything you want from a backstop: great defensively, a solid bat and a fierce leader. Day helped St. John's win the Catholic Conference as a senior and was later an All-Big East selection at Connecticut. He had a cup of coffee in the New York Yankees organization before hanging up the cleats in 2008.

BRYAN GARRITY, PEABODY: The 2004 Peabody graduate qualifies as perhaps the best backstop of the decade in terms of handling an all-star pitching staff. He caught back-to-back Gatorade Massachusetts Players of the Year in Jeff Allison and Ryan Moorer and helped engineer multiple no-hitters. Garrity hit at a .400 clip and led Peabody to the Division 1 North title as a senior. He was a four-year starter behind the plate at UMass-Amherst.

Infielders

MATT ANTONELLI, ST. JOHN'S PREP: A hitting savant, this Peabody native's sweet stroke led to a .454 career average at the Prep as well as a school record 28-game hitting streak that stretched from his sophomore to senior campaigns. In 2003 he set single-season Eagles' records for hits, runs and doubles and was chosen by the Los Angeles Dodgers in the 19th round of the Major League Baseball draft. Antonelli opted to attend college at Wake Forest, where he had a dynamite career that led to a first round selection by the San Diego Padres.

Antonelli remains in the Padres system, having been optioned to Triple-A Portland (Ore.) after a strong spring training with the big club.

TIM BRANSFIELD, MASCONOMET: One of the Chieftains' all-time best, Bransfield hit .540 as a senior in 2002 with six homers and 39 RBI. Bransfield was MVP of the Cape Ann League in 2001

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