

Commentary

Save your venom for someone who truly deserves it

Every time Daniel Briere or Chris Drury touches the puck in Buffalo, the sold-out crowd in HSBC rains down a cascade of boos on the former Sabres captains, the men who led Buffalo to back-to-back Eastern Conference finals appearances.

Radio call-in shows and Web site message boards overflow with angry sentiments about Brian Campbell "turning his back on the city that made him a star" and renouncing him as a traitor simply because he wouldn't accept the contracts offered by management. You can bet the next time Campbell plays in Buffalo, the fans won't chant his nickname "Soupy." They'll find a far more colorful epithet for him.

When Eric Moulds caught a slant pass over the middle during the Buffalo Bills preseason game against the Tennessee Titans last August, the crowd at Ralph Wilson Stadium ignored the decade of effort and work Moulds put in while playing for the Bills and chastised him with boos.

So you have four men who played their hearts out for their former teams, were revered by the Buffalo fans and now probably couldn't walk into the Walden Galleria without getting chastised by "betrayed" fans.

And I can do is shake my head in amazement.

What does this say about our community that we treat people in this manner? These are the same fans who showed such class in the Richard Zednick and Kevin Everett incidents in the previous six months. Buffalo received praise from fans around the country for the way they responded to Zednick's slashed throat and Everett's broken neck. And the fans deserved a pat on the back for their behavior.

But every time I see a former Sabre or Bill come back to Buffalo and get booed for having the audacity to sign with a different team, I feel ashamed. Briere, Drury, Campbell and Moulds are good men. The only difference between them now and during their Buffalo playing days is the name on the front of the jerseys they wear.

Look at it this way, if a competing company offered you twice as much money to do the same job you currently have, would you tell the recruiting office to stick it? Heck, no. You'd do the same thing as everyone else. You'd take the job and the money

and not look back. It's the same thing with athletes. This is their job. And if someone wants to pay them a boatload of money to do it, don't think less of them for taking the deal. You would do the same thing, and you know it.

If you want to ride a former Buffalo athlete, why not stick with someone like Dominik Hasek or Willis McGahee, men who dumped on Buffalo before they even had one foot out the door. Do you remember how Hasek "negotiated" his own trade to Detroit, making sure the Red Wings didn't give up anything to the Sabres and then told everyone he would go into the Hockey Hall of Fame as a Red Wing before even playing one game with Detroit? Do you remember McGahee blasting the Buffalo area for having "nothing to do?" Well, we know there's one thing he was doing in Western New York, racking up nearly as

many paternity suits as touchdowns.

Don't even get me started on that O.J. Simpson fellow.

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Sports Reporter

Pioneer

(Continued from page 16)

quarter. Klun scored six of her seven points in the first quarter and grabbed nine rebounds. Jessica Kowalski and Steele each added five points. Becca Rumschik scored a basket.

East shot 13 of 33 from the floor.

East's defense held Grand Island to 11 baskets (nine twos, two threes).

East finishes 17-7. They lose six seniors — Steele, Jessica Kowalski, Burgio, Hawkins, Stolzenburg

and Ally Kotz.

"I can't be disappointed with this group," said Durr. "I'm happy with how we competed throughout the year."

Bakhai and Steele were named to the ECIC Division II First Team and Klun and Stolzenburg made the ECIC II Second Team.

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Lions Club slates 10th annual girls basketball all-star games

Some of the area's best female high school basketball players will have one last shot to dazzle the fans when the Cheektowaga Lions Club hosts its 10th annual Senior High School Ladies Basketball Classic Saturday, March 15.

The game, which will be played at Cheektowaga Central High School, 3600 Union Road, will feature players who were nominated by area high school coaches and then chosen to participate by a panel of school officials from the region.

The Father Justin Council Knights of Columbus is again a major sponsor of the Classic, which will pit the Lionesses against the Justinettes at 6:30 p.m., followed by the Lions and the Knights at approximately 8:30.

At the conclusion of each game, an MVP will be selected from each team. Later this year, a scholarship will be presented in the names of the MVPs to a deserving

student from each of their schools.

Ticket prices are \$5 for adults and \$4 for students. Tickets can be bought before the games by calling 685-1422.

Participants for the games include the following:

Lionesses

Rachel Sluberski (Iroquois), Taylor Pagano (Cheektowaga), Shaniqua Ray (Cardinal O'Hara), Cheryl Hartinger (Kenmore East), Krissy Wesolowski (JFK), Nicole Calbi, Jessica Yee, Tori Rebmann, Gina Moss and Elisha Darby. The Lionesses will be coached by Matt LaRoach (Sweet Home) and Chris Koselny (East Aurora).

Justinettes

Joey Ruderman (Maryvale), Melissa Schultz (JFK), Holly Travis (Clarence), Margo Pagano (Cheektowaga), Sarah Tarrantino (East Aurora), Nadia Durno (Sweet Home), Jen Hare, Mallory Griffiths, Rachel Lowry, Jasmine Ball and Hope Newton. The

Justinettes will be coached by Keith Junik (St. Mary's of Lancaster), Frank Martin and Debra Stanczyk.

Knights

Grace Cunningham (Iroquois), Kate Kapanek (St. Mary's), Jessie Tarrantino (East Aurora), Samantha Arena (Sacred Heart), Gleniesha Ferby (Sweet Home), Krystal Watson (Sacred Heart), Katie Lancellotti (Clarence), Ashley Gallagher (East Aurora), Nikki Frederickson, Brianna Lee and Erin Asquith. The Knights will be coached by Dean Ramirez (Maryvale) and Carole Zirkle.

Lions

Breanna Harris (Cheektowaga), Brianna Nemmer (Clarence), Jazmine Bell (Kenmore East), Toni Caruso (Maryvale), Jill Fairchild (Orchard Park), Joelle Connelly (Pioneer), Anne Wapshare, Meghan Dougherty, Jordyn Eckman, Katie Medina, Jordan Meheran and Amie Stuitje. The Lions will be coached by Rachel Martin and Ken Ricker.



Williamsville East's Bridget Steele, right, grabs a rebound in the Lady Flames' 41-38 win over Grand Island in the Section VI Class A-1 final last Thursday at Erie Community College's Burt Flickinger Athletic Center.

Photo by John Normile

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Sports brief

Liam Callahan of Amherst was chosen to play on the 1994 Region 1 Olympic Development team when they travel to Italy March 15-25.

Callahan will train and play in the Trofeo Daniel Pecci Tournament in Bellaria, Italy and compete against teams from FC Juventus, Parma, Lazio and Rimini.

The team is made up of the top 18 players from 12 East Coast states in the Region 1 area.

Callahan plays with Buffalo United Soccer Club and New York State West-ODP. He is an eighth-grader at St. Christopher's School.



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