

Happy Birthday!



Harry Belton
Rob Collett
Arlene Ahrenzweig
Howard Falchick
Frank Garner
Patrick Gowing
Dianne Halley
Mark Hilton

Brittany LaPalme
Elaine Lynch
Tina Mann
Sherry Thomas
Kat Vila
Beth Ward
Jim Wollrab

Rampage Gear

Official San Antonio Rampage merchandise is now available at sarampage.com! Now you can shop securely from your computer to get all the greatest Rampage merchandise.

Choose from a variety of jerseys, shirts, sweatshirts, pucks, and much more! This is the official place on the web where you can find San Antonio Rampage merchandise. This site is controlled by the team, there are no middlemen, and when you order something from them your order will be fulfilled by them.



Next Month

- Nominations
- Duties of Office
- Baseball Game

Announcements

May Membership Meeting

Monday • May 19 • 7:00 pm
Wolfgang Pucks
2610 Sawgrass Mills Circle
Sunrise, FL 33323
954-846-8668

June Nominations Meeting

Monday • June 16 • 7:00 pm
Sawgrass Room
Office Depot Center
Tentative date and location

- Member of the Month •
Doug English

Florida Panthers Booster Club
P.O. Box 551797
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33355

Hotline • 954-835-7575

FPBC Website
www.flpbc.com

Florida Panthers Official Website
www.floridapanthers.com

San Antonio Official Website
www.sarampage.com



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Our “Pawsitive Panther”

by Cheryl LaPalme

The Florida Panthers Booster Club voted for its choice to receive the “Pawsitive Panther Award” during their March General Membership Meeting. This year’s recipient was Branislav Mezei.

Mezei played 11 games for the Florida Panthers during the 2002/2003 season and scored two goals during that time, including a game winner against New Jersey on January 1.

He has been out of the line-up for most of the year due to injury and during his recovery, he took the time to visit with the Booster Club and give his thoughts on the team, its progress and what he thought the future held for the Panthers Organization as a whole.

Linda Hart presented him with his award shortly after his first practice back with the team. Mezei was clearly surprised that he won and showed off his award to anyone who happened to be around.

“Peaches,” Mezei called out to team equipment manager, Mark Brennan. “Peaches, look at this. Only one practice and I get an award.”

Brennan just shook his head and went towards the equipment room as he mumbled something about needing a bigger helmet for a swelled head.

Mezei shrugged it off and turned his attention to Peter Worrell and Byron Ritchie who were chatting on the other bench. He took his award, skated over to Worrell and Ritchie and proudly showed it off to them.

Video of the presentation by Linda Hart was shown during the Panthers/Carolina game on April 4, 2003.

Shortly after the presentation, Mezei was sent to San Antonio to help the Rampage during their playoff run.



Photo by Cheryl LaPalme © 2003

Linda Hart presents Branislav Mezei with the Booster Club’s “Pawsitive Panther Award.”



Florida Panthers Booster Club
P.O. Box 551797
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33355
USA

ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

Meeting Reminder

Next General Meeting

Monday • May 19 • 7:00 pm
Wolfgang Pucks
2610 Sawgrass Mills Circle
Sunrise, FL 33323
954-846-8668

From the President's Desk

Hello Hockey Fans!

Our next general membership meeting will be May 19 at 7:00pm and it will be held at WolfGang Pucks at the Oasis in the Sawgrass Shopping Center. Don't forget to bring your hockey memorabilia to the meeting and donate it to our first ever Hockey Memorabilia Swap. All proceeds will benefit the Serge Payer Foundation.

Twelve Florida Panthers are playing for their respective countries in the World Championships in Finland.

As of May 4, Jani Hurme has two shutouts under his belt and Roberto Luongo has one. Jay Bouwmeester and Niklas Hagman each have two goals in five games. Matt Cullen, Pavel Trnka, Olli Jokinen and Adrian Wichser have a goal each and Ivan Majeski is a +4.

Elections are just around the corner. The duties and requirements of each office will be given in next month's issue of Cat Chat.

If you are running for office, please make sure you are a member in good standing and that your dues are paid in full for the 2003-2004 year by the start of the June Nominations Meeting. If those two requirements are not met, you will not be able to run for office.

I hope many of you will take the opportunity to either run or vote in the upcoming elections.

