

ALPHA DOGS: Leaders of the Dog Pound
by Stella Lorence

The crowd is on their feet, eyes glued to the game as the Boston University Men's Ice Hockey team sets up a power play. With an anticipation that is almost tangible, the crowd tracks the developments on the ice, reacting as a unit, until finally, the puck soars past the opposing goaltender and lands in the goal. While the players celebrate on the ice, the goal horn blairs over the taunting cheers of the fans and the BU Pep Band launches into the fight song.

Spurring this excitement throughout the game is Sam Quick (ENG '20), the President of BU's fan section, the Dog Pound. Often seen wearing his Jack Eichel jersey and a San Jose Sharks snapback, Quick is a figure as familiar to BU Men's Hockey as Rhett is, and can be seen leading cheers from the top of the Dog Pound, waving the big BU flag after goals, or tossing candy to fans in between periods.

"I try to make people have a good time," Quick said.

Quick was offered the role of president during the Dog Pound overnight trip to Vermont when he was a freshman. He was the only freshman to go on the trip, as everyone else was either a senior or an alum.

"It was a little overwhelming," Quick said. "I was kind of shocked that that would happen, but they basically started to groom me to become the next leader."

Quick then spent a year working closely with former president Maddy Campbell to learn the cheers and traditions, serving as vice president during his sophomore year. Quick said he and the other Dog Pound leaders are starting to network to find out who they will be passing their roles onto, but have not made any decisions just yet.

Also a staple at BU hockey games is Alicia McHugh (CAS '20), who despite not having a formal leadership title, contributes energy, excitement, and volume to the Dog Pound.

"I mostly help yell at games because Sam can't handle that by himself," McHugh said.

McHugh said she helps a lot at the beginning of the semester with ideas and drawings for posters. Freshman year, she met Quick, who brought her to her first hockey game.

"I really liked yelling and watching them fight, so now I'm in too deep," McHugh said.

Another important leader in the Dog Pound is Shay Abid (CAS '20), who writes the “Dirty Laundry List,” one of BU’s long standing hockey traditions.

The “Dirty Laundry List” is a flyer that Quick distributes at games. The front has information about upcoming games, ideas for chants, and blurbs that poke fun at the opposing team. The back lists chants and traditions, and when they happen during the game.

“It’s a fun piece of paper that we like to hand out to everyone that gives everyone a little bit of an idea of who we’re playing and the history that goes along with the team that we’re playing,” Quick said. “We started putting the cheers on the back because there’s a lot of new people that are coming to hockey games, a lot more freshmen than usual.”

Some of the cheers and traditions outlined on the “Dirty Laundry List” date back to 1972, when the Dog Pound was founded. The beginning of the “Dirty Laundry List” itself is uncertain, but archived versions suggest it dates back to at least a decade ago, Quick said.

Abid said some of the ideas for the “Dirty Laundry List” content comes from archived “Dirty Laundry Lists,” Instagram profiles of the opposing team, Google, Wikipedia, Reddit, and sometimes Urban Dictionary.

“We pick out the funniest, weirdest stuff that we can find on those teams, picture-wise or content-wise,” Abid said.

The research also benefits Katie Hansen (COM '20), who runs all of the Dog Pound social media accounts. The Dog Pound boasts 5,545 members or followers total across Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

“We’ve promoted more this year than we have in the past few years,” Hansen said. “We want to make it an atmosphere where people want to go to games before they go out on Friday and Saturday nights.”

Many of the photos featured in the Dog Pound’s social media posts come from Gabi Turi (COM '19), who takes photographs and videos at hockey and basketball games. She even got to be on the ice taking photos when BU won the Hockey East championship last season.

“The energy on the ice was just incredible, everybody yelling and screaming and cheering, and the absolute joy and happiness that happened,” Turi said.

No matter their role, all of the leaders agreed that the Dog Pound is part of the BU experience.

“BU hockey is frustrating,” Quick said. “BU hockey is annoying sometimes. BU hockey kind of sucks sometimes, but that’s what it takes to be in the Dog Pound. It’s stressful. People pour so much of their heart into the hockey, into the experience, into their team, into making sure their voices are heard, that everything is loud, that the team knows that we support them. But at the same time, it’s incredibly rewarding seeing us win, seeing us beat teams that we hate.”