

MSU Blue Line Club

Supporting Spartan Hockey Since 1962

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Welcome Back, Coach Danton Cole!

Danton Cole was introduced as Michigan State's seventh head coach in program history on April 11. An 18-year coaching veteran with international, professional and collegiate experience, Cole was a key member of some of the most successful Spartan hockey teams in program history. He comes to Michigan State from USA Hockey's National Team Development Program where he mentored some of the nation's top young players on the U-17 and U-18 teams for the past seven seasons.

While with Team USA, he won two gold medals (2012, 2014) and one bronze medal (2016) at the International Ice Hockey Federation Men's Under-18 World Championship and three top-three finishes at the World Under-17 Hockey Challenge (2011, 2013, 2014), the top events in each age group.

In his four years at Michigan State as a player, the Spartans went 131-44-8 (.738), winning a NCAA National Championship (1986), making three NCAA Frozen Four appearances (1986, 1987, 1989), capturing two CCHA regular-season titles (1986, 1989) and two CCHA Tournament championships (1987, 1989).

Cole, who was the recipient of the Distinguished Spartan Award in 2013, ended his Michigan State career with 69 goals and 94 assists for 163 points. He shares the MSU career games played record of 180 with former teammate Don McSween.

For more on the hiring of Danton Cole, visit MSUSpartans.com



THE DANTON COLE FILE

- TWO-TIME GOLD Medal Winner, IIHF U-18 World Championship
Head Coach, Team USA (2012, 2014)
- BRONZE Medal Winner, IIHF U-18 World Championship
Head Coach, Team USA (2016)
- CHA CHAMPION & NCAA Tournament
Head Coach, Alabama-Huntsville (2010)
- STANLEY CUP Champion, New Jersey Devils (1995)
- NCAA Champion, Michigan State (1986)
- BIG TEN Medal of Honor,
Michigan State (1989)

Dear Blue Line Club Members,

It has been a very exciting first week here at MSU Hockey for me and my family. The reception from everyone has been overwhelming. The banquet was outstanding and it was great to see so many of you and catch up on things. I look forward to seeing you soon and thank you for your dedication to Spartan Hockey.

See you at Munn!

Danton Cole



A Final Note From The Captain

The Best Four Years of My Life

The past four years have been some of the best of my life and I wouldn't trade it for the world. I got to play for one of the most historic programs in college hockey history, and was in constant contact with some of the great players and coaches who have graced the program with their presence. Not only did I get to pursue my dream of becoming a professional hockey player, I got to obtain an accounting degree from a fine institution in the Eli Broad Business College.

My favorite part about coming to MSU is the relationships I created with not only the coaches and faculty members, but the players as well. I have made some of my best friends for life during my time at MSU and have created memories that I will remember for the rest of my life.

I have my parents and everyone who has supported me over the years as well as the Blue Line Club to thank for that. I will always be a dedicated member of the Spartan Family and can't wait to see what the program does in the coming years. Go Green!

- Joe Cox



Blue Line Club President's Letter

With the Hockey Banquet last Saturday night, we concluded the 2016-2017 season. As I stated all year, especially from the win-loss perspective, it was an extremely disappointing season. I would like to thank all of our members for their continued support of the program and the Club this year. There are many things to look forward to. In addition to a change in leadership, with the resignation of Coach Tom Anastos and the hiring of Coach Danton Cole, we are returning three of last season's top 10 in Big Ten freshman scoring. We are also returning our leading scorer and highest-scoring defenseman. I truly believe we are at the ground floor of a resurgence of Spartan Hockey.

I would like to take this opportunity to personally thank Coach Anastos for his service. For whatever you may have thought of his hiring as head coach, or his job performance, he always did what he thought was best for Michigan State and Spartan Hockey. He ran a clean program and his student athletes excelled in the classroom. He was always approachable and willing to help the Club. I wish him the best of luck in all of his future endeavors. Once a Spartan, always a Spartan.

Lastly, but definitely not least, I would like to thank the amazing Board of Directors that I worked with this year, Janeen Geisenhaver, Lynda Knight, Rick Knight, Marissa Layman, Tess Layman, Sarah Segerlind, Gigi Somers, John Somers, and Doug Thorne. Your help and support were instrumental in all we were able to accomplish this season.

Go Green!