Cheryl LaPalme



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Vice President ----- Mark Hilton
Treasurer ----- Barbara Kay Kahn
Secretary ----- Evy Leach

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Events ----- Doug English/Scott Buckin
Membership ----- Mark Hilton
Publications ----- Cheryl LaPalme
Youth Hockey ----- Suzanne Miller
Youth Membership ----- Deby Pagano/
ShellyGoldberg

Cat Chat Contributors

Richard Lewis Photography
Serge Payer Foundation

Editor and Layout Design

Cheryl LaPalme

Photo Journalist

Evy Leach

Place Membership Application Here

3rd Annual Serge Payer Charity Golf Classic

Florida Panthers' prospect Serge Payer, began his public crusade against Guillain-Barré Syndrome (GBS) in January 2000 when his "Skate with Serge" fundraising event benefited the Guillain-Barré Syndrome Foundation.

Serge was diagnosed with GBS in early 1999 while playing junior hockey with the Kitchener Rangers of the Ontario Hockey League. The disorder is a rare but serious acute paralytic neurological disease.

There is no cure for GBS.

One in 75,000 people are afflicted with this debilitating disease, regardless of age, gender or race. The course and progression of GBS are unpredictable. Most patients recover from even the most severe cases, although about 15-20% of patients live with some weakness and permanent impairment. The mortality rate is about 5%.

Following his experience, in a public message, Serge stated: "It is my hope to raise general awareness of Guillain-Barré Syndrome and help people who are afflicted with this debilitating illness. Ultimately, I'd like to do whatever I can to help fund research, new treatments and a cure for this disease."

During the April General Membership Meeting, the Florida Panthers Booster Club unanimously voted in favor of helping Payer with his efforts. The Club will be raising funds until July 5th. On July 18, 2003, Payer will hold his Third Annual Serge Payer Golf Classic in Rockland, Ontario, and the funds collected by the Booster Club will be presented to Serge at that time.

The monthly raffles held after the May and June meetings will go towards the Payer Foundation as



Photo courtesy of the Serge Payer Foundation © 2003
From left: Derek Roy, Serge Payer, Sylvain Lalonde, Dan Boyle and Dan Briere at last year's Tournament.

well as all funds collected at the May General Membership Flea Market.

If members would like to make a personal donation, those donations will be collected during the May and June Membership Meetings. Please make sure your check is made out to the Serge Payer Foundation.

If you can not attend either of those meetings and you would still like to donate funds, please send your check to:

Serge Payer Foundation
c/o Florida Panthers Booster Club
P.O. Box 551797
Ft. Lauderdale, FL 33355

Please make sure your check arrives no later than July 5th to ensure that it will be received in time for the golf tournament.

For more information about the Serge Payer Foundation, please visit their website at: www.sergepayerfoundation.com

Information for this article was obtained from the Serge Payer Foundation website and was used with permission.



Upcoming Events and Information

Membership Meeting Change

The May General Membership Meeting has been changed. It will not be held at Office Depot Center. Instead the meeting will be held at Wolfgang Pucks at 7:00pm. Wolfgang Pucks is located at the Oasis in the Sawgrass Mills Mall.

Please note: Dinner will not be served during the meeting.

The address and telephone for Wolfgang Pucks is:

2610 Sawgrass Mills Circle
Sunrise, FL 33323
954-846-8668

This meeting will also be host to our first Hockey Memorabilia Swap. Proceeds from the event will benefit the Serge Payer Foundation.

Members can donate their extra hockey memorabilia to the Swap and bid on items donated by other members. Hats, pucks, sticks, pins, cards, jerseys, photos, etc., are all welcome.

This will be a good opportunity to complete your personal collection at a price that won't break the bank.

Please RSVP to Doug English at denglish6@cs.com or call the Florida Panthers Hotline at 954-835-7575 and let us know how many will be attending the meeting and if you will be donating items to the Swap.



Early Renewal and Family Membership

The Florida Panthers Booster Club is now taking early renewals for the 2003-2004 season.

Best of all, we now have Family Membership rates available! In order to qualify for the Family Membership rate, at least two individuals from the same household and belonging to the same family must be registered at the same time. If the criteria is met, those individuals will receive \$5.00 off their membership dues for that year.

Don't forget, individuals who are 13 – 17 years of age qualify for the Youth Membership Rate. Youth Members who join with their family will qualify for the \$5.00 off the regular price of membership.

All members wishing to run for office must have their membership renewed prior to the start of the June Nominations Meeting.

