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Date: August 26, 2008

Three Finlandia Alumni Join Professional Hockey Ranks

HANCOCK – Three Finlandia University alumni have been signed to professional ice hockey contracts recently, Joe Burcar, Finlandia head men’s hockey coach, and the Midwest Collegiate Hockey Association announced recently. Travis Hanson (Bark River, Mich.), Josh Paquette (Marquette, Mich.), and Ryan Sullivan (Marquette, Mich.) have all joined the ranks of the pro hockey world.

Travis Hanson was re-signed by the Cincinnati Cyclones, an East Coast Hockey League (ECHL) team affiliated with the NHL’s Nashville Predators and Montreal Canadiens. He was originally signed after the MCHA tournament last season. Hanson helped lead the Cyclones to a league championship when they defeated Las Vegas June 5, 2008. He was a team captain at Finlandia for two years, recording 58 points (25G/33A) in 103 career games.

“Travis has worked very hard to create this opportunity,” Coach Burcar said. “The Cyclones were looking for a big, strong player to win battles on the wall; they called him in last spring and he made an immediate impact in helping win the ECHL Championship.”

Josh Paquette has been signed by the New Mexico Scorpions, a team in the Central Hockey League (CHL). He rewrote the MCHA record book, setting new career marks with 47 goals, 83 assists, and 130 points. Overall in his college career, he tallied 152 points (51G/101A) in 105 games. He was named to the MCHA all-conference team on two occasions and to the all-newcomer team as a freshman. He helped lead Finlandia to a Harris Cup Championship in 2007 as a junior, and to a second-straight title game appearance in 2008.

“Josh is a very gifted player with his ability to score in any given situation,” Burcar said. “He has been able to score at every level he has played. I believe he’ll make the transition as a professional player very smoothly.”

Ryan Sullivan joins Paquette on the Scorpions roster. The Finlandia Lions Team MVP a year ago, he was also an all-conference performer on the ice, recording 88 points (50G/38A) in 82 career games. The Scorpions are officially back on the ice October 6 for the start of training camp.

“Ryan is ready for the next level, he is very complete in his game,” Burcar said. “We used Ryan in every position and he has excelled. The bigger the game, the better Ryan is.”

All three Finlandia players were also regulars on the MCHA All-Academic Team.

“We will miss all three of these players; they have brought so much to Finlandia hockey,” Burcar said. “We wish them great success!”

For additional information about the Finlandia University men’s ice hockey program, please contact Coach Burcar at 906-487-7316 or joe.burcar@finlandia.edu.

Please contact karen.johnson@finlandia.edu for photos of the ice hockey players.