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Q&A from NJP

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Covering New Jersey Ice Hockey

PLAYER PROFILE

This edition features

ROBBINSVILLE FORWARD

MIKE PIET

Tell us about yourself? What grade are you in? What are your hobbies or interests?

I'm an A student with a 3.92 GPA as a senior in high school taking all AP and Honors courses, and besides hockey, I spend most of my time just hanging with me friends.

Do you have any siblings? Do they play ice hockey?

I have a freshman sister that plays soccer and softball.

How long have you been playing ice hockey? Tell us what youth teams and levels you played?

I've been playing since I was about 8 years old. I played in-house for a few years then played for the New Jersey Kings (AAA), Wilmington Typhoon (AA), Lawrence Flames (AA), New Jersey Jr Titans (AAA) and now the NJ JR Titans (Junior B).

How did you get started playing? What position do you play?

I always wanted to play and I started out on roller hockey at the YMCA when I was 5 until I switched to ice at 8.

Who was your greatest hockey influence as you grew up?

As far as idol goes, I always looked up to Paul Kariya but my dad has gotten me to where I am today. He was always there to give me pointers and just overall improve my game.

Have you participated in any special off-ice training programs?

The last few summers I've trained with John Sabo. He was the captain of Boston University when they were winning national championships. People like Freddy Meyer (New York Islanders, NHL) and Jack Walchessen (Peterborough Petes OHL) stopped in every once in a while for a work-out.

Do you have a hero?

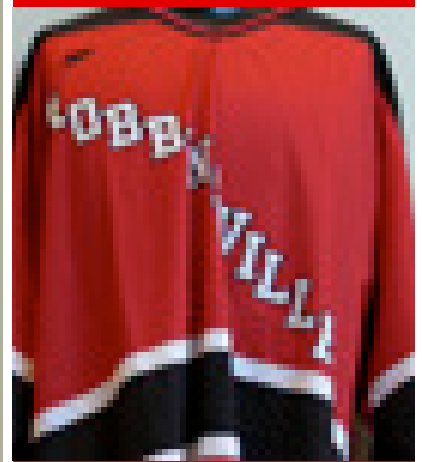
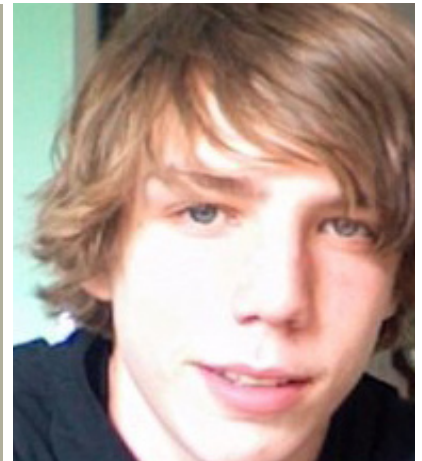
I've always looked up to my Dad. Ever since I was little I wanted to be just like him. He has helped me through so much adversity and I couldn't be where I am without him.

Who was your favorite coach on youth teams prior to High School and why?

Coach Vershinin polished my skills with the Kings and Coach Tracy Ferinden perfected my stride and strength. They were both one of a kind characters... Great years.

Do you play other sports? If so, which ones and which do you like better?

Up until junior year, I played baseball but had to give that up to excel in hockey.





What team was the toughest that you faced this past year?

In High School it was Johnson because we had all of our firepower and still came out on bottom. In Titans (Jr B), it was definitely the soon to be national champions, Long Island Royals.

Tell us about your Parents?

My parents are great. They are always at every game and willing to hop in the car and drive to Canada at a moment's notice. Both are huge sport fanatics. My Dad played baseball at Dickinson and my mom played field hockey at IUP.

Which player on your current team do you have the most respect for?

In High School, Ryan DeAngelis. He is the hardest working kid on the team and nothing can get him down. He has the attitude of a champion.

The Robbinsville team for this upcoming season should be great. Can you tell us about the players on the team?

We are going to have a pretty good team. Our first and second lines should put the puck in the net and our third line has come a long way and could show some production this year. We also have a solid core on defense and a few solid freshmen. Our goalies have come a long way as well, and should hold us in a few games when nothing else is working.

Can you describe what it is like playing for Coach Bergan?

