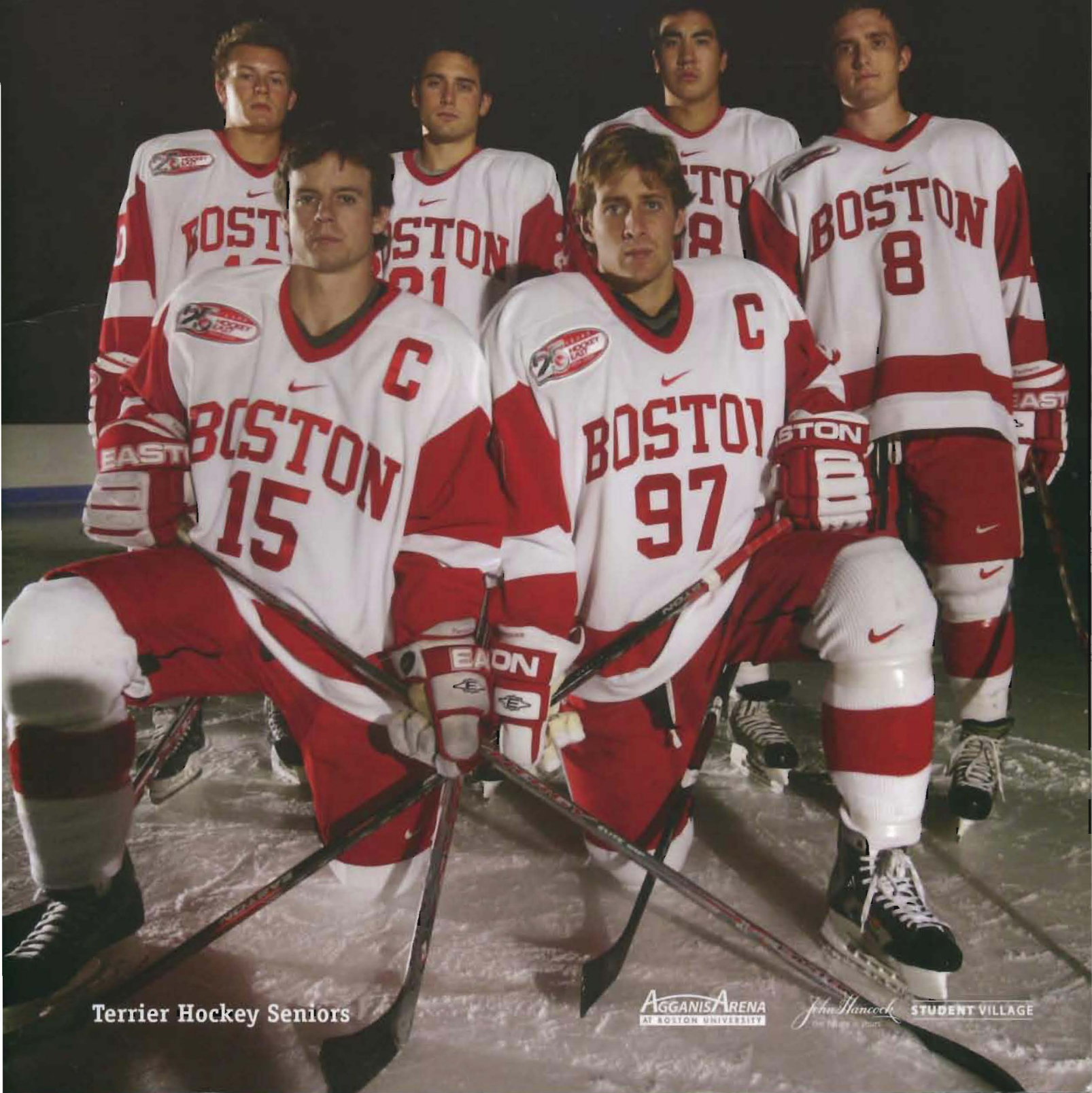




MEN'S ICE HOCKEY

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Terrier Hockey Seniors

AGGANIS ARENA
AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY

John Hancock
THE HOCKEY YEARS

STUDENT VILLAGE



Spotlight on Seniors Chris Higgins and Jason Lawrence From Teammates to Roommates to Linemates

By Melissa Parrelli

Growing up, nobody really knows for sure what their life has in store for them – it's unpredictable. And when you're on your way to college, wondering what your roommate will be like can be somewhat of a scary thought, because let's face it – we've all heard the horror stories.

But that's not the case with seniors Chris Higgins and Jason Lawrence. These Terriers have been living together for four years and their friendship seems to epitomize the type of chemistry that helps the team win on the ice.

"It's a team rule that we ask the guys – the hockey players – to room with teammates," said BU head coach Jack Parker. "We have certain rules as far as drinking, rules regarding curfews that would be difficult to enforce if one guy is in season and he is living with a non-hockey player athlete or even a non-athlete. It's a lot easier for the kids to get ready for a good night's sleep on a Thursday night before a big game if their roommate is doing the same thing because he's playing as well – that's the reason why we do it.

