Freshman Hockey Star
Talk of the Sport

This season, there is one reason that Sports Illustrated, ESPN, and dozens of NHL scouts come to Agganis Arena. And he’s a freshman.

Jack Eichel (CG’16), who came to BU as the number-one player in his recruiting class, according to College Hockey News, is now perhaps the best player in college hockey, mainly because of what head coach David Quinn describes as his “God-given ability” and competitiveness.

“When you add those two things up at our level, you have a special player,” says Quinn (CAS’89). “In one-on-one situations, he’s as competitive as anyone I’ve ever been around, and you add to that his size, skating ability, vision, and shot, and you have a guy who can step into college hockey and have the start he’s had.”

Often compared to NHL stars and Hockey Hall of Famers Mike Modano and Mario Lemieux, the 6’2”, 194-pound forward led the Terriers to a number-one spot in the nation earlier in the season in the USA Today/USA Hockey and USCHO.com rankings. The last time the Terriers topped both polls was in November 2010.

While he was too young (just 17) for the 2014 NHL Entry Draft, he will be eligible this June and is expected to be neck and neck for the first-place spot, overall, with the Ontario Hockey League’s Connor McDavid. The competition has been the subject of feature stories in Sports Illustrated and the New York Times, and came to a pinnacle in December as the two led their respective countries in the World Junior Championships. Team USA lost to Russia in the quarterfinals; Canada then went on to beat Russia in the finals to win the competition.

Dan Marr, NHL director of central scouting, says the rivalry between the two stars will be closely watched until the draft. “[They are] two remarkable young hockey players who make it fun to go to games,” says Marr. “They are a real treat to watch and are both difference makers. What is truly exciting is that the best is yet to come for both these talented young players.”

When asked, Eichel skates gracefully around his plan for the future. “I have a lot of things to work on and get better at,” he says. “I’m not going to put a timetable on how long I’ll be in college. Obviously it’s a goal of mine to play in the NHL, but I’ll make the jump when the time is right.”

Eichel picked up a plastic hockey stick at the age of three and learned the game with help from his dad on a frozen pond near their home in the blue-collar town of Chelmsford, Mass. He started playing for the Junior Bruins (an elite hockey program) at 13, and moved to Michigan for USA Hockey’s National Team Development Program, where stars like Patrick Kane and Phil Kessel had developed their skills before joining the NHL. Eichel skated for Team USA at the 2012 Winter Youth Olympic Games.

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in Austria and helped Team USA capture the gold medal at the U18 World Championship in 2014.

Before he turned 15, he was offered scholarships by BU and Boston College. And while he admits to having once been an Eagles fan, he says his choice of school came down to the recruiting process, and his was led by former men’s ice hockey coach Jack Parker (SMG’68, Hon.’97), who produced future NHL stars and Olympians during his 40-year career at BU.

“It was tough for me to decide between the two,” says Eichel. “But BU is just a better fit for me. I liked everything about this place, and I could see myself more as a Terrier than an Eagle. Ever since I made that decision, I’ve never doubted myself.”

With the end of Comm Ave determined, Eichel was eager to return to Boston from the Midwest. With tutoring, summer school class, and much encouragement from his mother, a nurse at Boston Medical Center, Eichel finished high school in three years. Because he spent the last three years away from home, his family has been making up for lost together time by being in the stands for every game they can.

They looked on in November as BU faced Maine, coming from behind to tie the game. Just two minutes into overtime, they saw their son scoop up the puck behind the BU net, skate up the left side, weave around a Black Bear defenseman and, instead of gliding past a second defender, use him as a screen to skate up to the goaltender’s left shoulder to end the game as a 3-2 Terrier victory.

“Eichel plays with authority,” says Marr. “He always rises to the occasion. He’s an amazing game breaker and scores the timely goals, and has an exceptional gear to pull away with the puck, and has the smarts and skills to deliver and finish a scoring chance.”

Eichel says his approach to the game will remain the same next year, no matter what happens. “I always try to play really hard,” he says. “There have been things in my career that haven’t gone as well as I would like, but I try to use those things to motivate me to work even harder.”

**U.S. News Ranks BU 37 of Top 500 Global Universities**

*Princeton Review lauds LAW faculty*

Boston University has been named 37th among 500 Best Global Universities in a new *U.S. News & World Report* ranking that compares the academic research and reputation of institutions around the world. The rankings, published in October, considered 750 universities in 49 countries.

“This new ranking from *U.S. News & World Report* demonstrates how strong our global competitiveness is,” says Jean Morrison, University provost. “It reflects the outstanding performance of our faculty, whose commitment to excellence in scholarship and groundbreaking research continues to place BU in a very enviable spot both nationally and globally.”

The new report cites BU’s global score of 66, based on 10 indicators that include global and regional research reputation, percentage of highly cited papers, international collaboration, number of PhDs awarded, and number of PhDs awarded per faculty member. The University was also ranked in comparison with other leading institutions on a range of academic subjects, from medicine to economics to neuroscience to environment/ecology. In these categories BU fared best in social sciences and public health, with a ranking of 25, followed closely by physics, clinical medicine, and molecular biology, which received rankings of 30, 30, and 33, respectively.

*U.S. News* emphasizes that none of the data from its annual Best Colleges rankings, which most recently put BU at number 42 among US colleges, is used in the Best Global Universities rankings and that the methodology used to compute the Best Global Universities rankings differs from those used for Best Colleges and Best Graduate Schools.

**PRAISE FOR LAW FACULTY**

The School of Law continues to win high marks from the Princeton Review, placing second in the “best professors” category in the 2015 rankings (Duke was number one) and seventh in “best classroom” experience among the 169 law schools surveyed by the test preparation and college admissions resources firm.

The Princeton Review surveyed 19,500-plus law students nationally and collected information from school administrators to come up with its annual rankings in 11 categories. Other categories besides professors and classroom experience included “best career prospects,” “toughest to get into,” “best quality of life,” and “most diverse faculty.”

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