

= Mirabito Outdoor Classic =

The Mirabito Outdoor Classic , also known as the 2010 AHL Outdoor Classic , was an outdoor ice hockey game played in 2010 between the Syracuse Crunch and Binghamton Senators of the American Hockey League (AHL) . It was the first outdoor game in the history of the AHL as well as the first outdoor minor league hockey game . Syracuse won the game 2 ? 1 with the help of goaltender Kevin Lalonde , who stopped 36 of the 37 Binghamton shots , and Alexandre Picard , who scored the first outdoor goal in AHL history . The game was played in front of a then AHL record crowd of 21 @, @ 508 , on a rink constructed at the New York State Fairgrounds on a dirt auto racing track .

Crunch owner , Howard Dolgon , pursued the ideal of having his team in an outdoor game , but unlike the National Hockey League 's (NHL) Winter Classic the Crunch were responsible for funding the entire event . In order to afford the cost of hosting an outdoor game sponsorship deals with several independent organizations were made including Mirabito Energy Products , which lent its name to the title of the event . In part because of his success in putting on the event , Dolgon was awarded the James C. Hendy Memorial Award as the AHL 's outstanding executive . Following the success of the Mirabito Outdoor Classic other AHL Outdoor Classics were held by other AHL teams .

= = Background = =

= = = Planning = = =

In late November 2009 Syracuse Crunch owner , Howard Dolgon began attempts to have an American Hockey League (AHL) outdoor game for his franchise . Cost estimates for hosting the game were close to \$ 1 million . Unlike the National Hockey League 's (NHL) Winter Classic , the league did not run the event , meaning the Crunch had to finance the entire project . The high cost of hosting was a reason for other franchises not pursuing outdoor games prior .

Dolgon originally wanted the game to be played at Alliance Bank Stadium in Syracuse and asked the Onondaga County Legislature to help fund the game . A proposal for the county to put in \$ 350 @, @ 000 was voted down by a 16 ? 2 margin . After the proposal was denied , Dolgon thought the project was dead , then he received a phone call from United States Senator Charles Schumer encouraging him to go forward with the game . Schumer later stated his encouragement stemmed from the opportunity for the event to be " a national event focused on Upstate and Central New York " .

With the game plans moving forward , Dolgon managed to recruit corporate sponsors to help alleviate the cost . The Crunch received \$ 350 @, @ 000 from several sponsors , including Mirabito Energy Products which lent its name to the events title . Mirabito decided to sponsor the event because they were opening stores in the Central New York area and wanted to establish their brand name . New York Governor David Paterson secured a \$ 75 @, @ 000 grant from the Empire State Development Corporation and helped the Crunch gain use of the New York State Fairgrounds free of charge . Even with the additional funding the Crunch still needed to pay upwards of \$ 550 @, @ 000 .

= = = Rink = = =

The rink was built on the fairgrounds in front of a 15 @, @ 000 @-@ seat permanent grandstand on a dirt auto racing track and leveled with what was described as " tons of granite " . With demands for over the 15 @, @ 000 seats occupancy of the grandstands , the Crunch rented additional temporary bleachers . Since there was no scoreboards on or near the track Syracuse rented two large video screens to show the score , time remaining , penalty times , and other information . The installation of the temporary rink cost an estimated \$ 400 @, @ 000 and took a month and a half to complete .

= = = Associated events = = =

As plans moved forward the decision was made not just to play the game but make it an event celebrating New York hockey history . For the game the Crunch played their intrastate rivals the Binghamton Senators . The days before the game local youth hockey teams played on the ice , and then the day after there was a pond hockey tournament played on the rink featuring 16 local teams . The fairgrounds also featured VIP tents , fan zones , bands , and ice sculpting for the celebration , as well as appearances by former players for New York 's various professional teams .

