St. Louis Blues pick up top players

By Mark McTyre

For the Oregon Daily Emerald

The St. Louis Blues' organization of the National Hockey League is making moves that could take its team from a fourgame, first round playoff sweep in 1994, to the Stanley Cup Finals of 1995.

The Blues have gone money crazy in this off-season. The organization gave forward Brendan Shanahan \$15 million. It raised its ticket prices by 30 percent. It signed All-Star defenseman Scott Stevens to a free-agent offer sheet worth \$17 million over four years. Then, the Blues signed All-Star defenseman Al MacInnis to a four-year, \$13.7 million deal after acquiring his rights from Calgary for Phil Housley and swap of draft picks.

The deal for Stevens fell through as the New Jersey Devils matched the offer sheet, but the Blues didn't stop spending.

In the days to follow, the Blues signed All-Star goaltender Jon Casey, who posted a 30-15-9 record with the Boston Bruins in 1994, to a two-year, \$1.8 million deal to back up its own All-Star goaltender Curtis Joseph.

"After listening to our hockey people, we singled out areas that needed to be addressed," team President Jack Quinn said during an interview with the St. Louis Post-Dispatch. "We wanted to give Curtis Joseph some relief, and we accomplished that in signing Casey."

Let's not forget that the Blues still have the five-time 50-goal scorer Brett Hull and the relatively new acquisition of center Petr Nedved. What more could a city ask for?

A new design for uniforms? Got it. A new top-of-the-line arena?

The top coach in the NHL?

The Blues now have the top coach in the NHL: Stanley Cup winner Mike Keenan. Keenan signed a contract on Sunday worth an estimated \$5 million for five years.

Keenan's departure from the Stanley Cup champion New York Rangers was not a nice one. Keenan claims the Rangers breached his contract by not paying him his bonus on time.

Fans in St. Louis ought to start thinking about the 1995 Stanley Cup because Keenan might just bring it along with him.

Keenan went to war in New York against the jinx, the pressure and the papers. The Rangers won their first Stanley Cup in 54 years.

Italy loses to Brazil 3-2 in final World Cup match

PASADENA, Calif. (AP) — Italy's World Cup ended with tears and pride.

"We proved as good as Brazil on the field. We were only inferior to them on penalty kicks," Italian coach Arrigo Sacchi

"We are world champions, without the Cup," Italian Federation president Antonio Matarrese added. "Damn penalties. They are my nightmare since 1990."

The Italian team, fielding three players returning from injury, withstood Brazil's pressure for 120 exhausting minutes before surrendering 3-2 on penalty kicks.

Captain-sweeper Franco Baresi and star forward Roberto Baggio, the most charimastic players on the Italian team, made decisive mistakes from 12 yards.

Baresi, starting at the last minute, three weeks after undergoing knee surgery, blamed cramps and tiredness for his miss on the first shot.

Baggio, Italy's leading scorer with five goals in three games, also emphasized that exhaustion and a clouded mind caused him to kick the ball over the bar.

The Italian coach said that finishing second to Brazil was not a shame. "We can be proud of this team," Sacchi said.

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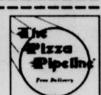
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