



Main Menu

- Home
- Community News
- Sports
- Photos
- Classifieds
- Special Sections
- Contact Info
- Archive

Sports News

July 20 - 27, 2005

Family's love of the sport shows at Hockey School

By [JONATHAN KNIGHT](#)

Sure, the National Hockey League may have been locked away gathering dust until last week's resolution of a year-long labor dispute, but hockey is alive and well in Central Ohio.

Almost in celebration of that persistent enthusiasm, one area family is preparing to rev up its annual hockey camp, which has quickly become one of the most respected in the nation.

It's called the "OV" Hockey School, run by the Donskovs of Westerville. It's set for Aug. 1-5 at the Worthington Ice Center, which is run by Paul Donskov, the patriarch of this small but passionate hockey clique.

His three sons -- Misha, Anthony, and Matthew -- will come together for the sixth time to pass on what they've learned to the next generation.

"It's a very special time to share our knowledge," Anthony said. "We love taking what we've learned as players and showing how it changed us as men and changed us as human beings."

It all started in 1999 when the family began discussing expanding Paul's powerskating camp.

"We wanted to do this on a larger scale," explained Misha, who also serves as lead development instructor for the NHL's Atlanta Thrashers. "Our camps mainly aim toward the more competitive hockey player. Our mission is to provide kids with a competitive environment that's fun.

"But it can really expose them to what it takes to be a hockey player. And if you look at the demographics of the kids we have, they all fit that mold. They all want to be the best."

The camp includes on-ice technical skill drills, off-ice training exercises, guest speakers such as Ohio State University men's hockey coach John Markell, and wraps up with the OV Cup, a mini-tournament on the camp's final day.



Photo courtesy Anthony Donskov

The Donskov family is preparing to translate four lifetimes in hockey into their annual "OV" Hockey School at Worthington Ice Center in August. From left are Misha, Matthew, Paul and Anthony.

Our Top Story



School Bus schedules

[click here](#)

The first OV school in 2000 catered just to the Westerville Warcats, a high school club hockey team, and the enrollment was less than 15 players. This year, the Donskovs are anticipating 150 players divided into five age groups ranging from age 7 to adults.

If 7 seems like a tender age to be roaring around the ice with sticks, consider all three of the Donskov brothers learned to skate shortly after they learned to walk.

Developing a passion for the game from their Russian-born father and veteran coach, the Donskovs grew up in southwestern Ontario, a hockey hotbed that has produced several NHL stars.

Accordingly, all three Donskovs went on to play collegiately and then at the professional level: Misha for two years in Europe, and Anthony and Matt in the Central Hockey League, the hockey equivalent of double-A minor-league baseball.

But perhaps nothing demonstrates the brothers' dedication than their high school experiences at Westerville North -- and beyond.

"They didn't have high school hockey when we were there," Matt said, "so we would go to Canada and play junior hockey during the school year and go to school there.

"We were fortunate to have a good principal (Jim McCann) and a good school that helped us out with transferring credits and everything. We'd leave at the start of the school year and spend most of the year in Canada. We'd come back in March and finish up the year here. We all did it our junior and senior years."

And it was during one of these excursions that the name of their camp originated. When Anthony and Misha were teammates on a team in Durham, Ontario, the local media nicknamed them the "OV Brothers," stemming from the last two letters of their last name. Later, when they needed a name for their camp, they remembered their nickname.

"It's short and sweet and we can all relate to it," Misha said.

Just as the popularity of the game has swelled in the past decade, the OV School has grown as well, bringing players from as far as California and Idaho. While the Donskovs are thrilled at the success, they're hesitant for it to get too big.

"Right now, we're still happy with where it is," Misha said. "Like any business, you don't want to grow too fast. The last thing any of us want to do is sacrifice quality for quantity, since the quality is what keeps people signing up."

And beyond the fulfillment of coaching and teaching, the family camaraderie and appreciation for hockey is what keeps the Donskovs signing up each year.

"It's something we all enjoy doing," Anthony said. "The game has been good to our family. We've just truly enjoyed every minute. We want to give whatever we can back to the younger kids. Hopefully, our passion and love for the game rubs off."