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One-on-one: Pavelek spearheads Vikings' resurgence

BY JOSEPH HAYES • TIMES HERALD • JANUARY 21, 2009

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Mark Pavelek has been groomed to be a hockey player since he was a child.

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He first laced up skates at age 4, and since has played for club teams such as the Port Huron Flags and, most recently, Detroit Honeybaked.

After years of playing against the top competition in the state, the pressure of a hectic travel schedule began to mount. His desire slowly subsided for the game.

That is until Pavelek decided to play for his school team, the Marysville Vikings. Now, Pavelek is spearheading the resurgence of the program.

"He's a really good player," coach Paul Moretz said. "Since I first watched him play in fifth grade, I knew he would be.

"He has great awareness on the ice and great anticipation. He reads the ice and the play as well as anybody. He's a great hockey player and an all-around good kid."

Pavelek talks about his past frustrations, his new team and his goals:



JOSEPH HAYES ONE-ON-ONE



Joseph Hayes: You had been playing hockey for much of your life when you decided to take a break. What made you change your mind, and why did you step away?

Mark Pavelek: It was a lot of pressure playing before. Now it's a lot more fun. It's a lot less pressure. The coaching is different. That's probably a big part of it. I'm playing with my friends now.

JH: How demanding was it to play on one of the elite club teams in the state?

MP: It was really tough. You got home late; you didn't get much sleep. I didn't have a social life at all. It was pretty much all about hockey.

JH: How have things changed?

MP: Things are a lot better. I was just going to put (hockey) in the past because of all the stress. But my friends got me playing again. It's fun playing with my friends. I used to never be able to see them.

JH: Are you surprised with how quickly your new team has come together?

MP: I am a little surprised. I didn't know how they would accept me. They accept me as a good player. It's actually a lot easier. It's a slower pace than what I was playing before.

JH: With Honeybaked, you played defense. How has the adjustment been to right wing?

MP: In my whole AAA career I played defense. It's different playing forward, but it feels natural. I'm getting used to it. I'm a lot more of an offensive player now. It helps to have played defense. When my teammates are doing something wrong, I can help correct them sometimes.

JH: How would you describe your playing style ?

MP: I'm an enforcer. I score a lot more now. I practice a lot outside of the rink. I work on my stick handling and shooting at the net in my basement. I try to do the little stuff that gets you one step ahead.

JH: What goals are left for the rest of the season?

MP: Hopefully, we can win states. In the future, I'd like to play hockey in college. I've known people who have done that. They say you can get to places by doing it. It's the right path to go.



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Smooth moves: Marysville's Mark Pavelek takes the puck down the ice as Ortonville's Anthony Rousos, left, and J.T. Wedding watch inside McMorran Pavillion. (By MELISSA WAWZYSKO, Times Herald)

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Marky is a GREAT kid whom I had the absolute pleasure to coach.He will go far with his attitude and work ethic.GREAT PARENTS also.

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