"It's not unusual for a freshman to come in and have a roommate that is assigned to them by the coaches and wind up staying with that roommate," added Parker. "It's probably even easier for Lawrence and Higgins because they live very close to each other and knew each other before they even got here. So they've been close friends since day one. They've been on each other's line for almost their entire career here. They're pretty serious kids about school, serious kids about hockey, so there's no conflict between the two of them."

Higgins' and Lawrence's comradeship can be credited to the fact that they have many similarities in their backgrounds. They both grew up in adjacent towns on the North Shore suburbs of Boston.

In Saugus back in the early '90s, Lawrence was really close with his family, skating under his dad's coaching. Meanwhile – up the street in Lynnfield – little Higgins was also learning from his father, but playing with his brothers as well.

"I have an older brother and a younger brother," said Higgins. "We'd always be outside playing street hockey and then in our house playing mini hockey. You play with the little sticks on your knees inside your house, which my parents weren't too happy about because we'd break a few things. But it was all good fun."

Whether causing mischief as little boys or not, Higgins' and Lawrence's moms have always played an important part in their son's lives even though they weren't behind the bench with their husbands.

"My mom's been to I think every game I've ever played in pretty much," said Higgins. "She always was driving me to games as a kid... and now she still does my laundry. I'm really fortunate to have my parents live so close."

"My mother was always back and forth watching and stuff like that growing up," said Lawrence. "My parents are a main part of how I got where I am today. But going away for high school I think was a little harder on my mother than it was on me – she definitely missed me a lot."

Besides having supportive families, Higgins and Lawrence transitioned well into teammates and roommates because they had positive high school experiences, even though they were in different environments. Lawrence was with USA Hockey's National Team Development Program in Ann Arbor, Mich., and Higgins was in South Hamilton, Mass., at Pingree School.

"The one thing I noticed about Michigan is that everyone takes things a little slower. Boston is so fast paced – in restaurants, everywhere you go – but once you get out there everything is more laid back. It kind of threw me for a loop because I was like 'what's everyone waiting for?' But it was good because all the guys that were on the team were in the same situation being away from home so we all kind of bonded together and formed like our own family out there."

Higgins added, "Pingree was a small school so everyone kind of knew everyone. There was a lot of gossip, so if something

happened then everyone would know about it the next day and talk about it. It was a pretty laid back school. I still have a lot of good friends today from Pingree so it was a great high school experience for me, but it was definitely a change once I got to BU where it's a much more structured environment."

Both guys prepared adequately for their incoming years as Terriers. Higgins skipped his senior season on the Pingree team and pushed himself to play with the New Hampshire Jr. Monarchs of the Eastern Junior Hockey League, while Lawrence and the U.S. National Under-18 Team played college teams throughout the country.

"Myself, my parents, and the coaching staff at BU felt that it would be a good stepping stone for me to play at a higher level than the Division II prep school that I had been playing," said Higgins. "I played against older guys, we played more games, and it was more of an intense competition, so it definitely helped before coming to school here at BU."

And Lawrence had an idea of what to expect because BU had some of the same coaching staff from the U.S. National Team.

"[BU Associate Head Coach David Quinn] was actually my coach two years prior to BU, so I knew him well," said Lawrence. "It really was an easy transition. Coach [Parker] is really open when you get here - he understands that you're a freshman and you have to adjust, so it's not bad."

The stat sheets speak for themselves when seeing how much of a presence these two forwards have had at BU, especially Higgins, who recently became the 75th Terrier to reach the 100-point mark in his career.

"It's an honor you know to be in the same company as all the great players that have achieved that in the past for BU," Higgins said. "But other than that, individual points are one thing - it's nice to have - but our main goal is to get a national championship as a team."

Lawrence helped contribute to the team's strong start the first half of the season tallying six goals, including a team-best five power-play tallies.

"We've had a hot start," said Lawrence. "The team has been doing well and that's what we've been looking at. I've just been lucky to pot some goals early on, but hopefully we can keep this up and win something in the end."

Fans, coaches, and younger teammates alike will miss these two offensive players when they graduate, but there are some things about each other that the roomies will not be sad to leave behind.

"Chris and I became good friends," said Lawrence. "But one thing I won't miss is how much time he spends in front of the mirror. We try and get ready; I'm waiting in the elevator and he's looking in the mirror fixing his hairdo. I don't know whatever he does, his hair or something - I won't miss it. But I will miss him, it's been fun."

Higgins responded, "Yeah, well Jay always says that I look in the mirror or whatever before we leave for games, but on games days, he gets pretty crazy. He's always yelling in

the room. I'll be trying to take a nap and he'll be screaming and yelling, getting all pumped up for the game. It's a good screaming though - getting jacked up for the game. He turns on the sound dock that we have in our room and he blasts rock music; that's when everyone else in the apartment pretty much knows that's our alarm clock to get up and get ready for the game. But we've been real close ever since freshman year, so I'll definitely miss living with him."

All of that time in front of the mirror pays off for Higgins because when asked what superlatives his teammates would get, senior co-captain John McCarthy said "Higgins would definitely get 'best dressed' or 'most fashionable.' And Lawrence would get 'most likely to chase down a biker who threw something at your car.'" We can only imagine what that latter means, but we'll leave it as an inside joke among the players.