Alan Corrie
President



2017 DISTINGUISHED SPARTAN AWARD WINNER: FRANK FINN

By Neil Koepke

When Frank Finn began his college hockey career at Michigan State as a student-athlete in the fall of 1978, he already had specific goals in his mind before he walked on campus.

Frank wanted to have the best possible experience he could have as a hockey player, but even more importantly, he wanted to have a great academic experience - one that would lay the groundwork for his career in the workplace, following a life in hockey.

Based on memories of his four years on the ice and his successful international business career off the ice, it is clear Finn achieved those ambitious goals.

"When I started school, I said that I wanted to be more successful outside of hockey than within hockey, and that I wanted to create an impact beyond Michigan State hockey," Finn said.

"I hope I've done that, but the bar was high leaving Michigan State, considering all of the amazing experiences I had playing hockey in East Lansing."

Finn, 56, who played hockey at MSU from 1978-1982 - one year for Amo Bessone and three seasons for Ron Mason - is the winner of the 2017 MSU Distinguished Alumnus Award.

He is currently the President of McCain Foods U.S., based in Chicago. Previously, Finn served in prominent executive roles with Shell Oil in the U.S. and London, and with Pepsi Cola in Michigan, Ohio, New York and in the Czech/Slovak Republics.

"When I reflect back on being a hockey player, I realize the skills I developed at MSU, such as teamwork, goal-setting, and time management. These were life skills that provided a foundation and became critical keys to success," said Finn, a 1978 graduate of Livonia Stevenson High School.

"I was never the most gifted player. I was a scrappy player with a strong work ethic, and that served me well at Michigan State, as well as later in life. I've learned to never give up, to take nothing for granted, and to work towards improving every day."

Finn was at MSU during a transition time in the hockey program. The Spartans struggled during Bessone's last season in 1978-79, and then went through a rebuilding process under Mason's first two seasons. But as a senior, Finn was part of the Spartans' first team to make the NCAA Tournament under Mason in 1981-82, a run that lasted nine consecutive seasons.

After his senior year, Finn took advantage of an MSU academic opportunity that exposed him to living abroad. This became a turning point in his life.

"Three weeks after playing in the NCAAs, I was on a plane to Europe, scratching my international itch," he said. "I was able to complete my undergraduate degree at Erasmus University in Rotterdam (Netherlands). I was part of an exchange program with MSU. It was a gift I will never forget, and an experience that had a profound impact on my life."

"Studying in Europe fueled my appreciation and desire for the international experience. As you can see from my business career, living abroad opened up my eyes to a new and bigger world. Later, I ended up working for Pepsi, living in Prague and developing the business in the Czech and Slovak Republics. I did this for more than five years, and later I lived in London with Shell Oil."

"There was a time when I lived more of my adult life overseas than I did domestically, and that international experience was in no small part due to the opportunity provided to me by Michigan State."

Finn graduated from MSU with a bachelor's degree in Marketing in 1982. Ten years later, while working for Pepsi, he earned an Executive MBA from Case Western Reserve. He has also received Chartered Director Certification from McMaster University in Hamilton, Ontario.

On the ice as a Spartan, Finn had seven goals and 23 points in 36 games as a freshman, and 11 goals and 27 points as a sophomore. He had his best season offensively as a junior when he scored 15 goals and had 16 assists for 31 points in 35 games, second on the team to Mark Hamway's 33 points (18-15).

As a senior, with highly skilled players such as Hamway, Newell Brown, Kelly Miller, Tom Anastos and Lyle Phair taking over scoring roles, Finn found himself in even more of a defensive checking role. He had two goals and eight assists for 10 points in 34 games on a team that compiled an overall record of 26-14-2, finished second in the CCHA at 21-10-2, and won the CCHA playoff championship at Joe Louis Arena in Detroit.

In his first three seasons at MSU, Finn had the great fortune of playing with the same linemates - Ken Paraskevin and Gary Harpell. Finn centered the line with Paraskevin on right wing and Harpell on the left side.

"We were primarily a defensive line and I had the privilege of playing with the same linemates for three years in a row from the first practice," Finn said. "We played against the other team's top offensive lines. When we faced off against Minnesota, we were up against Neal and Aaron Broten. Against Wisconsin, we played against Mark Johnson. With North Dakota, it was Doug Smail."

"We were always trying to hold the top players in check. I think we did that assignment effectively. We weren't known for being a goal-scoring line, but I had forgotten that I was second in scoring my junior year."

