

At A Glanz ... Happy Elves, Part 1



Rich Glanzer
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At a Glanz By Rich
Glanzer

Its funny, I've always been considered, "too competitive." Growing up, I received a lot of trophies. All kids that play sports do. Yay!! We participated, we get a trophy!!!

Bleh. That's right, BLEH!! There was only two trophies that ever meant anything to me growing up. One was the most improved trophy I got for my baseball team, the St. Mary Supersonics. Even as a kid I understood that trophy meant I didn't suck as much as I did the season before, but I still wanted it. I knew I was never going to be one of the best players, but I also knew no one would outwork me. I mean I was a smart little guy, how many 7-year-olds realize they have to work harder than the next boy because their simply not as good? But I wanted to win that trophy because I wanted to show my teammates that I cared. I cared enough to improve.

But while I was happy to get that trophy, that's not the one I *really* cared about. The one I *really really* cared about growing up and the one I still cherish today (even though heck if I know where it is) is the one we got for beating the VFW Roadrunners in

the championship game. I remember it clear as day; we were down by a run going into the bottom of the last inning. I had caught every inning of every game that season. I *wanted* that championship. And with men on 2nd and 3rd, Craig Shiloh hit a single. The old Met announcer Bob Murphy was announcing the game (not really) and it sounded something like this, "Here's the pitch to Shiloh. Lined into left center, base hit!! One run is in, here comes Marc Herschmann rounding third. The throw to the plate....SAFE!!! SAFE!!! SAFE!!! THE SUPERSONICS ARE THE CHAMPIONS OF THE FREEEEEEEEEE WOOORRRRLLLLLLLDDDDDD!!!!!!!!!"

That trophy is the one I cared about. Because 30-some years later, I still remember that game. I still remember that season. That shiny blue trophy, may have been lost in one of my many moves, but I guarantee I never threw it away.

Fast forward to today. After many years of playing organized hockey, having a good season that didn't result in a championship, just never meant anything to me. It was the championship or bust. Don't get me wrong, there are some fun seasons where I scored a ton of goals (which is a rarity for me) but if it didn't end up with me winning a plastic trophy, the memories didn't stick. That is, until last season when I played for my coed hockey team, the Happy Little Elves.

In 2008 I joined this coed hockey league that plays in New York City called BTSH. I was put on the Elves, a new team filled with free agents. We won our first game 4-3 against

the Tuques. It was a great day. I remember thinking, man we are a pretty decent team. I think we'll do alright. 18 games later, we never won another game. We lost 17, and tied 1. It was by far, the most frustrating sports season in my life. Everyone was fighting with everyone. People were mad at me for being "too competitive." And I was mad at them for not being competitive enough (notice there are no quotes there).

As the season wore on, the newness and freshness of the league wore off. My team stopped going to the bar after the game. We would lose by six and go home. Finally I added a few of my Public Enemy teammates (from my Long Island mens team), and though we didn't win, we finally played competitively.

Instead of losing by six, we lost to some of the best teams by 1. It was still frustrating, but at least we were on the right track.

At the end of the 2008 season, our record was 1-17-1. I remember thinking, I cant wait till next year. I knew next year wasn't going to produce a championship, but I also knew people were going to be in for a surprise. Just like when I was a kid on the Supersonics, first comes most improved....

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