

= Tim Breslin =

Timothy G. Breslin ( December 8 , 1967 ? February 9 , 2005 ) was a professional ice hockey left wing . Breslin played eight seasons in the International Hockey League ( IHL ) with the Phoenix Roadrunners and Chicago Wolves and part of a season in the ECHL with the South Carolina Stingrays . He also played major league roller hockey in Roller Hockey International ( RHI ) with the Chicago Cheetahs .

Breslin attended Lake Superior State University . While a freshman he helped the Lakers win the school 's first national championship in 1988 . He served as an alternate captain in his senior season while also tying two school records , points in a game ( 7 ) and points in a series ( 10 ) . Undrafted out of college , he signed with the Los Angeles Kings as a free agent . He spent four years in their minor league system playing for Phoenix and South Carolina . After a brief stint in the RHI , he joined the Wolves as a free agent . As a member of the Wolves , Breslin was highly involved in charitable activities which led to him winning IHL Man of the Year honors in the 1996 ? 97 season . He was a member of Chicago 's Turner Cup champion team the following year .

Late in 2004 Breslin was diagnosed with cancer and died 11 weeks later on February 9 , 2005 due to complications from appendiceal cancer . To honor him the Wolves created the Tim Breslin Unsung Hero Award and the Tim Breslin Memorial Scholarship . As a way of helping his family financially , they hosted an exhibition game dubbed the Breslin Cup .

= = Early life = =

Tim was born in Downers Grove , Illinois on December 8 , 1967 to James and Kathleen Breslin . He was one of six children , having three sisters and two brothers . Breslin grew up in Addison , Illinois where he began playing hockey at age five . He learned the game while playing with his brothers on a frozen pond near the family home and on a backyard rink his father made . As he got older Breslin played in local leagues and Driscoll Catholic High School 's club team , which afforded him the opportunity to join the Dubuque Fighting Saints in the United States Hockey League .

= = Playing career = =

= = = Amateur = = =

Breslin joined the Fighting Saints for his high school senior year and played an additional season after graduation . His performance in Dubuque helped earn a scholarship to Lake Superior State University ( LSSU ) . In his freshman season with the Lakers , Breslin contributed 6 goals and 20 points , as LSSU finished first in the Central Collegiate Hockey Association ( CCHA ) . Advancing to the 1988 NCAA Division I Men 's Ice Hockey Tournament , the Lakers defeated Merrimack College and University of Maine to reach the championship game . In the title game LSSU defeated St. Lawrence to earn its first National Championship . For the 1988 ? 89 season Breslin improved to 7 goals while remaining at 20 points . LSSU finished second in the CCHA and in the 1989 NCAA Tournament they lost to eventual national champion Harvard in the quarterfinals . In his junior season Breslin continued to produce at about the same pace , registering 8 goals and 25 points . The Lakers again finished second in the CCHA , and in the 1990 NCAA Tournament they advanced to the quarterfinals for the second straight year where they were defeated by national champion runner @-@ up Colgate .

In his senior season Breslin was named one of the team 's alternate captains . Playing on a line with future National Hockey League ( NHL ) player Doug Weight , Breslin had a break @-@ out season . He set career highs in goals ( 25 ) , assists ( 37 ) , and points ( 62 ) . During the year he tied a school record for points in a game with a seven @-@ point performance against Ohio State . The scoring output helped him tie another school record when the two teams played the following day . Adding another three points in the second game , Breslin brought his two @-@ game total to

10 , tying the record for points in a series . Lake Superior State finished first in the CCHA , but was again defeated in the quarterfinals of the 1991 NCAA Tournament .

= = = Professional = = =

Undrafted out of college , Breslin signed with the Los Angeles Kings as a free agent . He attended Kings training camp , where he played with his professional hockey hero , Wayne Gretzky . Breslin failed to make the team and Los Angeles assigned him to their International Hockey League ( IHL ) affiliate the Phoenix Roadrunners . In his first season with Phoenix , Breslin broke his arm early in the season . He returned to play just three weeks after the injury , but eventually re @-@ broke the arm and missed the remainder of the season . He finished his first professional season playing in 45 games , scoring 8 goals and 29 points . In the 1992 ? 93 season Breslin improved his production to 14 goals and a career @-@ high 44 points . Phoenix finished the season with a league @-@ low 26 wins and 58 points . He began his third professional season with the Roadrunners , but after five games he was reassigned to the ECHL 's South Carolina Stingrays . Breslin played nine games for the Stingrays , registering six points , before being recalled by Phoenix . Finishing the year with the Roadrunners , he registered 9 goals and 27 points in 50 games . Phoenix improved to 85 points but failed to make the playoffs for the third straight year . At the conclusion of the season , Breslin 's contract with the Kings expired .

