

Second annual Celebrity Hockey Game entertains for local cause



Drew Stafford of the Buffalo Sabres makes a move Thursday night during the second annual Celebrity Hockey game at Shattuck-St. Mary's Ice Arena. Stafford was a member of the Shattuck Alumni team, which beat the World team 5-4. (Bobby Hart/Daily News)

Faribault's greatest show on ice

By Bobby Hart

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FARIBAULT — Approximately 400 hockey fans flocked to Shattuck-St. Mary's Ice Arena Thursday night to see a show.

The cast didn't disappoint. Featuring two rosters stacked with a combined 16 NHL players, the 2008 Celebrity Hockey Game stayed true to its title.

The Shattuck Alumni team beat the World team 5-4 in the second annual showcase game, but the real winner was Faribault hockey. The Faribault Hockey Association and the local high school teams came out with approximately \$5,000 after NHL names such as Zach Parise (New Jersey Devils), Travis Zajac (Devils), Drew Stafford (Buffalo Sabres), Kyle Okposo (New York Islanders) and Aaron Voros (New York Rangers) hit the ice for a local cause.

It was only right that Marty Mjelleli scored Shattuck Alumni's first goal of the game, considering he was the mastermind in organizing the teams and recruiting the talent. Mjelleli, who signed with the Gwinnett Gladiators of the East Coast Hockey League this summer, put forth a Herculean effort, posting flyers all over town to get



The Shattuck Alumni team (white) shook hands with the World team (green) after the second annual Celebrity Hockey Game Thursday night at the SSM Ice Arena. The game, which featured two rosters stacked with pro and college players, was won 5-4 by the Shattuck Alumni. (Bobby Hart/Daily News)

the word out about Faribault hockey's annual main event.

"I'm just pleased with the turnout," Mjelleli said following the game. "This year, with the type of personnel we got with the players, my hat goes off to them because they took time out of their schedule and they came out here, and I thought the fans were rewarded with a good game."

Parise, who led New Jersey in scoring last season, scored the game-winner to even the score between the two teams, since World won 8-7 last year. Parise squared off against his Devils' team-

mate, Zajac, who made the trip all the way from Manitoba, Canada for the game.

"That's what hockey guys do for each other," Parise said. "You do things like that for a good cause like this."

Shattuck was well represented with alumni, but so was the Faribault Falcons program, which had former players such as Seth Helgeson and Matt Lipinski on the World team.

"It just shows the talent and the amount of quality hockey players that this city has produced," said SSM alumni Brady Murray of the local talent-laden rosters.

People were treated with autographs by the star cast before and after the game, but the main event was on the ice. Both fans and players left SSM Ice Arena with smiles, and Faribault hockey had more money to produce more local talent for future games.

"Next year is game three," Parise declared after the game. "We'll try to get some more guys to come down and hopefully have an even better roster next year."

The show must go on.

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