

Defying The Odds

by: Ben Solin

(Ben, a former Daniel Hand Tiger, is now playing Prep hockey at Exeter. He has committed to play college hockey at Harvard University)

High school hockey's a time to be remembered. If you're lucky, you're able to suit up for 80 games in your career. 80 times sitting in the locker room before a big game, trying to get your self to focus. If you didn't play hockey, you just wouldn't get it. Why you had to get a certain amount of sleep the night before a game, had to eat the same breakfast, tape your stick the same way, do all the same stretches in the same order, sit in the same seat on the bus ride to the game, dress in the same outfit for every game, and listen to that one song that always was able to get your head focused before stepping onto the ice for warm-ups.

It's the little things like this that you miss once you don't have it anymore. The 30-minute bus rides to and from the rink that everyone "hated" but really it was a chance to screw around with your closest friends. 30 years from now you're not going to remember the little stuff like how a certain day at school went or how sick you were one day. But I can promise you that you will remember the game of odds you played with your buddies to see which of you could get the snack-bar girl's number first. Or the time you hung your other friends helmet from the ceiling with clear tape just to get him back for putting a strip of tape on your blade before practice. It's the little things in hockey that go a long way, and create inseparable memories and bonds with certain kids you never might've crossed paths with before in your life. **Most of all it's a place to call home.**



For a kid who started off his freshman year, being 5'1" and weighing 100 lbs. soaking wet, it was a place where you could fit in. Nothing else mattered other than your love for the game. It was a place to prove yourself, a place to prosper and to prove everyone else wrong. It taught you that hard work can really

produce miracles on and off the ice. I've heard it all... "You can't compete at the high school level, you're way too small!" "You can't have a winning season, you just lost 12 seniors!" "You can't win the SCC Championship! You're not deep enough." "You can't lead the state in points, do you know how many good players are out there?" "You can't win the state championship with a 10-10 regular season record!" "You can't play prep school hockey those kids are too good!" "You'll never be able to make it into the elite 8." "You can't play college hockey, you're too small and not dynamic enough."

I'm here to say never stop believing and working for YOUR individual goals, because hockey players know best that they have a great chance to become a reality. Good luck to every team out there as the season comes to a close, and seniors - the clock is ticking, make the most of your final moments representing your school's colors.