Membership dues are as follows:

Adult Membership

\$25.00 per person (18 years old and up)

Youth Membership

\$10.00 per person (13-17 years old)

Family (Adult) Membership

\$20.00 per person (18 years old and up)

Family (Youth) Membership

\$5.00 per person (13-17 years old)

Take Me Out to the Ballgame - 2003

Saturday, June 7, 2003 at 6:05 p.m.
Florida Marlins vs. Anaheim Angels
Seating is in Club Level C (left field)
Tickets: \$12.00/members
\$13.00/non members

Discounted Parking is NOT available this season. Cost is \$9.00 per vehicle. Please send your check payable to the Florida Panthers Booster Club by May 24, 2003 to:

Florida Panthers Booster Club
Take me out to the Ballgame 2003
PO Box 551797
Fort Lauderdale, FL. 33322-1797

Darcy Hordichuk - Toughness, Power, Heart

by Cheryl LaPalme

Darcy Hordichuk will be the first to tell you, he's had a great life. He grew up in the small town of Kamsack, Saskatchewan. The town boasted little more than 2500 people and was one of those places where everyone knew everyone else.

Hordichuk, or Hordy as he is known to friends and teammates, grew up wanting to be a police officer. He would often take part in ride-alongs in an effort to see what the life of a police officer was all about.

“The neatest thing about doing that is you don't know what's going to happen that day or that night. It's just exciting, if you get a car chase or something like that. It was great.”

Like just about everyone from Canada, Darcy grew up loving hockey and during the winter months, (when he was not ski-dooing), he would flood the backyard turning it into a hockey rink.

During his youth and into his adult life, Darcy looked up to Tyler Wright, who is currently with the Columbus Blue Jackets. Tyler's brother, Douglas is about the same age as Darcy and often, they would drive six hours just to watch Tyler play in juniors.

“I've said that there are three things that I want, that I've dreamed of all my life ... and that is to be in a PlayStation 2 game, to have my name on my hockey sticks and to play against Tyler Wright. He's the one that basically motivated me that it [playing in the NHL] wasn't impossible.”

As he grew older, his hockey career began taking shape. He played for the Dauphin Kings and the Saskatoon Blades going 12-21-33 in 58 games with the Kings, and 9-10-19 in 129 games over a span of two years with the Blades. What really got him noticed were his 279 penalty minutes with the Kings and his 515 penalty minutes with the Blades.

Hordy was drafted by 9th by the Atlanta Thrashers going 180th overall in the 2000 NHL Entry Draft. He was signed shortly after rookie camp and split his time between Atlanta and the Orlando Solar Bears (IHL). In 2001, he helped Orlando win the Turner Cup, not with his fists, but with his hands by scoring the game winning goal in overtime during game four against Chicago. That winning goal gave Orlando a 3-1 lead in the series.

“That was exciting. It's amazing what happens when you crash the net. Even I get lucky once and a while,” laughed Hordichuk.

Hordy has very specific ideas about the rules in the NHL. In particular, he would not mind seeing the instigator rule removed.

“I think once you do that, then you'll see really, probably a lot more slashing and stuff like that taken away from the game,

because everyone's not going to be as tough as they are when they have the instigator rule because if they slash someone, knowing the guy's going to get hammered on, then I don't think he's going to do half the stuff.

Unfortunately now in the game, there are so many guys that will call you on, call you on and then they keep their gloves on and skate away and because you've got the gloves off, you go to the penalty box. I think that's brutal.”

Every second of every shift, Darcy works hard to gain his team an advantage. He is the first to humbly admit that he is not exactly a goal scorer and he is quick to point out what it will take for him to stay in the NHL.

“My whole life, I've never been the most talented player or the most gifted player so the only thing that has basically got me here is my hard work. When you've been in this situation before, you know that it's a lot of work to get here and I'm not going to give that up by not working hard.”

On March 19, 2002, Darcy was traded to the Phoenix Coyotes who immediately assigned him to Springfield (AHL). The following day, he was called up by the Coyotes and remained with the team for the remainder of the year. During the 2002/2003 season, he split his time between the Coyotes and Springfield before being traded to the Florida Panthers on March 8, 2003.

“I think I fit a lot better in this franchise. I'd like to bring a lot to the Panthers and make [Rick] Dudley look good in the trade.”

Hordy challenged Krzysztof Oliwa of the Boston Bruins to a fight on March 15. It was only his third game with the Panthers, but it would be his last game of the 2002-2003 season. During the bout, he twisted his ankle the wrong way and suffered a high ankle sprain.

While in recovery, Hordichuk was a positive influence on the team, but where he really

shined was his influence in the community. He's the kind of person who enjoys volunteering his time and recently, he took part in a program titled, “Principal for a Day.” The program took him to Westglades Middle School in Parkland, FL where he took a tour of the school, answered questions from enthusiastic students and handed out autographs.

His work in the community will continue in the 2003-2004 season when he unveils two new programs. The first program is called “Hordy's Pack” and it is similar to other programs which give game tickets to local charitable organizations. He would also like to have shirts made up for all those who participate in “Hordy's Pack.”

