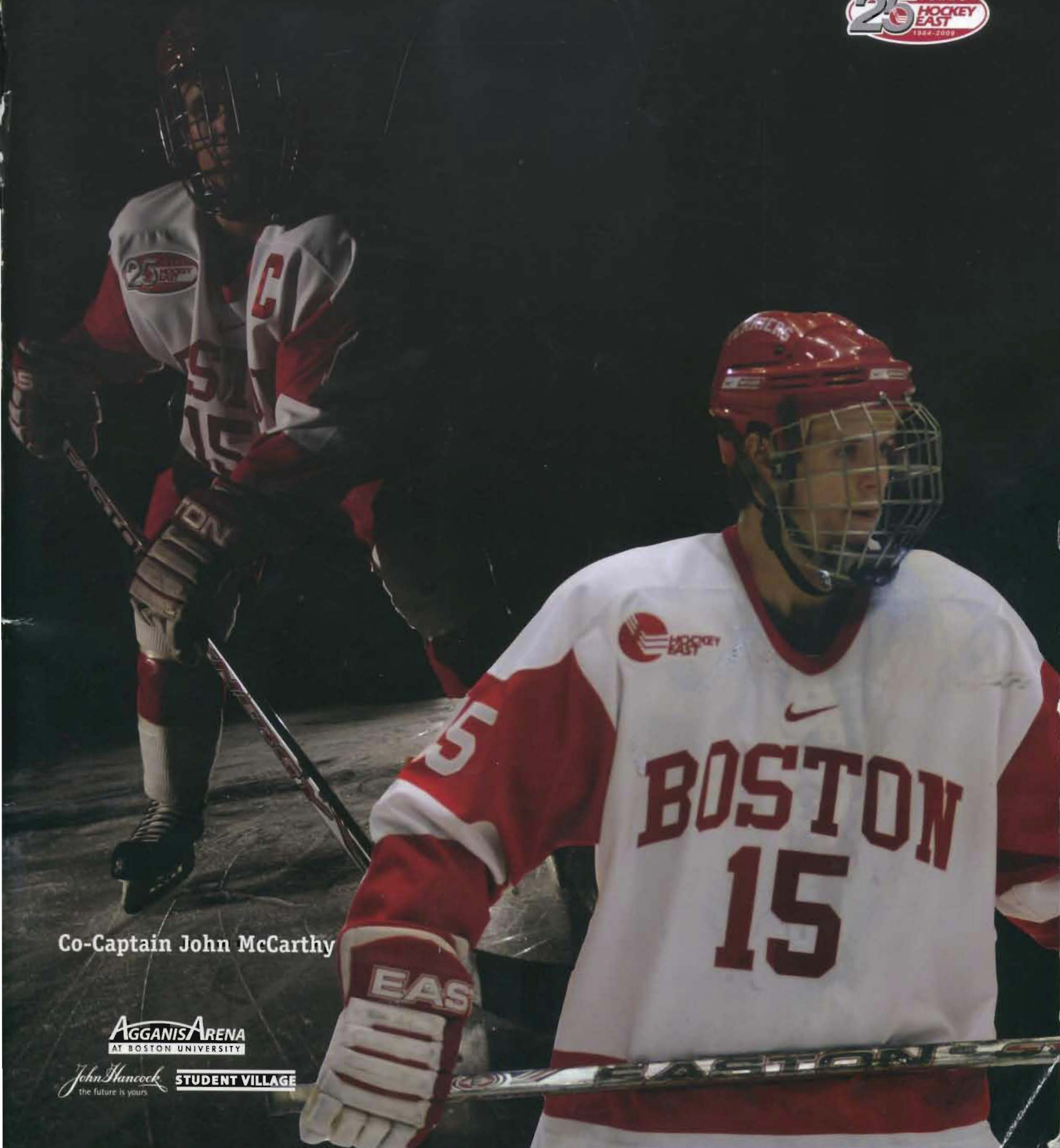




# MEN'S ICE HOCKEY

## 2008-09 SEASON

vol.2

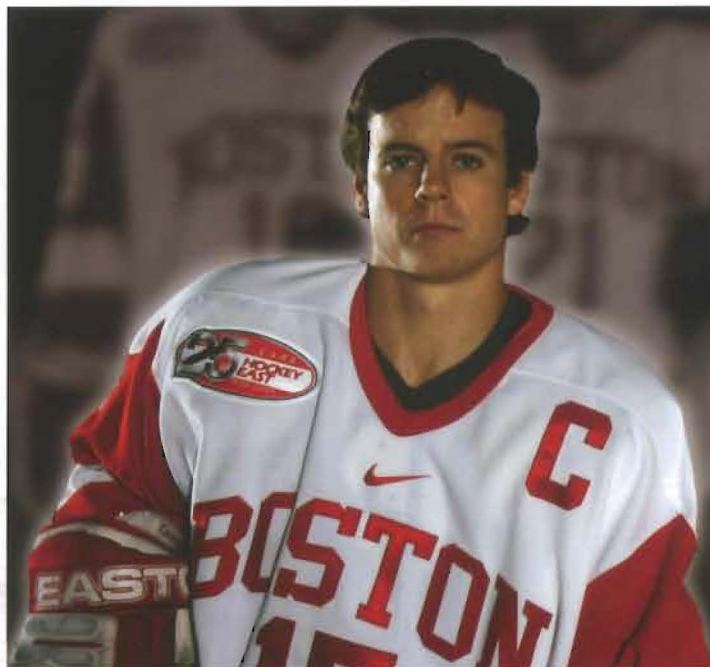


Co-Captain John McCarthy

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**STUDENT VILLAGE**



## THE BEARABLE BOSS

By Melissa Parrelli

In the dictionary, the word captain is defined as “a person who is in authority over others; a chief; a leader.” The Boston University men’s ice hockey team has two captains, and the classification breaks down even further — one is more vocal, while the other tends to lead by example. The two at hand, of course, are seniors Matt Gilroy and John McCarthy.

“John is pretty quiet,” said BU head coach Jack Parker. “They both lead by example, but Matt’s more of a vocal guy. Johnny is much more of the ‘do as I’m doing, not as I’m saying,’ and what he’s doing is really good stuff. You watch practice, and John’s the hardest worker here. If you look at the grade point average, he’s the best student on the team. And if you talk to him, you realize how he respects other people and the other students on campus.”

Respect is such a simple word that means so much, especially in the world of sports. It’s likely the definition of respect may soon involve the name John McCarthy in some way — according to the other BU hockey players at least.

“Johnny is a great teammate with a great work ethic,” said teammate Jason Lawrence. “All the guys on the team respect that from him and that’s an attribute that makes him a good leader.”

Senior Chris Higgins added “John is liked by everyone because he’s a genuinely nice kid who cares about others. Our senior class is very close and I do not think there has been one time when any of us even had an argument with John.”

