

Game 1 Recap, Chiefs vs. Ducks, 3/20/05, 4:30 p.m., Wheaton Ice Rink

Hockey North America's Washington Chiefs began their inaugural season against the Baltimore Ducks at the Wheaton Indoor Ice Rink, on Sunday March 20th at 4:30pm. After 8 weeks of rigorous instruction, the Chiefs were poised to win their first game, but it was not to be as the Ducks won 6-1. From the opening face off (taken by Jeff Chan), the Ducks appeared to be in control; however there was no questioning either the Chiefs' hearts or effort. The Ducks went up 2-0 early, but in a spectacular play late in period one, Chiefs winger Ryan Fayhee earned the game MVP award by rocketing down the left wing, getting behind the defense, angling in on the goalie, and blistering a wrist shot. His efforts halved the score to 2-1.

Other than a late attempt on goal by Ira Rabin with Rob Fobian foolishly firing the puck directly into the frozen goaltender, the Chiefs' scoring opportunities were few and far between as they were unable to maintain consistent offensive zone pressure. Recently acquired veteran defenseman John Walker made his presence felt by pushing the play up ice only to see his efforts whistled for offsides on no less than three occasions, one of which was highly questionable. Walker also showcased his magician skills by inadvertently tripping one of the Ducks wingers, but avoided the penalty box as the referee assessed Jeff Chan the two minute minor. The Ducks scored on the ensuing power play, however Chan was quoted as saying, "Well, I was a little confused by the call, because clearly it was John. But it was better not having John in the box so, I didn't argue."

The Chiefs goaltending crisis was alleviated several weeks ago with the arrival of newly signed John Bretschneider. Although the Ducks scored 6 goals, Bretschneider had several stellar saves; many coming after the outcome was decided. By continuing to build on his efforts from Sunday's game, Bretschneider should be a steady source of inspiration throughout his tenure.

On the injury front, Josh Schopf played an early shift but a nagging ankle injury sidelined him for the remainder of the game. Team physicians report Schopf is questionable for game 2 against the Unknowns. Defenseman Dave Leib and center Paul Kolbernich were scratched from today's game, but will be back in the lineup on Tuesday night.