= = Game = =

The game was the first outdoor game in the 74 @-@ year history of the AHL and the first minor league hockey outdoor game . The attendance of 21 @,@ 508 set a new AHL record surpassing the old mark of 20 @,@ 672 set in 1997 at the Greensboro Coliseum . The record was later broken by subsequent Outdoor Classics . Prior to the game the 174th Fighter Wing of the New York Air National Guard performed a flyover , and recording artist Jessie James sang The Star @-@ Spangled Banner . For the ceremonial puck drop , a skydiver delivered a puck from the National Hockey League 's first foray into outdoor games from the 1991 Las Vegas exhibition game .

There was a slight delay in the start of the game as some of the glass needed to be fixed . Once the game was under way it took just 1 : 50 before the Crunch 's Jon Mirasty and the Senators ' Jeremy Yablonski engaged in the first fight in Outdoor Classic history . Mirasty had previously stated that he was going to be involved in the first outdoor fight . The physical play continued and minutes later at the 3 : 29 mark Paul Baier and Mike Radja were given matching roughing minor penalties . Not long after the matching minors Mike Blunden made a pass to Alexandre Picard to send him on a breakaway . Picard became the first player to score in an Outdoor Classic when he beat Senators ' goaltender Mike Brodeur putting the Crunch up 1 ? 0 . The score remained the same at the end of a penalty @-@ filled first period . Eight total penalties were called on the two clubs through the first 20 minutes of the game .

Early in the second period the Crunch got another power play opportunity when Senators ' captain Drew Bannister took a hooking penalty . The man advantage did not benefit Syracuse as the Senators tied the game 1 ? 1 when Martin St. Pierre found an open Josh Hennessy , who put the puck past Kevin Lalande for the shorthanded goal . Binghamton seemed to be gaining the advantage in the second period outshooting the Crunch 16 ? 9 . But , with just 11 @.@ 7 seconds remaining in the period , Crunch defenseman David Liffiton scored the go @-@ ahead goal from the high slot . During the third period the score remained the same , when with just 1 : 30 left in the game Syracuse 's Kevin Harvey took an interference penalty giving the Senators a chance to tie the game on the power play . Binghamton was unable to score in the first minute of the power play and pulled Brodeur to give them the six on four advantage . Even with the two man advantage the Senators failed to post a second goal on Lalande , who stopped 36 of the 37 shots he faced during the game helping the Crunch to the 2 ? 1 victory . His performance earned him the first Star of the Game . The game was a penalty @-@ filled affair with 26 infractions called on the two teams and a total of 18 power plays awarded . Neither team was able to capitalize on the opportunities , with Binghamton going 0 ? 10 and Syracuse 0 ? 8 .

= = Reception and legacy = =

The event was considered a success not only did it set a new attendance record it also generated considerable exposure for both the Crunch and the AHL . The game was originally going to be aired just in New York by Time Warner Cable , but was picked up by the NHL Network for broadcast across Canada and the United States . The players and coaches appeared to enjoy the game as well . Crunch head coach Ross Yates stated , " it was unbelievable . It 's hard to describe " . Liffiton described the game as " a little taste of what it feels like to play college football " while Picard added

, " I ? Il do that every game for the rest of my life . " AHL President Dave Andrews further noted that it made him proud to be a part of the league .

Due in part to his success of putting on the event , Dolgon was awarded the James C. Hendy Memorial Award as the AHL 's outstanding executive . With the success of the Mirabito Outdoor Classic , multiple outdoor games have subsequently been held by AHL teams .

= = Team rosters = =

^ ? : Holt and LaCostat dressed as the back @-@ up goaltenders and did not enter the game .

= = = Coaches = = =

Binghamton :

Head coach : Don Nachbaur

Assistant coach : Mike BusniukSyracuse :

Head coach : Ross Yates

Assistant coach : Trent Cull

Assistant coach : Karl Goehring

= = = Officials = = =

Referee ? Terry Koharski

Linesmen ? Dan Murphy , Tim Kotyra

Source : AHL Box Score

= = Game summary = =

Scoring summary

Penalty summary

Three star selections

Source : AHL Box Score