

Montclair Hockey: Former Mountie standout Parker signs on to play at D-I Maine



Former Mounties captain and all time goal-scoring leader Remy Parker credits his time as a player for Montclair High School for his love of the game.

Courtesy Remy Parker

by **Andrew Garda**

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Not every path in life goes in a straight line. Former Montclair High School hockey player Remy Parker can attest to that.

The 2016 MHS graduate committed to attend and play hockey with the University of Maine Black Bears on May 28, after spending a year at Albany Academy and two years with the New Jersey Hitmen of the National Collegiate Development Conference (NCDC).

“Hockey is the only sport you need to play juniors for,” Parker said on a recent phone call. “A big percentage of college Division 1 players start at 21 and are usually above age [compared to] normal college students. So that’s just how it is.”

His former MHS coach, Pat Verney echoed that.

“I try to explain to everybody, the path in hockey is so different than the path in all the other sports,” Verney said. “There’s an expectation in ice hockey that a kid is going to develop for a couple years playing post high school hockey somewhere, whether you’re playing at a prep school, or whether you’re playing high level junior hockey.”

For Parker, the time seems to have been well spent, and he saw improvement every year since he’d left MHS. Last season, the Hitmen forward improved his scoring output by 32 points, totally 52 and putting him in eighth place for scoring in NCDC, while also being named to the All-Star game.

For Parker, the Hitmen – who play in Wayne, near his parent’s Montclair home – have been a big part making him the player he is today.

“The way they compete, their mindset each and every day whether it’s just practice on or off the ice, or boxing or lift, everything they do they want you to push it as hard as you can go. They also try to build your confidence up, build you up as much as possible to be not only a great player on the ice, but a great person off the ice. I think those two things go together very well and that makes a successful person and hockey player,” Parker said.

As much as the time he has spent with the Hitmen has molded him, Parker also credits Verney with his love of the game, as well as his overall mentality.

“When I was in high school, I wasn’t sure what I wanted to do,

but early on maybe freshman or sophomore year, Coach Verney really pushed me, and showed me how amazing the sport is," Parker said. "He really pushed me to an extent to where this is all I want to do for the rest of my life. This is what I want to make a career in. Because of that, I went on to an amazing prep school, and then after that I went to an amazing junior team in the Hitmen, and the Hitmen just changed my life."

Verney had equally high praise for his former player.

"I would say he was one of the strongest players ever to play [at MHS], I would say the best player, to play at the high school. He broke our goals record, he was a two year captain."

Verney said Parker also meshed well with the talent around him.

"We were fortunate because he was with some other amazing players the year we had with him, [Brock] Bowers and [Michael] Gerne, that was such a special year," Verney said.

Parker's success is special because he is the first male MHS hockey player to play D1 hockey since Verney took over the team, he said.

"The only other Division 1 player we've had here during my time, was a female, Jacquie Pierri," he said. "She went to play D1 at Brown University. [and had] a ridiculous career. She got a Brown education, played professional women's hockey and won the equivalent of the Stanley Cup with the Calgary Inferno."



Former MHS star Remy Parker said the New Jersey Hitmen pushed him harder than he thought he could be pushed, but the reward was a scholarship to the University of Maine.

Courtesy Remy Parker

That's a lot to live up to, but Verney feels Parker has shown he can put in the effort to succeed.

"He was a dominant high school player, where he had all types of accolades," he said. "MVP of the Division, we won a bunch of Division championships when he was there, had an undefeated regular season – the only team in Montclair hockey history – while he was a captain. He did everything he could do in high school and accomplished everything he could, but it was the work in the post-high school career that made this happen."

Parker is ready to meet those expectations. Now that he's played hockey full time, he is determined to make it his full time job.

That said, he's still going to Maine to study, and hasn't lost sight of that.

"I definitely want to play pro after this, that's the main

goal, but I want to major in business,” Parker said.

What the University of Maine business department could offer him was a factor in choosing the school, but more than anything, Parker loved the hockey program.

“What really stood out to me is the coaching staff,” he said. “Usually at a Division I program, coaches run it like a business, but I feel as if the University of Maine coaches treat you like family. That’s really what I wanted from a coaching standpoint. I wanted to be treated as family to them, and all of them are amazing.”

Beyond that, the campus is beautiful and the hockey facilities are top-notch he said.

“I couldn’t ask for a better rink to play in, a better gym to train in, a better trainer than who they have there.”

Parker feels what MHS and the Hitmen did for him –pushed him to improve himself every single minute of every day – is something he will once again experience with the Black Bears.

“In both programs every single person pushed each other do the best they can,” Parker said. “[And they] are both winning programs. So that also made it tons of fun.”

While the Black Bears have struggled the last few years, it’s a storied program. Now Parker has an opportunity to help put it back on top.