

# MSU lands two big recruits

Six players signed so far for 2009-10 men's hockey team

By Shane Frederick  
Free Press Staff Writer

**MANKATO** — The Minnesota State men's hockey team added some significant size with its two newest recruits.

On Monday, the program added two more players to its 2009-10 freshman class, as 6-foot-3, 210-pound forward Eriah Hayes and 6-5, 225-pound defenseman Tyler Elbrecht signed national letters of intent.

"Obviously, they are big kids, but they are big kids who are skilled kids," Mavericks coach Troy Jutting said. "Tyler Elbrecht is more of a defensive defenseman, but Hayes has been a big-time scorer."

Hayes scored 135 goals and assisted on 99 others during his 105-game high school career in La Crescent. That scoring didn't stop in the junior ranks. In 2007-08, he had 30 goals and 26 assists in 53 games with Topeka (Kan.) of the North American Hockey League. This season, he moved up to Waterloo (Iowa) of the United States Hockey League and had 27 goals and 18 assists in 59 games.

Elbrecht, an Edwardsville, Ill., native, is the captain for St. Louis, the best team in the NAHL this season.

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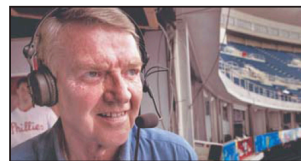
Columnist  
Shane  
Frederick  
tackles the  
NCAA hockey  
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MLB, PAGE D3

Baseball says good-bye  
to Kalas, Fydrich

# Sports

## RECRUITS: Pitlick a former Mr. Hockey finalist

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A league all-star, he finished the regular season with 11 points and 121 penalty minutes in 41 games.

"Both kids are just starting to come into their own," Jutting said, "and there's room for them to get better."

The spring signing period began Wednesday, but Hayes and Elbrecht will be part of class of at least six players.

Four others — goaltender Kevin Murdock, forwards

Eli Zuck and Tyler Pitlick and defenseman Danny Heath — signed during the early period in November.

Murdock led the USHL in both save percentage (.920) and goals-against average (2.24) and won 21 games for Lincoln (Neb.). Pitlick of Centennial High School was a Mr. Hockey finalist and second-team All-State this season, compiling 27 goals and 31 points in 22 games. Zuck and Heath suffered injuries at Tri-City (Neb.) of the USHL.

Zuck "was off to a great start," Jutting said. He had

seven goals and 12 assists in 25 games before getting knocked out for the year. Meanwhile Heath was lost on the first day of the season.

"I'm excited about it," Jutting said. "I think we've got a really good class. The kids, offensively, have been really successful. Along with some size, I think they provide a good mix to our current players."

The Mavericks have lost six players from the 2008-09 team, including five seniors: goalies Mike Zacharias and Dan Tormey, defensemen

Blake Friesen and Brian Kilburg and forward Mick Berge. Junior forward Trevor Bruess turned pro after the season, signing with the Washington Capitals.

Minnesota State also has a commitment from another goaltender. According to the NAHL and the Fairbanks (Alaska) Ice Dogs, Phil Cook will be attending MSU next season. He has a .922 save percentage and a 2.68 goals-against average.

Coaches cannot comment on recruits until they have signed.