Even Gilroy enjoys splitting duties with McCarthy. “It’s great being co captains,” Gilroy said. “John really keeps his mouth shut and goes to work; the guys see that and follow him. When guys are in the weight room, locker room, or on the ice and they don’t know what they should be doing, they can just look at John and that is what they are supposed to do. That’s why he is such a good leader and why guys respect him so much.”

Being so well liked is not something that everyone can claim, but this Andover, Mass., native makes it look really easy. The admiration from teammates and friends didn’t just start at BU. In high school at St. John’s Preparatory School, McCarthy was not only captain of that hockey team, but he managed to captain the football team as well.

“In football I played quarterback and you’re almost a natural leader when you’re quarterback because you call all the plays and everyone looks to you,” McCarthy said. “Hockey in high school was the same thing as here at BU. I just did what I had to do every day and I think that doesn’t really go unnoticed by a lot of guys on the team. They know when you come to the rink with a certain attitude that you’re going to do your job and do it well, and that affects other people positively.”

McCarthy’s father, Frank, and older brother, Jim, seem to have had a positive effect on him growing up, as they influenced him to stick to the ice. Frank played hockey at Holy Cross and Jim brought his little brother along to play pond hockey with friends all the time, so the sport has been pumped in the McCarthy blood for years.

“When I was a young kid, I got a lot of hand-me-downs from my brother,” McCarthy said. “When you’re young, you’re growing so fast that you go through so many pairs of skates, and they’re expensive, so my brother would wear his skates and then he’d hand them down to me and I’d wear them.”

The close relations with his family oriented John in choosing a hockey career at BU.

