



SPORTS

Amid outrage, NFL keeps counting its money



METRO

Boyfriend said to be clueless on 2 children



SPORTS

Trade for F hit for Red

Visiting hockey players find warm welcomes in Concord

By Nancy Shohet West | GLOBE CORRESPONDENT NOVEMBER 21, 2013



JOSH REYNOLDS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

Jocelyne Lamoureux (center) whips up a chocolate snack with members of her host family, ChaCha (left) and Rosie McLean, in Concord.

With a World Series game on TV and a pot of chili bubbling on the stove, a cluster of women in their 20s chatted companionably in Sheila Boyle's kitchen in Concord one

evening last month.

Two of them had just returned from the beauty salon and wanted to show off their new highlights, one needed advice on a crochet project, and another was describing the bridal toast she planned to give at her sister's upcoming wedding.

CONTINUE READING BELOW ▼

Only the Team USA jackets worn by the young women betrayed that these were not friends home from college. Unless you follow women's ice hockey, Jocelyne Lamoureux, Monique Lamoureux, Brianne McLaughlin, and Jessie Vetter may not be exactly household names.

But these four spend their days pounding pucks into nets and flying into the boards at pre-Olympic competitions throughout New England and eastern Canada.

Along with the 21 other members of the US women's national ice hockey team, the Lamoureux twins, McLaughlin, and Vetter have been spending the six months leading up to the Winter Olympics in Russia training at the Edge Sports Center in Bedford. Early this year, when they found out that the elite athletes would be training at the same rink where their children play hockey, local families were quick to offer up their households for the women.



JOANNE RATHE/GLOBE STAFF

Meghan Duggan (No. 10) and Michelle Picard mix it up on the ice in Bedford.

Perhaps no one was more eager to host a hockey player than Rosie McLean, a fourth-grader at Nashoba Brooks School in Concord.

“Rosie locked onto the idea,” said her mother, Lisa McLean. “She heard about it and kept asking me every day if I’d found out anything yet about the homestays.”

Rosie, who plays ice hockey and says her goal is to be an Olympian, eventually got her

wish, when Jocelyne Lamoureux arrived late in the summer to stay with the McLeans.

The Lamoureux twins hail from North Dakota, Vetter is from Wisconsin, and McLaughlin from Ohio.

Since arriving in Concord, the Olympic contenders' lives have been a mélange of hard-core athletic training and suburban fun. When not working out at the rink or traveling to hockey competitions, they join their host families for cookouts, attend children's soccer games, sightsee, play golf at the Concord Country Club, eat ice cream at Bedford Farms, and relax. They have also participated in community outreach events, visiting hockey clubs and schools around the area and even joining younger players for a few practice sessions.

Jocelyne Lamoureux, 24, observed that it is a world of difference between staying in the McLean household and renting a house with teammates, as she did while training for the Vancouver Winter Olympics four years ago. When discussion first arose about the possibility of doing a homestay, she was immediately enthusiastic.

"It's hard packing up your stuff and moving halfway across the country for such a short time," she reflected. "I thought it might seem easier to be with a family."

And not only has it been convenient, pointed out twin sister Monique, who is staying with Jeff Moore and Barbara Southcote in Concord, it has also been illuminating, in the way that any homestay experience can be.

"It's so interesting to see how another family interacts. It's so much fun to be part of that atmosphere," Monique said. "Jocelyne and I are very close to our parents and our four brothers back in North Dakota, and getting to be part of another family has made the training time easier.

“
Every day at dinner we ask Jocelyne what she did that day. She tells us about workouts and practices, and it's just so amazing to see this from the other side.”



JOSH REYNOLDS FOR THE BOSTON GLOBE

I call Jeff and Barb's house home now."

But if the athletes are enjoying the experience, the families are equally so.

"Every day at dinner we ask Jocelyne what she did that day," said Charlotte "ChaCha" McLean, Rosie's 14-year-old sister and also a budding hockey player. "She tells us about workouts and practices, and it's just so amazing to see this from the other side. I think of the Olympics as such a different world, but hearing about Jocelyne's training every day makes me realize what her team is doing isn't that different from what my team is doing. She's an Olympic athlete, but she makes it all sound so normal."

When she first considered hosting a player, Boyle said, she was a bit uncertain. "Would it be awkward?" she remembers wondering. "Unlike most of the homestay families, our family doesn't even have any hockey players."

However, athletics is part of the household's fabric: Boyle is a long-distance runner; her husband and three sons ski and play soccer, tennis, football, and lacrosse. And, she said, any apprehension was allayed soon after goalkeeper McLaughlin, 26, pulled into the driveway.

"I thought it would be like having a guest in the house and I'd be making elaborate meals every evening, but instead it's just like having another member of the family," Boyle said. So much so that she found herself feeling a strong sense of maternal anxiety when she saw McLaughlin getting roughed up during a game against Canada last month in Vermont attended by the Boyles along with several other Concord families.

Teammates, who are vying for berths on the US Olympic squad, watch practice at the Edge Sports Center in Bedford.

Joanne Rathe/Globe Staff

Teammates, who are vying for berths on the US Olympic squad, watch practice at the Edge Sports Center in Bedford.

Finn Boyle, 10, may not know a lot about hockey, but he knows it is fun to have an

US women's hockey goalie Brianne McLaughlin eats dinner with the Boyle household in Concord, including brothers Max (left) and Finn, as part of a homestay program.

honorary family member around, especially one who likes sports as much as he does. “Bri showed me her silver medal from the Vancouver Olympics,” Finn said. “She’s really funny and cracks jokes all the time. We jump on the trampoline.”

“We had a pull-up contest,” added his 13-year-old brother Max. “Bri beat me by two pull-ups.”

And as excitement for the Sochi Winter Olympics in February builds, the families in Concord say they will be sorry to see the homestays ending.

“Monique has been a great influence on both of my daughters,” said Jeff Moore. “This experience has shown them firsthand how focused you have to be to achieve a goal, and also how important a positive attitude is. The final Olympic team hasn’t been picked yet, so there’s still an element of stress, but they can see that Monique and all her teammates go off to practice every day and have fun.

“My daughters tend to be hypercompetitive, but this is a good lesson for them that even when you work hard, you don’t always know how things are going to work out. You do your best anyway.”

Nancy Shohet West can be reached at nancyswest@gmail.com.

0 COMMENTS

© 2014 BOSTON GLOBE MEDIA PARTNERS, LLC