Finn said he has especially good memories of teaming with pals Harpell and Paraskevin.



"I've reached out to both of them since I heard I was going to be recognized with this honor. We still keep in touch as friends and former teammates," he said. "That's what the Spartan experience is really about. I thanked them for their support and the opportunity to play with them as Spartans."

"When I think of my contributions to the program, I can't think of any other individuals like Gary and Kenny who assisted me in having such a memorable experience. I have always treasured the two of them as my teammates. Their friendship is what made my time at MSU a joy."

During his business career, Finn has held many different titles, managed a wide variety of responsibilities, and has never been afraid to learn new industries. How's this for change and a challenge:

After 13 years with PepsiCo, Finn left the soft drink/snack industry to work with Shell Oil as vice president, general manager of Consumer Lubricants Europe, based in London. Finn enjoyed learning a new industry while bringing his commercial leadership skills to Shell.

After several years of living in Europe, commuting back and forth to the U.S., Finn and his wife decided it was time to settle back where it had all begun, in the Midwest. They moved to Chicago where Frank took a position with McCain Foods, first as Senior Vice President of Commercial Operations in 2007, then Chief Operating Officer in 2010, and President in 2011. He is currently responsible for commercial operations, sales, marketing and corporate communications in the U.S.

"I went from working for a big integrated oil company, to a family owned business at McCain," Finn said. "It is a private company that cherishes the 'can-do' spirit. They go by the saying, 'Trying and failing is OK, but failing to try is not.'"

For sure, Finn is a great leader who has been successful in contributing to the financial success of many companies. But he is most proud of his ability to impact and better people's lives.

"Throughout the years, I am most proud of the people that I've been able to develop and work with. When I was in Prague, I was able to turn the keys over to local management, after helping them learn how to run the business. This concept was the same at Shell, and I hope it will be my legacy at McCain."

"There's great fulfillment in watching people develop, watching them flourish, moving diverse candidates into leadership positions, taking risks on up-and-coming employees and watching them take off. To me, that's fulfilling. That keeps me going and energized."

Finn has four sons - Brett, 33, who lives in Denver; Ryan, 29, and Neil, 25, who both live in San Diego; and Liam, 7. Finn and his wife, Shannon, a management consultant and university professor, reside with Liam in Naperville, Illinois.

Finn said he was thrilled and "truly humbled" by being honored at the MSU Awards Program with the Distinguished Spartan Award.

"In my wildest imagination, I was not anticipating it," he said. "I've re-engaged with the program, reaching out to the hockey alumni community, and rallying behind the Munn Transformation project."

"It's time for me to pause and realize that I got so much out of this program. I'm honored to be recognized and I can only hope I can continue to provide back to the school that, as a student-athlete, gave so much to me."



The Second Annual Stephen Swistak MD Memorial Golf Classic

Saturday, June 10, 2017
Timber Trace Golf Club | Pinckney, Michigan

Support the memorial fund of former Spartan hockey player Steve Swistak, who passed away from esophageal cancer in June 2015. The Swistak family has created the Dr. Stephen Swistak Memorial Fund in Stephen's honor in order to continue his legacy, support other student-athletes with similar aspirations and values, and advance esophageal cancer research and awareness. Over 130 golfers participated and 28 sponsors provided financial backing for last year's inaugural event, raising over \$32,000.

Funds raised from the inaugural outing, the Stephen Swistak Memorial Scholarship Endowment with MSU was created. The funds go toward an annual scholarship endowment for a Spartan hockey player and provide support to the Munn Arena renovation project.

For more information and to register for this year's event, visit www.swisstrong.com

2017 Spartan Hockey Team Award Winners

- Distinguished Spartan Award** – Frank Finn
- Team MVP** – Mason Appleton
- Spartan Shield Award** – Joe Cox
- Bill Burgess Outstanding Senior** – Joe Cox
- Outstanding Offensive Player** – Mason Appleton
- Dr. John Downs Outstanding Defensive Player** – Carson Gatt
- Amo Bessone Award** – Joe Cox (given by Cox to Chris Knudson)
- Most Improved Player** – Carson Gatt
- Outstanding Rookie** – Taro Hirose
- Spartan Fitness Award** – Brennan Sanford
- Blue Line Club President's Award** – Joe Cox
- Goofus Award** – Anthony Scarsella

