



Holt Hockey Archives Launches Original Hockey Guidebook Online

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DURHAM, N.H. - As the 25th annual Hockey East championships get underway later this month (March 20 - 21), hockey fans, players, coaches and officials can turn to a new - yet very old - source for the sport's rules, history and lore. The University of New Hampshire's Charles E. Holt Archives of American Hockey has scanned what may be ice hockey's earliest guidebook (loaned by the U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame) and made it publicly available on the Web for the first time ever.

The 1898 Spalding Ice Hockey and Ice Polo Guide," printed in 1897 and available at <http://www.library.unh.edu/special/index.php/hockey/spalding-guide>, predated any similar Canadian guidebook by two years. "While the Spalding Guide certainly credits Canada as hockey's birthplace, in an odd way, because the Spalding Company hoped to push sales of its hockey equipment, we beat the Canadians at their own game," says Steve Hardy, UNH professor of kinesiology and faculty adviser to the Holt Hockey Archives. The Canadian guide, published in 1899, went digital a few years ago on the National Library of Canada Web site. "We wanted to match that with the American counterpart. It is our little birthday gift to Hockey East," says Hardy.

The guide includes rich descriptions of the then-emerging game of hockey ("all the rapidity and great variety of action to be seen in lacrosse and polo [on horseback] without the roughness of the former or danger of the latter"), rules, and team photos, statistics and standings. A review of amateur hockey around the country proclaims Baltimore to be the nation's most enthusiastic hockey city, and advertisements at the end of the guide offer hockey sticks (75 cents), pucks (50 cents), skates (\$5), and miscellaneous sports equipment ranging from cycling saddles to boxing gloves.

"We are pleased at this new resource as we all continue our attempts to understand the game's origins," says Joe Bertagna, commissioner of Hockey East and executive director of the American Hockey Coaches Association (AHCA). "We are grateful to the Holt Archives for making this guide available to the public. It is a unique gift to all of us in the amateur hockey community."

In addition to the Spalding Guide, the Holt Archives (www.library.unh.edu/special/index.php/category/hockey) is the official repository of Hockey East, the AHCA, and the Eastern College Athletic Conference (ECAC) records. The collection holds NCAA rules committee meeting minutes back to 1929, ballots for the Hobey Baker Memorial Award, and "one of the best runs of hockey guidebooks anywhere," says Hardy.

Hardy credits the staff of the Milne Special Collections and Archives at UNH for their professional approach to creating and maintaining the archive. "Outside of the Hockey Hall of

Fame in Toronto, the Holt Archives are arguably the most substantial, professionally processed and maintained collection anywhere. Our mission is to preserve this history for future researchers," says Hardy.

Adds William Ross, head of special collections at UNH's Dimond Library, "The real focus is not the 'doodads' but the research materials necessary for anybody who wants to document hockey - especially amateur hockey - in the United States."

Started in 2001 following the death in 2000 of legendary UNH men's hockey coach Charlie Holt, the archives began as an idea, says Hardy, on a 1991 research visit to the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto. Hardy, launching his focus on hockey research, was poring through some crumbling old scrapbooks that had never been catalogued by the Hall of Fame's staff. He turned the brittle page of one scrapbook to discover an entire set of hockey trading cards from the 1909-10 season. "They were in mint condition, but no one knew they were there," he recalls. "The Hall of Fame had just hired a professional archivist, but they had more material than they could possibly process with the staff at hand."

As a research institution, however, UNH has the staff and resources to professionally archive these materials. Three major donations - a run of guidebooks, the writings of Bertagna and the NCAA minutes - launched the collection, and Hardy has tapped his network of professional and personal colleagues for additional donations ever since. And of course UNH Wildcat hockey - men's and women's - is documented fully, with UNH sports information material dating back to 1924.

Now, researchers and hockey aficionados can trace the history of rule changes such as the mandating of facemasks in college hockey in the 1980s. Reading through the NCAA and ECAC materials on that discussion, Hardy says, one can chronicle coaches' concern that facemasks would make players more reckless in their play. "That's exactly what happened," he adds.

Hardy, who skated for Bowdoin College in the late 1960s, is a patron as well as an instigator of the archives: he is author of several scholarly articles and a book chapter on early hockey and currently is working on a comprehensive history of hockey with Andrew Holman, a Canadian historian at Bridgewater State College. And students in Hardy's "The Coolest Game," a first-year "Inquiry" course that aims to introduce students to inquiry-based thinking and research through the lens of hockey, visit the collection for assigned research projects. "It's an exhilarating experience for them to get to use these archives," says Hardy. "They think it's the coolest stuff."

The University of New Hampshire, founded in 1866, is a world-class public research university with the feel of a New England liberal arts college. A land, sea and space-grant university, UNH is the state's flagship public institution, enrolling 11,800 undergraduate and 2,400 graduate students.

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