



## Men's Blues – Captain's Log



For yet another year the Men's Blues have played strongly in the top division of the British University Ice Hockey League, the BUIHA. Holding a 4-1 league record, the team has outscored its opponents 34:16 in its victories. For the second year in a row the team's top scorers – Landis Stankieveh and William Bruce, followed closely by first-year linemate Parker Carney – are dominating the league's leader board. The team's sole loss (8-6 to the London Dragons) simultaneously was the team's best performance;

our players put up a hard fight and the match ultimately was determined by a number of controversial calls made by the referee. Overall, the season is shaping up to be a good one. In light of the BUIHA's new playoff format, the Blues can be pretty confident about securing a playoff spot, and stand a good chance of winning the universities national title for a second year in a row (not to mention extending their Varsity Match winning streak to six years running).

All this success has come despite numerous obstacles that nearly railroaded the entire season:

The team had to sort out issues with the ice rink's management group to secure ice time for matches, it has been plagued with injuries (including a near fatal one to yours truly), and it has struggled with rising costs in this poor economic climate. That we've accomplished this much in the face of such hardship is a testament to the strength and resilience this club is renowned for, as well as of its individual members. I am truly honoured to have these men by my side, I cannot thank my supporting staff enough, and I look forward to playing out the rest of the season.

Ruben Leavitt  
2009-2010 Captain, OUIHC Men's Blues

## Men's Tour 2010

Early January saw the Mens Blues travel to Eastern Europe for their 2009/2010 Tour. Thanks to alumnus and club historian Michael "Moose" Talbot, we knew we were following up a long tradition of OUIHC tours on the continent. Significant battles had been fought against teams in Berlin, Prague, Budapest, Vienna and throughout Switzerland in the 1920's and 1930's (and surely several times since). Our itinerary saw us due to land in Budapest on 10 January, but the chaotic English winter refused to play along and we were stranded for a day while our flights were rearranged to Vienna instead. From Vienna, we made our way to Bratislava and Prague, before finishing with a weekend in Berlin.

The Blues first match pitted us against a team of students from the University of Bratislava. Little did we know that they all played at a high club level and were studying at the Sports Academy ... in spite of heroic efforts by Andy Peterson, our stand-in goalie from the Vikings, we were given a lesson in how to play hockey. Two days later, we found ourselves facing off against a similar team from Charles University, Prague, with local alumnus Vojtech Chloupek (2004) joining our ranks. We had faced Charles University in the final of a European Universities tournament in Munich a year earlier, losing 4:3. But this time, playing in Sparta Prague's stadium, the Czechs had prepared better than us, and stormed to a 12:5 victory in a free-flowing, fast-paced match.

The final fixture saw us pitted against FASS eV Berlin, a grudge match against a club that we had defeated handily a year earlier.



Berlin had bolstered their ranks since the year before, and it became a tight encounter. The match see-sawed back and forth, but with two minutes remaining we found ourselves down 5:3. An outstanding effort by William Bruce brought us within one, and with a minute remaining, we pulled our goalie. Berlin gained control of the puck, but a brilliant sliding save by Parker Carney prevented an empty net goal, and we carried the puck back into their end, forcing a face off. 16 seconds remained on the clock, and as we won the draw, Rob Bradbury got a shot on goal, and the rebound was promptly buried by Bruce: tie game! Ice hire time didn't allow for overtime so we went straight into a shootout, and our shooters prevailed to win the match.

It was a fitting end to an incredibly successful tour that saw the Blues play a high level of hockey, discover some of Europe's most beautiful cities, and render every bar in their path a dangerous place. We are now well primed for both this year's Varsity Match and the VM afterparty, and looking forward to even more success in the second half of the season.



## Women's Blues – Captain's Log



This has been an exciting season for the Women's Blues, as we have seen our team expand and develop.

With eight returning players from last year, two late season additions that did not make last year's campaign, and an assortment of fresh international talent (thanks to our successful recruitment operation and training week) we started the season off with a formidable roster.

This year the Women continue to play as part of the English Ice Hockey Association's Women's Division 1 Midlands where we hold a 0-3-1 league record. Before the holiday break, our schedule had us

training both on and off the ice as well as playing in four matches, in which we saw all of our players improve.

During the holiday break we travelled to Vierumäki, Finland where we spent a week of intensive training at the Ice Hockey Centre of Excellence. This was immediately followed by our first tour in the French Alps.

This year we have faced challenges on and off the ice. Thanks to the efficacy of our treasurer and the support of generous alumni, we have been able to keep subscription fees manageable for our players despite rising costs and a depressed

economy. We also had to cope with the temporary medically imposed ban on ice hockey of one of our Assistant Captains after the discovery of a heart condition, both as teammates and as friends. These challenges, however, have only strengthened our fortitude and resolve and drawn us closer together.

I cannot thank my executive enough for working so diligently to overcome the obstacles we have faced, as well as all the individual members, present and past for their continued support - I consider it a great honour and privilege to be among your ranks. Thank you all again, and I look forward our continued development and success.

Chana Hoffmitz

2009-2010 Captain, OUIHC Women's Blues

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## Girls' Camp in Finland and Tour in France

This year's Christmas break provided the team more opportunity for honing its hockey skills than it had ever had before: A week-long training camp at the Sport Institute of Finland in Vierumäki was followed by another week in France, where the team played exhibition games against local women's teams.