It's interesting haha. He is a great guy and given what he has had to work with, he has brought our team a long way. We would not be winning games without him. He has forced us travel players into a system with the first-time skaters that has made us a team.

Who are your favorite role models?

I love watching Alex Ovechkin on the ice. He has this will to score every time he gets the puck and he knows it. I model my game off of that attitude.

What are the best and worst parts of playing high school hockey?

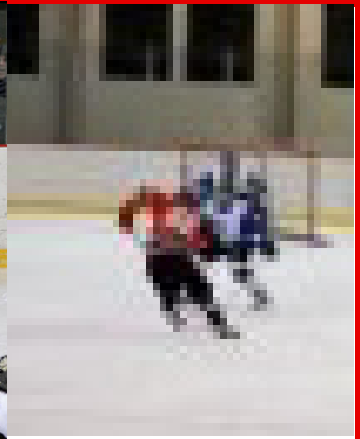
It is a lot slower than my Titans games and most of the kids are less experienced which gives me a few bad habits and frustrates me but playing your sport in front of your school is an indescribable feeling that makes it all worth it.

Do you view yourself as a role model for younger players?

In Titans, all of the little kids look at us like we're in the NHL. We flip them a few pucks during warm-ups and give them all fist bumps when we leave the ice... It's pretty sweet.

If there was one thing you could change to improve your program at your school, what would it be?

I actually think everything is perfect.



High School hockey is extremely competitive. Coaches receive pressure from many sources to develop a win at all cost philosophy. Do you believe high school hockey is only about winning?

In my opinion, High School hockey is only about winning. I mean we aren't in Minnesota playing Shattuck St. Marys looking to get picked up by the Penguins. We are living for the moment. But Coach Bergan has a different attitude. He rewards the kids who work hard in practice with ice-time and if I get an attitude he will, by all means, bench me.

What is the craziest thing you have seen happen at a game you played in?

Last year in the playoffs with the Titans, a kid on my team did a Datsyuk for a walk-off game winning goal in a shoot-out to advance to the next round. We went wild, it was unbelievable.

Which school is your biggest rival and why? How did you do against them this year?

I would say, given the past two years, Nottingham has always brought a hard hitting, testosterone filled game. We've beaten them 4 out of 5 times.

What will your team need to do well to make it to The Rock next season? Do you think you can get there?

That's a pretty high goal. We need to play every game. We can't take any games off. Off-ice is key. We need to be the best conditioned.

Can you tell us about your club experience with the Jr. Titans program?

I love it there. The coaches are great and, being on the younger side of the roster, I learn a lot of life experience. Road trips are insane and it's just a great time. Livin' the dream.

Which teams do you feel will be the strongest in the CVC?

Hopewell and Notre Dame are always dominant.

Do you have a favorite quote or saying?

"I firmly believe that any man's finest hour, his moment of greatest fulfillment, is when he lies exhausted on the field of battle, victorious" Vince Lombardi.

Where do you plan on attending college? What do you plan to study?

I want to study Business in the Boston area.

Will you play hockey in college?

That's the plan.

Do you think you will ever coach hockey in the future? If yes, which coach would you like to emulate?

I don't think I will end up coaching competitively. I might coach my son's in-house team or what not. I would strive to be a combination of all of my coaches growing up.

What was your favorite part about this past season?

Patriot Division Champs which was the first banner in Robbinsville High School.

Which NJ high school player from last season impressed you the most and why?

Justin Decowski of Steinert. The kid scored 8 goals on us.

If you could script the next few years, what would happen in regards to your hockey career?

Next year I would be playing in the EJHL and if I don't get picked up by a college, play one more year there and be a dominant force. Then I hope to play NCAA hockey whether it be D3 or D1... hopefully D1.

If you could change one thing that occurred in the last 5 years, what would it be?

This past summer I broke my collar bone trying out for the Des Moines Buccaneers of the USHL. This caused me to miss an NAHL tryout with the Springfield Junior Blues and the Hartford Junior Wolfpack's (AJHL) main camp. Both of which I have talked to the coach prior and they seemed very interested. And above all, I lost half a summer of working out. I kind of wish that didn't happen.

Who would you cast to play you in a movie about your life?

Charlie Conway haha

