



Mudbugs clear of immigration issues

October 25, 2006

By Roy Lang III

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n Bossier-Shreveport gets remaining 12 players eligible.

The Bossier-Shreveport Mudbugs can focus on hockey now. Tuesday, the final 12 players with immigration issues were cleared.

But head coach Scott Muscutt isn't out of the woods just yet. He needs to get his roster down to 18 players today. With nearly 30 players to choose from, that's not going to be easy.

"This still means there is a lot left to do here, but I think we're on the right track now anyway," said Muscutt who says roughly five spots were still up for grabs on Tuesday. "This will be an interesting time coming up here."

Karlis Zirn is one player Muscutt locked in. Zirn was an emergency replacement to help the Mudbugs just field a team during the opening weekend, but now is here to stay.

Zirn, 28, was third in the Central Hockey League Rookie of the Year race in 2004, but has been away from hockey since the spring of 2005. Despite the rust, he scored two goals in the Mudbugs' season-opening loss Friday.

The former Colorado Eagle and American Joseph Ori, could be the silver lining for the Mudbugs to come from the immigration situation.

"There have been a couple of guys that were not in our plans at all," Muscutt said. "Joseph Ori is just a great pickup we wouldn't have had except for this situation. They've really added to our lineup in places where we didn't know what we were going to get there."

Ori, a 6-foot, 185-pound winger from Niles, Ill., played in the same league as Mike Nason, a newcomer slotted for a roster spot with the Mudbugs this season.

The 24-year-old Ori collected a pair of assists this weekend.

"He's a great skater with great skills," Muscutt said. "He challenged Austin from our blue line in. He possesses a tremendous amount of skill and youth."

Muscutt is happy about the two late additions, but stops short of labeling the hidden gems as the team's answers to a President's Cup.

"It's a little early to be throwing our hands up in victory," Muscutt said.

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October 25, 2006

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