“When I was growing up, I actually started a t-shirt company and I ended up just really liking that aspect of it. There's going to be one shirt that's directed towards “Hordy's Pack. The one we've got right now is, ‘If you mess with the power, the lights go out!’”

Another program will involve contributions made to local charities based on his jersey number - 24. The contributions will go: \$2.40 per shift; \$6.24 for every clean solid body check; \$10.24 for each shot on goal; \$50.24 per assist; \$240 per goal.

Twenty-Four dollars will be donated each time the team takes fewer penalties than the opponent and each time they win at least 50% of their face-offs. Panthers' fans will also get the opportunity to help out because each time they give a standing ovation (for any reason), \$24.00 will be donated.

It's easy to get caught up in a conversation with Darcy. Unlike many athletes, he's very down to earth and willing to talk with everyone about any subject. He has made it possible for fans to get closer to him by putting out his own website located at www.darcyhordichuk.com.

Hordichuk takes great pride in the fact that he is completely hands on with the site (with the exception of the actual graphics). He answers all the questions, he donates

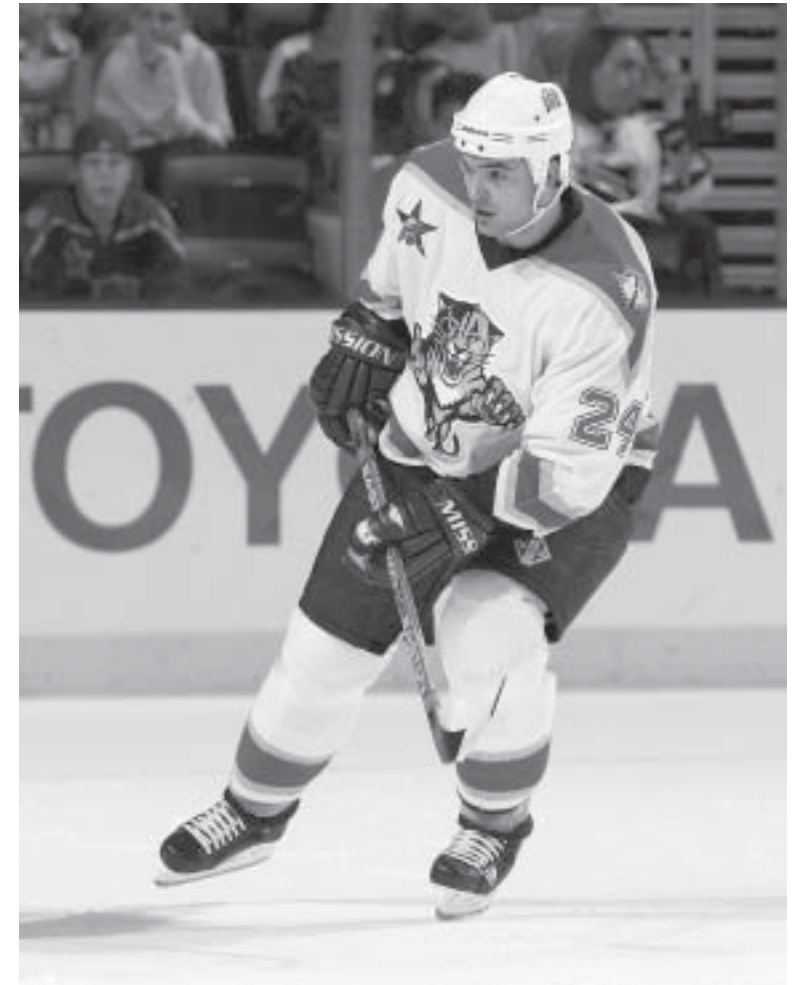


Photo by Richard Lewis Photography © 2003

Darcy Hordichuk his first home game as a Florida Panther.

all the photos and he uses it to connect with past and present fans.

An enforcer is rarely thought of as a spiritual person, but according to Darcy, “I definitely have my beliefs. I know that it's probably the reason I'm here today and I definitely thank God for everything He's done. I think He's made me a better person.” Hordy stays grounded by including God in his game day rituals by saying a prayer prior to the start of the game. He keeps himself grateful by marking his sticks with an “S” to remind him of where he's been.

“I put an “S” on my sticks to remind me what Springfield was like so if I'm having a tough game and I don't feel as motivated, I just look at it. Sometimes I have about 10 broken sticks with “S's” on them so I guess its working.”

Hordichuk may not be as talented as other NHL players, but his work ethic, his heart and his love for the community more than make up for that. “I'm going to prove to everyone that gave up on me that I'm a good player and that's what motivates me every game,” reflects Hordichuk. “I'd like to be someone that's going to contribute and be effective.”