After attending hockey camp in the Czech Republic for several years, the team headed further north this year, to the beautiful white surroundings of the Vierumäki Sports Centre. The team was coached on and off ice several times a day by Niels Garbe,



Vellu Gröhn and Juha Teräsvasara of the International Ice Hockey Centre for Excellence. The gruelling training program resulted in visible improvements in individual skills and team coherence. Most players took particularly to heart Vellu's synthesis of what playing ice hockey is all about: "Ass down, back straight!"

The conditions that were perfect for the Vierumäki camp – plenty of snow and freezing temperatures – proved less ideal when it was time to continue the trip to Courchevel via a stopover in London, a night in Geneva and a game in Grenoble. After various adventures with cancelled flights, missing luggage and bus crashes, all players (including alumni reinforcements Jamie Waller (1999-

2007) and Mima Boardman (2005-8)) reached the Grenoble ice rink, where they were treated to a stinging 14-3 loss at the hands of the Brûleurs de Loups, which boasts 9 members of the French national team among its roster.

The team spent the following five days in Courchevel, where the pursuit of winter activities, such as



skiing and lugeing, was punctuated by two further games, one at Meribel and the other at Courchevel against Val Vanoise. While the team lost both encounters (13-4 at Meribel and 9-2 at Courchevel), there was much to be positive about goaltender Stephanie Simmons put in stellar performances, team top scorer Joyce Meng showed she was still on form (2+1) and in general there was significant improvement towards the end – the team actually outscoring its much more experienced hosts by a goal in the last period at Courchevel.

Everyone felt the memorable trip will come to much use later in the season, most significantly when the time arrives to face off against the Light Blues on 28 February.



## Vikings – Captain’s Log



It has been an up and up year for the Oxford Vikings. After finishing bottom of the division last season, the team needed a boost in personnel and that’s exactly what it got. With 16 new players the Vikings have been able to turn things around entirely, and obtain a total of 6 wins in 8 games, including defeating varsity rivals, Cambridge Eskimos, in a convincing 6-2 victory on their ice in a friendly, a monstrous 15-2 thrashing of closest league rivals London, and all but securing a playoff

spot. With the help of our top scorer, Rob Bradbury, who has notched 20 points in just 8 games, as well as a dominating defence, and a strong mix of rookies and vets, 2010 presents a fantastic opportunity for the Vikings to earn their first Varsity challenge victory over the Eskimos since 2001, and perhaps even a strong play off run.

In a similar scenario to the Men’s Blues, the Vikings have also suffered their fair share of injuries, with our player/coach, Mitch Breisner, likely to be out right up until Varsity, and another player

suffering a season ending injury in just the second game of the season. Despite this the Vikings are looking in the greatest shape in memory for most, with the large squad offering strong depth, yet maintaining team unity and a spirited atmosphere on and off the ice. As captain, I am extremely proud to have the opportunity to lead these players into Varsity, and will not forget this season regardless of how we finish. This season has so far proven to be a big success, and every single player in the squad is to thank for it.

Andy Peterson  
2009-2010 Captain, Oxford Vikings

## VARSITY WEEKEND EVENTS AND OTHER ALUMNI INFORMATION

We hope you have enjoyed the inaugural number of the OUIHC alumni newsletter. The second and final issue of this 2009-10 season will be posted to you in May and will cover, most importantly, Varsity and other match results for the rest of the season. If you cannot wait that long to get club news, please visit our new website at <http://www.ouihc.com>.

### Varsity weekend 26-28 February 2010

The Old Blues Hockey Tour ends in Oxford in time for the Varsity weekend. The weekend’s alumni events kick off with a joint **banquet** with CUIHC alumni at St Cross college on 26 February, starting with a pre-dinner drinks reception at 6.30 pm. The cost of the banquet is £55 and must be paid in advance. Please contact the OUIHC historian Michael “Moose” Talbot ([mzbtalbot@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:mzbtalbot@yahoo.co.uk)) for any details, and to book your place(s), by 12 February.

On Saturday 27 February, an informal **lunch** is organised for all **men** alumni at Vincent’s club at 12.30 pm. Please contact Michael Talbot for details and to confirm your place (£7) by 12 February.

The **men’s 90<sup>th</sup> Varsity Match** faces off at the Oxford ice rink at 4.30 pm on 27 February. Tickets cost £8 and usually sell out in advance, so to avoid disappointment, please get in touch with Michael Talbot, who is co-ordinating tickets for the alumni, by 12 February. We look forward to many Oxford alumni attending to ensure support for the Dark Blues.

The weekend does not end there: It is the **women’s** turn to skate onto the ice of the Oxford rink for their **Varsity Match** at 4.30 pm on Sunday 28 February. Tickets will be on sale at the door for £6, but can also be purchased in advance for £5 each by making a payment to the Oxford University Ice Hockey Club (account number: 10716502, sort code: 20-65-18) and bringing a printout of the payment confirmation to the game.

The last event of the weekend is the **Viking’s Varsity Challenge Match** against the Cambridge Eskimos, which begins after the women at 6.30 pm. Entry to the game is free of charge.

Hopefully lots of alumni will decide to make a weekend of it, and stay to watch Sunday’s games as well!

If you have any comments or suggestions, please e-mail them to us either at [mensalumni@ouihc.com](mailto:mensalumni@ouihc.com) or [womensalumni@ouihc.com](mailto:womensalumni@ouihc.com). We are still compiling our database and rosters for previous years, so we would be particularly grateful for contact details of your fellow alumni and confirmation that you are happy for us to publish your name on our website. Please let us know if you would rather not receive any more newsletters from us by using the “unsubscribe” function in the cover e-mail.

With hockey greetings,  
Laura Halonen and Julian de Hoog, OUIHC alumni officers