In the summer Breslin joined the Chicago Cheetahs of the Roller Hockey International ( RHI ) league for the 1994 season . Playing in just 6 games , Breslin recorded 5 goals and 13 points . Prior to the start of the 1994 ? 95 IHL season , Breslin signed a one @-@ year contract with the Chicago Wolves . He was one of the first three players signed by the Wolves who began their first season as an IHL expansion team . In his first season with the Wolves , Breslin notched 7 goals and 28 points . Chicago finished with 80 points ? good enough for third in their division and to qualify for the playoffs . Facing the Kalamazoo Wings in the first round , Chicago was swept in three straight games . Playing in his first professional playoffs , Breslin contributed two points playing in all three games . In the off @-@ season Breslin negotiated his own contract to stay in Chicago , signing a two @-@ year deal . Over the next two seasons , Breslin averaged 56 games played a season due to knee and shoulder injuries . As a team the Wolves qualified for the playoffs in both seasons but failed to advance beyond the second round . At the conclusion of the 1996 ? 97 season , Breslin was awarded the I. John Snider trophy as IHL Man of the Year , an award given to recognize outstanding community service .

In the off @-@ season Breslin again re @-@ signed with the Wolves . Chicago also brought in John Anderson to be the team 's new head coach . Under Anderson , Breslin had posted a career high in assists with 26 and games played with 81 . Chicago won the West division and finished with the second @-@ best record in the league . In the postseason the Wolves stormed through the first three rounds , losing only four games , to advance to the 1998 Turner Cup Finals . In game 1 of the finals against the Detroit Vipers , Chicago blew a two @-@ goal lead early in the third period . They regained the lead with just over eight minutes to play . In the final minutes of the game , Breslin added an insurance empty net goal giving the Wolves a 4 ? 2 victory . It was Breslin 's only goal of the playoffs . The series eventually went to a seventh and deciding game that the Wolves won 3 ? 0 to capture the franchise 's first Turner Cup . For the 1998 ? 99 season Breslin 's production dipped to 7 goals and 21 points . The Wolves advanced to the third round the playoffs , but Breslin played in only 4 of the team 's 10 games . On the first day of training camp the following year , Breslin announced his retirement from professional hockey .

= = Playing style = =

Listed as a left wing , Breslin was capable of playing all three forward positions , an ability which gave his coaches flexibility and allowed him to play in any situation . Not a big player , standing six feet tall weighing 180 pounds , he played a gritty , physical , brand of hockey primary in a checking line role . As a checker it was his responsibility to shut down the opposition and keep them from

scoring , emphasizing defense over offense . Because of his versatility and role , he was often a member of his team 's penalty killing unit . Breslin was known for his team @-@ first attitude and willingness to do whatever was asked of him in order to help the team succeed . Former Wolves General Manager Kevin Cheveldayoff said of Breslin , " You could always count on Tim to come and compete every night and do what was needed for the team to win " . Not the most talented of players , Breslin 's work ethic helped him to be a better player . Head coach Anderson once stated , " He is the kind of player who maybe isn 't in the very upper echelon in skill factor , but his dedication and hard work make up for that . "

= = Personal = =

Breslin married Jami Rutili , and the couple had three children , Shane , Paige , and Chase . He earned a degree in recreation management while at Lake Superior State . During his career , Breslin was involved in numerous charities . He delivered food on Thanksgiving for the Chris Zorich Foundation ; conducted self @-@ esteem workshops for an anti @-@ drug , anti @-@ gang organization ; participated in the Wolves ' Read to Succeed program , in which he read to children at local libraries ; and several others . In a 1997 interview , Breslin said that the most special charity he helped was one started by him and his wife . The Extra Effort program was started at Indian Trail Junior High School in Addison , where Jami was a teacher . Each month the program gave both a male and a female student four tickets to a Wolves game and a gift bag . The students were chosen based on attitude , effort and attendance . After retiring from professional hockey , he coached youth hockey and helped manage an Irish pub .

= = Death and legacy = =

After complaining of stomach pains for several days , Breslin was taken to a hospital on Thanksgiving of 2004 . There he was diagnosed with appendiceal cancer and underwent surgery . He died eleven weeks later on February 9 , 2005 due to complications from the cancer . The Wolves honored Breslin by wearing a helmet sticker shaped like a shamrock with his initials inside of it for the 2004 ? 05 season . As a way of helping his family financially , the Wolves and Chicago Blackhawks put on a charity game called the " Breslin Cup " . The game featured 40 players , most of whom were former players from the two franchises . All the proceeds from the game went to a trust set up for the family . The game drew around 10 @,@ 000 fans , with the Wolves ' alumni defeating the Blackhawks ' alums in a shootout . The Breslin Cup and associated events raised over \$ 250 @,@ 000 for the family .

The following season the Wolves further honored Breslin with an on @-@ ice ceremony that concluded with the raising of a banner of his name . They also created a team award called the Tim Breslin Unsung Hero Award , to be given annually to a player who " best typifies Breslin 's on @-@ ice spirit and team @-@ first attitude " , and a college scholarship , the Tim Breslin Memorial Scholarship , in his honor . A winner is chosen each season from students who fill out an entry form and write a corresponding essay . The scholarship pays for one semester of college . Breslin was inducted into the Illinois Hockey Hall of Fame in 2013 .

= = Career statistics = =