And laughing is something that the Terriers seem to do both off and on the ice. Lawrence shares one of his funniest memories as a Terrier that will be hard to forget:

"When Brian Strait fell going out to the blue line for starting lineups this year. They announced his name and he was sprinting out really fast and he went to stop and he went flying - almost took me and Chris out. It was unbelievable. I'll never forget that, it was unreal. He came out too fast - that's what he gets."

Winning the Beanpot and Hockey East Championship as freshmen seems to be two of the favorite memories for every one of this year's seniors. The fact that Higgins and Lawrence were linemates that year undoubtedly is part of the reason for the team's success that season, but possibly the best moment has yet to come.

"For the third top memory we'll leave a question mark there because hopefully we'll win a national championship," said Higgins. "Overall, I will definitely miss the guys; you have 26 of your best friends on the team and you just really can't beat the bonding. But it would make us feel really good before leaving school - to be considered national champions."



Higgins and Lawrence photographed as part of the 2007 Beanpot Championship team during their sophomore season.

Up to Speed: Brandon Yip Feature

By Melissa Parrelli

Traveling over 3,000 miles to go to college is a big jump for anyone, but senior forward Brandon Yip was not afraid to take that risk when it came to hockey - even if it meant leaving his country.

"It didn't matter how far away from home I was, I just wanted to go to a place where I had a chance to win," said Yip.

Prior to arriving in Boston, Yip, a Maple Ridge, B.C., native, played for the Coquitlam Express of the British Columbia Hockey League for two seasons, leading his team in scoring, points per game, assists and short-handed goals.

He transitioned easily into the BU program, nabbing Hockey East Rookie of the Year honors in the 2005-06 season, but one of Yip's top memories as a Terrier was scoring the overtime winner in the Hockey East Championship game against Boston College that same year. "It wasn't just the feeling of scoring the goal, it was the feeling of how happy everyone was on the team and being piled on," explained Yip.

Skating his way to an impressive career, his skills on the ice came to an abrupt halt when he separated his shoulder and sprained his ankle in his sophomore season alone.

"Obviously he was a really good incoming freshman and was a big part of a very successful BU hockey team that year," said BU head coach Jack Parker. "Then he got nagged by injuries two years in a row."

"The shoulder injury really set me back physically and mentally," said Yip. "I had never dealt with a serious injury up to this point of my career so I didn't know what to expect. It was difficult to stay in high spirits and keep motivated, which took a toll on me. I was out for around four months and then came back for a few games and then injured my ankle, which set me back another three to four weeks. It was a very frustrating season personally, but I did learn a lot which I think now makes me better as an individual."

Now as a senior, Yip has come full circle where he's "putting up the numbers that everyone knew he was capable of," explained senior co-captain John McCarthy. Before the holiday break, Yip tallied six goals and six assists, keeping him in a respectable spot among the Hockey East point leaders.

"This is the first year he's been 100 percent for a while - probably since his freshman year," said Parker. "But because of that, he is playing up to his capabilities and then some. It's nice to have your seniors have their best year in their senior year, and certainly all of our seniors are doing that right now."

McCarthy added, "Yip plays a physical game; he makes sure to finish his checks, but he is definitely a skill guy. He plays the point on the power play a lot, he is always on the first or second line, and he can also fill the role of playmaker. He is a pretty versatile player."

Besides dominating the ice, however, Yip spreads his talents to the green. "I spend my summers hitting up the links. The Asian Sensation'

is what they call me on the golf course," he joked.

But despite his obvious athletic abilities, there are a lot of things that fans may not know about Yip.

He explained his uniqueness: "I'm a quarter Irish - weird, huh? And I also love those ice cream Dibs things - I can't stop eating them. The Crunch flavor is unbelievable."

Another aspect of this 23-year-old that may not show through on the ice is his sense of humor.

"There are a lot of funny guys on the team," said senior Chris Higgins. "But Yipper is like the class clown; he's always cracking jokes."

"He really is the funniest when he isn't trying to be funny," McCarthy said, who is also one of Yip's roommates. "I like to watch Jeopardy with him because his answers are usually not even close, but he yells them out because he thinks he's going to get it right every time."

Yip chimed in, "I'm not sure if they think I'm funny or if they're just being nice because they think there is something seriously wrong with me. There have been many hilarious guys on the team throughout the years. This one time Boomer [Bryan Ewing] and I hid Danny McGoff in the laundry bin and waited for people to walk by so he could jump out and scare them. Our code word was 'banana' so he knew when to jump out. Simple things like that keep us entertained throughout the year."

Yip certainly keeps the crowd at Agganis entertained during the season with his skills on the ice, but his fellow Terriers may miss his comical nature when he graduates this spring. However, Yip won't walk away without feeling a little emotional, too.

"I will miss everything about BU hockey - coaches, everyone involved with the team, the fans," said Yip. "The thing I'll miss the most I think is the camaraderie among teammates... and Mrs. Gilroy's pre-game meals - she makes a mean spaghetti and meatball."

