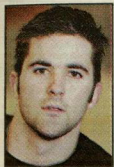


WEDNESDAY
DECEMBER 4, 2002

Sports

Scoreboard / 2D
The Flip Side / 12D



Matt Libby says his next goal is to show the parent Washington Capitals that he's an NHL prospect.

Libby gets his contract

● Matt Libby has proven himself, becoming the first Mainer to earn a regular contract with the Pirates.

By JENN MENENDEZ
Staff Writer

As Matt Libby's on-ice production increased, it seemed to be only a matter of time before the Maine native would get the news that the Portland Pirates had decided to keep him around all year.

On Tuesday, that news came.

Libby was told just before Tuesday morning's practice that he had landed a full-season contract with the team. Libby and rookie center Brad Parsons, who got the same good news, had been skating with the Pirates on 25-game contracts.

Terms of the full-season deals were not released.

Libby, a Saco native, is the first Mainer to earn a regular contract with the Pirates.

"I guess it's a little bit of a relief, but for me not too much changes," Libby said. "I still have to approach the game and practices the same way I have been."

The contracts — both standard American Hockey League deals —

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A big wheel in Europe

Maine cyclist shines on a national and foreign stage

By GLENN JORDAN
Staff Writer

It was raining in the small Belgian town, with wind blowing across corn fields and bits of cow manure — kicked up by fellow cyclists — clinging to the helmet of Oliver Stiler Cote.

A group of small boys approached the teenager from Arundel, who had just won an 85-kilometer circuit race for juniors, to ask for his autograph.

Yes, you could say Cote — Ollie to those who know him well — enjoyed the summer after high school.

"It's totally glorified over there," Cote said of the European approach to bicycle racing. "Little kids come up to you and ask for autographs."

"Every team has so many staff members. A racer will have one guy fixing his bike, another (massaging) his legs, cleaning his face and giving him (water) bottles and someone else

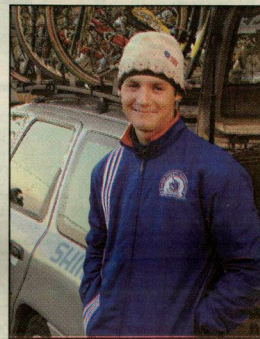
registering him for the race. And a coach.

"It's motivating."

The cycling season is over for Cote, a 2002 graduate of Waynflete School in Portland who emerged as the nation's second-best junior cyclist this year.

He placed second in the 12-mile time trials at the national championships in August, and in October was the second

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Oliver Stiler Cote, a recent Waynflete graduate, has become the No. 2 junior cyclist in the country, and was 30th at the world championships in Belgium.

BOWDOIN 5, COLBY 3

They pulled rank



● Fifth-ranked Bowdoin stays unbeaten, downing 14th-ranked Colby in front of an emotional crowd.

By PAUL BEITT
Staff Writer

BRUNSWICK — Emotions always run wild when Colby plays Bowdoin in hockey, but emotions only can take a team so far.

Unbeaten Bowdoin regained its composure in time Tuesday night for a 5-3 victory against the White Mules in a New England Small College Athletic Conference game before an estimated 2,500 fans at Dayton Arena.

"It's tough dealing with the crowd, and all the emotions riding high," said Chris Pellerin of Bowdoin, who

PIRATES

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have not been formally finished, according to Pirates Coach Tim Army, but should be within the week.

They are expected to be one-year deals with the parent Washington Capitals.

Over the last 20 games, Libby has established himself as a reliable defensive player who can join the offense and carry the puck with poise.

He's become one of the club's top defenders – significant considering the Pirates started with nine healthy defensemen and on any given night one or two are healthy scratches.

“Matt came in here with a number of defensemen. He's pushed and played well and been deserving of playing every night,” Army said. “He's established himself as one of our best six defensemen.”

Parsons, an undrafted center out of Princeton, has been a tenacious play-making center who's seen increasing ice time in important situations.

He has two goals and 10 assists, and on many nights has been the fulcrum to the most productive line on the ice.

“I'm very, very happy with the way they've played,” Army said. “I'm a big believer that everyone earns ice time through play. They've both added a great deal to our team.”

After Army gave both players the news, he also levied some advice.

“I said, now don't breathe a sigh of relief. The challenge is to make yourself even better,” Army said. “Don't be comfortable with your game or satisfied you've gotten to this point. Be even more diligent in becoming a more efficient player.”

Libby is aware of that reality.

He took the news with joy, but was



File photo by Jill Brady

Despite being on a team loaded with defensemen, Matt Libby of Saco earned his ice time and got his reward Tuesday with a contract for the rest of the season with the Portland Pirates.

immediately thinking about how to prove himself as a legitimate prospect to the Capitals, who have numerous young defensemen in the organization.

“I didn't smile in the office, but when I got out I was definitely in a good mood,” Libby said. “It was a very nice feeling. But I also want to be able to prove over the rest of the season that I can be a good prospect for the Washington Capitals.”

Libby, 24, is the first Mainer to play for the Pirates since Eric Fenton of South Portland was in 25 games in the 1993-94 season. Fenton never earned a regular contract with the

team.

Libby is living at home in Saco with his father, Gene Libby, a local defense lawyer.

“It's a good way to spend time with my family,” Libby said. “We'll see, maybe next year I'll get my own place, but for now Dad's going to take care of me for one more year.”

NOTES: The Pirates are off on their first significant trip of the year, starting tonight. The club bussed to Albany on Tuesday, will bus back to Boston after playing the River Rats, then fly to St. John's, Newfoundland, for a two-game trip this weekend. ...