

Hockey

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teridge remained motionless throughout the morning. Finally, at 12:30 p.m. Feb. 18, a teammate realized he was not breathing.

Atteridge was rushed to the Robert F. Kennedy Medical Center in Hawthorne, Calif., where he was pronounced dead at 2:34 p.m. Dead.

The word still pierces through the ears of Hardin and Shaffer.

"I'll never forget that feeling of losing him," Shaffer said.

After Atteridge passed away, the Ducks relinquished their Pac-

8 games and were struck with the type of grief that one never knows how to handle.

Fortunately for the team, head coach Garreth MacDonald was there to provide adult guidance at such a precious moment.

"Losing Russ was tough for everybody," said MacDonald, who is in his second year as coach after coming down from his hometown of Toronto, Canada. "The team was hurting and was pretty lost. I did my best to keep everybody composed.

"When we were down there we were sort of isolated and it hadn't really sunk in yet. But when we

came back, the media started calling us with all of these questions, and it just hit us. He was gone."

The first day that the team arrived back in Eugene they realized that they could be on the verge of losing something else: The entire Oregon hockey program.

The Oregon Club Sports executive committee launched an investigation of the incident, and for a three-to-four month period, the 2000-01 season was in serious jeopardy.

"I feel quite lucky that we do have a team because my initial re-

action was that we weren't going to," Shaffar said. "I thought it was done."

The team, led by MacDonald, was not about to call it quits. They accepted the sanctions handed down to them and then formed some more of their own.

The team had to turn in a proposal, stating its code of conduct, by the first Saturday in July. One week later, MacDonald heard from Sandra Vaughn, the Club Sports recreation coordinator.

"Sandy told Garreth that you will have a team, and Garreth immediately told me," Hardin said. "I then told everybody else and it was just like, 'Whew.' What a relief."

Atteridge's parents also played an integral role in ensuring that the team would stay as an Oregon sport. Timothy Atteridge, Russ' father, flew in from Amherst and talked to University President Dave Frohnmayer and others to let them know that he didn't want the team to pass away along with his son.

"He was amazing," Shaffar said. "He and his wife helped us get through our feelings and they were just great people."

Said Hardin: "We all know that Russ wouldn't have wanted us to quit because of what happened."

The big season-opening game against Stanford is only days away, and on this Tuesday night, Hardin and Shaffer can hardly contain their excitement.

"Friday cannot come soon enough," said Hardin, whose team plays the Cardinal at 7:30 p.m. on Friday and Saturday at the Lane County Ice Arena located at the Lane County Fairgrounds on 796 W. 13th. "Since everything went down in February in L.A., we've been wanting to get back on the ice to prove that we're not bad guys at all."

MacDonald has recruited a solid group of freshmen and one jun-

ior college transfer that has everyone excited for the season. On road trips, there will be no drinking at all and there will always be a chaperone present.

"I feel very comfortable with the hockey team," said Vaughn, the Club Sports coordinator. "It's a big difference from last year in that everyone has really made a true commitment to the team."

None more so than Hardin and Shaffer, who are intent to end their collegiate hockey careers as winners. And both of them guarantee that they will take Atteridge with them in their hearts as they pursue a Pac-8 championship.

"My season is dedicated to Russ," Hardin said. "He was a friend of mine, he was a teammate and he really was the life of our team. He would just strip down to his boxers and run around the locker room sometimes to help keep the team light in serious times."

While both players said they are going to keep the focus of the team more on the present, there will always be a reminder of their fallen teammate hanging on their locker room wall.

It is the number "7" jersey that Atteridge wore. There will also be a moment of silence before Friday's game in tribute to Atteridge.


"That'll be a pretty emotional time," Shaffar said.

The Ducks will then go about doing what they've been craving to do all along: Just play hockey. The season will continue through the months of October, November, December and January.

And then, as if on cue, Oregon will get the privilege of hosting the Pac-8 Championships exactly one year to the day since Atteridge's tragic death.

"It's destiny, man," Hardin said. "We're going to win it all. I can feel it."

No doubt their number one fan will be watching it all take place from a bird's eye view in the clouds.



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Seventeen-year-old prep player in coma

The Associated Press

CASTLE ROCK, Wash. — Scott and Nori Murray had prepared to take their 17-year-old son to meet with college recruiters last weekend. Instead, their son was sent to a hospital, where he remains in a coma from injuries received in a high school football game.

After scoring Castle Rock High School's first touchdown Friday night, Matt Murray slumped into unconsciousness. The fullback had been tackled on his way toward the end zone and a helmet slammed into his head, tearing a blood vessel in his brain.

Matt remained in critical condition Wednesday in the intensive care unit of Legacy Emanuel Children's Hospital in Portland, Ore., hospital spokesman Mike Sinclair said.

Doctors operated Friday night. His vital signs are stable, but surgeons are reluctant to say when he will awake or whether he will completely recover, his parents said.

"Believe me, we've asked, 'Why Matt, why us?' We believe God's got a plan," Scott Murray said.

Matt is also a baseball player. Instead of taking their son to Yakima to meet baseball recruiters as planned, the Murrays have been staying in a motor home outside of the hospital.

Their 9-year-old son, Michael, is staying with friends in Castle Rock, a small southwest Washington town about 50 miles north of Portland.

"The doctor said it would probably be best that he doesn't come down right now, and we agree," Scott Murray said.

With homecoming planned this Friday, Castle Rock's head football coach Tom Bate said the mood was "somber."

School officials considered postponing homecoming, but the Murrays encouraged them to go ahead.

"We want the football team to continue on ... and not let down," Scott Murray said. "Matt would want it that way, too."

After Matt's injury, Rick Greene, family friend and pastor at Cowlitz Valley Christian Center, turned toward the bleachers and put his hands together to pray. Many followed suit, and cheerleaders dropped to their knees in prayer. Since then, prayer chains for Matt have been seen in Castle Rock and even in the Midwest.

"We're very surprised by how many lives he's touched. It's amazing how big this has gotten," said Nori Murray, a licensed practical nurse who runs an adult family home. "We appreciate all the support the community's given us."