“I committed fairly early to BU because I had been going to the Beanpot since I was a little kid with my father and brother,” McCarthy said. “Just the tradition that they have here at BU, as soon as I saw that they were recruiting me it was almost like a done deal for me. But hockey is a big burden on your family, and I was fortunate enough that my parents

were there to support me and help me to eventually earn a scholarship here."

Besides playing hockey, John manages to be a scholar in the classroom as well. As an economics major, the subject just comes naturally to him.

"It's really hard to keep up with your studies when playing a sport in college," said Gilroy. "I struggle with it, but John really never has a problem; he always gets his work done and does it well. I think his work ethic off the ice in the classroom is as good as his work ethic on the ice, which a lot of guys struggle to do. That just goes to show you what a true hard worker he really is."

McCarthy may come across as the ideal role model around the rink and in the classroom, but everyone has their quirks, especially when they are at home. Gilroy, Brandon Yip and Steve Smolinsky have been roommates with McCarthy for a few years, and they can vouch for his unique behaviors.

"John and Steve love the Bruins and take the games very seriously when watching them on TV," said Yip. "So Gilroy and I always cheer against them. It's not that we don't like the Bruins, it's just that we like to see them lose and see the look on John and Steve's faces after a game. John gets real upset, and they just sit there in front of the TV and won't let anyone bother them during the game, so we try to take the remote from them sometimes."

His friends call him "The Grizzly Bear," and he may even act like one when those other bears – the Bruins – are on TV. But deep down, this 22-year-old is good at heart.

"The Grizzly Bear," chuckled Yip. "I think he got the name because he probably has the biggest chest on the team from lifting, but he's really pretty gentle; so I guess he's not a grizzly, but more like a big cuddly bear."

Besides the Bruins games, McCarthy can usually be found watching MTV.

"He watches unbelievable amounts of MTV," said Yip. "He loves TruLife and The Real World and his TV is always on full blast. He leaves it on when he sleeps and I live in his apartment so I know it's really loud. He's just like The Bear – we call it his cave [his room] – you can't disturb him in there. We'll be in the common room, everyone being loud, except he'll be sleeping in his room, hibernating. He's the only one that complains if it's loud."

Beware: if you try to touch McCarthy's food, The Bear's claws may come out.

"Taking food off his plate really irritates him," said Yip. "When we're out to dinner we all just pick off each other's plates, but we don't go near his because he gets pretty upset and will swat your hand away."

But McCarthy has a good excuse for protecting his grub; he has a severe food allergy and can only eat certain things.

"I'm allergic to a lot of stuff – all nuts, all shellfish, grass, trees, mold, dogs, cats, birds," he said.

Yip explained, "Fortunately most of the guys are from around here, so when their parents bring in food they always kind of make a little side dish for John so he's not left out... but then I usually end up eating it."

McCarthy's good-natured character still seems to shine through in everything though. Even a costume.

"John dressed up as a pumpkin for Halloween freshman year," remembered Higgins. "The costume looked unreal until Yip – who was dressed as a samurai warrior – ruined John's costume. But John forgave Brandon and wasn't even mad. That just shows how he's such a great friend."

Despite his nicknames and other unique claims to fame, McCarthy is surely a Terrier. And as a senior, he's been able to share some great moments on the ice with the rest of his class.

"My first game was great just because I got to put the jersey on and everything. It was cool for me because I'd been a fan since I was a young kid and always pictured it. Winning my first Beanpot [as a freshman in 2006] was a big moment for me, too. And becoming captain was also a big honor just because of the tradition here, especially among the captains."

Reflecting on the past during senior year is common for any student, but thinking ahead about the future is normal too. McCarthy was drafted by the San Jose Sharks in the 2006 National Hockey League Entry Draft, and despite getting a degree in the spring, he's not counting hockey out just yet.

"I want to see what happens with hockey first," said McCarthy. "I've been playing for 19 years and I think it would be kind of crazy to just give up on it now. So I want to explore that option and see if something comes about, but it's nice to know I'll have that degree to fall back on."

McCarthy has been part of a winning club in years past, and with the positive, winning attitude emitted from the captains right down to the other players, success is to be expected from the 2008-09 Terriers.

"I've always said it," said Parker. "When BU has a lot of success it's because the best guys on the team are the best guys on the team — and John is one of the best players on the team and, without question, one of the best people, too."

