

Saturday January 31, 2009

Brothers, sisters team up for Tigers

The Thomas and Francis siblings are getting the rare chance to play together.

By MICHAEL LYCKLAMA

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Matt and Clara Thomas accomplished something that can only be done in hockey in eastern Idaho. The brother and sister both scored a goal Jan. 16 -- in the same game.

Matt, a senior defenseman, scored two goals that night while playing on the Idaho Falls High School junior varsity team, and Clara scored her first high school goal.

But all the talk after the game was that they both scored.

"We had a bunch of people coming up and saying the Thomases were on their game," Clara said.

Matt and Clara aren't alone though. Joining them on the Idaho Falls junior varsity are the brother-sister pair of Matt and Marla Francis.

Thanks to a growing girls hockey program in Idaho Falls and a shortage of high school boys hockey players, the sisters joined the high school teams to bolster their skills for the girls travel team, and the brothers have been asked to help fill out the JV roster.

"I went to a regional camp and asked what would make me improve?" Marla Francis said. "And they said playing with boys is the best thing for me to improve."

While boys and girls mix at the youth levels -- Clara didn't play on a dedicated girls team until she was 12 -- neither pair of brothers, both seniors, and sisters, both sophomores, played together because of the age difference.

The only opportunity they've had has been this season.

"It's been fun," Matt Thomas said. "We've never played before so it's new. With the rush of the game and the fact we play two different positions, we don't talk much in an actual game."

But as Matt Francis points out, it helps having another set of eyes on the ice and at home to critique your game, especially since both brothers play on the varsity team also.

"She knows what I do and I know what she does," Matt Francis said. "She can watch me and tell me what I need to work on."

While the chance to play together on the high school team ends this season, the adult leagues in Idaho Falls await.

The father-daughter pair of Butch and Beth Vernon also scored in the same game last week.

U-18 Midgets

Idaho Falls Eagles 5,

Seattle NW Admirals 1

At Boise, Josh Moon, Eddie Anderson and Logan Winterholler each scored second-period goals to help Idaho Falls dig out of a 1-0 hole and beat the Seattle Northwest Admirals at the Frozen Four tournament in Boise.

Winterholler finished with two goals, Morgan Cole added a length-of-the-ice empty-net goal and an assist while Ben Claver, Devin Davis, Don MacLaclin, Jake Belnap and Devin Crighton picked up assists. Austin Mooso made 25 saves for Idaho Falls, which played Boise late Friday.