



Waltham High alumnus Dave Krueger gets some love and affection as his alter ego of the Boston College Eagles mascot. (Courtesy Photo)

Eagle-eye views: Former Hawk turns Eagle

By Scott Souza / Daily News Staff

Friday, March 24, 2006

Many Boston College students spend their years at the school traveling the country, meeting all sorts of people and developing a whole new view of the world around them.

That's exactly what Waltham High alumnus Dave Krueger has done.

Only he's done it wearing a bird costume.

For the past four years, Krueger has gone coast-to-coast on the Boston College sideline as the school's Eagle mascot. He has tried to rally the maroon and gold faithful in hockey arenas, basketball fieldhouses and football stadiums in the Big East, Atlantic Coast Conference and Hockey East.

He has flailed his feathers at Madison Square Garden. He has tweaked his beak on the blue turf of Boise, Idaho. He was almost caught skating around like a chicken with his head pulled off at the TD Banknorth Garden during last month's Beanpot, but instead checked an exuberant Boston University fan to the ice before being unmasked Lucha Libre-wrestling style.

"I dropped him pretty good," the winged warrior proudly proclaimed.

He has been invited to appear at events in Times Square, Jacksonville, Fla. and Disney World. When ESPN needs to film one of their mascot-filled commercials, the folks in Bristol, Conn. have him on speed dial. He was on the cover of Sports Illustrated's March Madness issue last year.

He was even once the No.1 play of the day on SportsCenter.

"We were playing N.C. State (in basketball)," he recalled. "I remember the date: January 19, 2004. The players were just coming back onto the floor and I was at halfcourt doing my thing. I had my back to the basket and threw up a ball that went in. I knew the cameras were rolling when it happened too."

So he stayed up late and watched SportsCenter hoping they might show the replay.

"They were doing the top 10 plays of the day and No.3 was like Marcus Camby dunking over three people," he said. "I figured if something (that good) was No.3 then they weren't going to use me... But then (SportsCenter anchor) Linda Cohn said: 'But nothing can top this...'" It was three in the morning and I screamed so loud I woke everyone up."

A baseball all-star, football player, basketball participant and all-around fun guy at Waltham High, Krueger went to Boston College with the realization that he'd probably need to buy a ticket to be involved with any major sporting events at the Division I school.

Then fate intervened during a bathroom trip in the middle of the night his freshman year.

"We had one of those shared (dorm) bathrooms," he said, "and on the door was a notice my (resident assistant) put up about mascot auditions. They were that night, so I didn't pay any attention in class that day. All I could think of was what skits I could do."

With a demonstrated ability to improvise and a promise that he could skate, Krueger was awarded the part.

"I called my mother that night all excited and told her I tried out for the team and made it," he said.

"She was like, 'You made the baseball team? You made the baseball team?' he remembered.

Then he broke the news.

"I said: 'Nope, I'm the new mascot.'"

Wearing a costume and acting goofy does have its privileges. He was invited to the ESPN 25th anniversary party where he stood on the red carpet -- in character, of course -- with Isiah Thomas, Jalen Rose and Richard Petty. He has worked as a mascot for the Connecticut Sun women's basketball team, the former Boston Breakers women's soccer team and the New England Revolution (for some reason, their mascot is a fox named Slyde).

He said the job has allowed him to develop many contacts in the sports marketing industry in which he hopes to make his career. There has even been talk that he may have an inside track to becoming a future Pat Patriot.

"I guess I've done a good job establishing connections through it," he said. "I've tried to take advantage of all of it."

But here's the big question: Is the chick costume a chick magnet?

"My girlfriend *is* a cheerleader," he conceded.

Well, there you go.

While Krueger only has a little longer in life as an Eagle, he has plenty of more antics to act out. Earlier this week, he was in West Lafayette, Ind. for the BC women's basketball team's upset of top-seeded Ohio State. Today, he was set to fly to Albuquerque, N.M. for tomorrow night's Sweet 16 game against Utah.

"I was thinking that it would be great if the women's team made it to the Final Four (at the Garden)," he said. "That way I could start and end my career (as the mascot) right in Boston."

Typical bird. Always wanting to come home to roost.