

Action Photo Makes Brandon Lajoie's "Battle of the Valley" Goal a Memorable One in More Ways than One!

Kent, WA 4 October, 2008 – It's tough to get a great action photo at Kent Valley Ice Centre, or at most ice rinks for that matter. You can't get close enough to get the perfect hockey action picture, nor would you want to for the risk of getting hit by the puck. Unless you have an electronic camera with the kind of giant high-speed lens, like the ones you see on the sidelines at the Seahawks games, perfect hockey action photos are pretty tough to come by. However, if you have a reasonably fast telephoto lens and you're persistent, eventually you just might capture that once-in-a-lifetime photo that will be treasured forever. Such was the case in Saturday's Mite "Battle of the Valley" game between KVHA's Mite Tornadoes and Mite Hurricanes as Lexi Doner, a Lightning parent, caught the Mite Lightning's only goal of the game, Brandon's Lajoie's first of the season and his team's first goal of the season.



Lexi Doner was watching the Mite "Battle of the Valley" game Saturday and snapping photos from the top row of the stands at the west end of the rink. He was taking photos of his youngest son "Little Lexi" skating in his first ever hockey game with the Mite Lightning. Near the end of the third period Doner spotted Brandon Lajoie take a pass from Elliot Bucci and break down the ice all alone toward the Tornadoes goal. Lexi focused his camera on Brandon, followed him across the blue line and into the zone carefully adjusting focus with each of Brandon's strides until Brandon reached the edge of the face off circle just to the left of the goal. Lexi snapped the shutter just as Brandon fired a bullet toward Tornadoes goalie Nicholas Gill. The camera caught the puck in flight on its way to the Tornadoes net and just a moment before it slipped past Gill on the stick side for the score.

Brandon Lajoie is 6 years old. He will be 7 on October 18th. He has been skating since he was 3 but didn't skate on hockey skates until he was 4. Brandon learned to skate in the "Learn to Play Hockey" program at Sprinker Ice Arena in Spanaway and moved to the Kent Valley Hockey Association last year. Kelley Lajoie, Brandon's mom said; *"He's wanted to play hockey since he could talk. He always*

told me he wanted to play hockey." According to Kelley, Brandon's interest in hockey began at daycare in Alaska when he got to watch his daycare provider's son play hockey. *"From that moment on, that was what he wanted to do!"*

Saturday's goal was Brandon's first goal of the young hockey season. According to Kelley, *"He was pretty excited about this goal because he scored the first goal of the season for the team last year too."*

Brandon Lajoie's goal at 13:18 into the third period sent an electrical shock through Lightning parents and fans in the stands as they jumped up, cheered, rattled a cow bell and held up "Go Lightning" banners. Lajoie, high-fived his teammates in celebration of the goal. Brandon's mom Kelley, standing two rows below Doner in the stands, screamed with delight. Doner paused during the celebration to check the camera's viewing screen and check out the photo he'd just taken. He was pleased with what he saw.

The photo of Brandon Lajoie's goal during the Mite "Battle of the Valley" is important for a variety of reasons; it captures Brandon's first goal of the season for the Lajoie family photo album, it records the Mite Lightning team's first goal of the season, it's a great action photo and it captures Brandon's excellent shooting form. But, more importantly, it provides Brandon's father an opportunity to be part of that game and that goal, even though he is involved in a different kind of battle thousands of miles from Kent Valley Ice Centre. Captain Bart Lajoie is stationed in Iraq with a Military Integrated Training Team working with the Iraqi military. He's been in Iraq since August and is scheduled to return home from his tour of duty in August of 2009.

Captain Lajoie - We dedicate this photo to you. Check out your son's great form in that photo, his left skate planted firmly on the ice, his right skate in the air to counterbalance the release of the puck from his stick, and the puck flying toward its mark. It is our hope that this photo serves to put you in the stands at Kent Valley Ice Centre with the rest of us. We share with you the moment when we all stood and watched your son's breakaway with excitement and anticipation. As much as many of us in the stands hated to see that Tornado goalie's shut out come to an end, we also knew that breakaway scoring opportunities like this don't happen very often. Six-year-old Brandon (soon to be seven) seized the opportunity and confidently scored a dramatic last minute goal, his first goal of the season and his team's first score of the season. He took Bucci's pass, rushed down the ice and scored that goal like he'd done it before, and he had done it before, during his team's opening game last season. Enjoy the photo Captain Lajoie, you were there with us!

Thank you, Brandon, for the memorable goal and congratulations Lexi for capturing the moment with your lens. Thank you, Captain Lajoie for your continuing service to our country. Now, go show your buddies this great photo...

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