

Denver East's Joe Capra is the CHSAA Class 5A Player of the Year

By Heather Rule, SportsEngine, 04/11/22, 2:00PM MDT

Share

Members only: The junior defenseman brought athleticism and confidence from the gridiron to the ice rink, and helped lift the Angels to new heights this season.



Denver East junior defenseman Joe Capra (7) was named CHSAA Class 5A Player of the Year after helping lead the Angels to the CHSAA state title. He finished the season with a team-best 23 goals and tied for the lead with 46 points in the regular season. He added a goal and three assists in the state tournament to bring his season totals to 24 goals, 26 assists and 50 points.

"He's just very dynamic with what he does and how he sees the ice and moves the puck," Denver East coach John Kopperud said. "It's unprecedented where a defenseman leads your team in goal scoring." All photos by Steven Robinson, SportsEngine

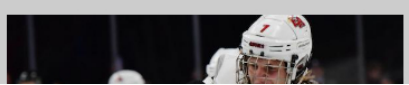
For the Colorado High School Activities Association Class 5A Player of the Year, hockey isn't his top sports priority.

"I take football a lot more seriously, I'd say," junior Joe Capra said. "Hockey I really kind of do just play for fun. And I just had a fluke year, almost, where I just felt unstoppable."

He felt particularly unstoppable during a five-game stretch in late January to early February when he scored 11 goals and 19 points, scoring four points in four consecutive games. In all, the defenseman led Denver East with 23 goals and tied for the lead with 46 points in the regular season. He added a goal and three assists in the state tournament, helping the Angels become the first Denver-area public school to win a CHSAA state title.

Capra is also the quarterback of the Denver South football team, and he runs track and field in the spring. He doesn't get much of a gap in between football and hockey season. Once football is 100 percent complete in the fall, he'll grab his hockey bag and join his hockey teammates, who've already played the fall season together.

It takes Capra, who is listed on his Twitter account at at 6-foot-2, 172 pounds, about one



Members get access to exclusive content, including the stories below.

Become A Member >>

Members Only

EXTRA HPHL Final: Rock Canyon comes together to take home championship
By Ryan Williamson, SportsEngine 05/23/2023, 9:00pm MDT
HUB EXCLUSIVE: WITH THEIR FULL GROUP OF PLAYERS TOGETHER, THE JAGUARS PLAYED THEIR BEST HOCKEY OF THE SEASON WHEN IT MATTERED MOST.

Read More >>

EXTRA Polar Bears control Storm to clinch HPHL Lady Byng championship
By Ethan Olson, SportsEngine 05/23/2023, 8:30am MDT
MEMBERS ONLY: THE POLAR BEARS WERE LED BY AN UNDERSTANDING OF TEAM SUCCESS OVER INDIVIDUAL GLORY.

Read More >>

EXTRA 2023 Colorado Combine: 2008 girls final selections
By Ethan Olson, SportsEngine 05/19/2023, 11:30am MDT
MEMBERS ONLY: SEE WHICH PLAYERS MADE THE COMBINE FINAL SELECTIONS FOR 2023.

Read More >>

EXTRA CO Hockey Hub fans: Vote now for HPHL Player of the Week from May 9-14
By Ethan Olson, SportsEngine 05/19/2023, 11:30am MDT
MEMBERS ONLY: WE HIGHLIGHT PLAYERS WITH SOME OF THE BEST STATS FROM LAST WEEK. YOU CHOOSE WHO HAD THE BEST OUTING.

Read More >>

practice on the ice and he's ready to go, according to Denver East hockey coach John Kopperud.

Capra has always been a solid hockey player, a speedy playmaker who's responsible with the puck, though Kopperud has seen his strength improve over the years, something that translates from football.

"It's a bummer that he plays football for us hockey people because he could have a real future in hockey," Kopperud said. "But it's a hobby for him. And he's such a good athlete that he gets away with it."



Capra models his game after a particular Avalanche player, saying he is the Cale Makar of Colorado high school hockey — an offensive-minded defenseman.

Capra's confidence and poise with the puck is also extremely high, according to Kopperud. He takes chances with the puck and can get away with it because of his speed and athletic ability, the coach added. Capra idolizes his game around a certain Colorado Avalanche star.

"I'd like to say I'm the Cale Makar of Colorado high school hockey," Capra said. "Because I'm really offensive when I play, even though I'm a D-man. I'm still going to try and score as many goals as possible."

Valor Christian coach George Gwozdecky's team faced Capra twice this season, in a 3-2 December loss and the state title game. The coach noticed Capra's decision-making abilities, his speed allowing him to beat opposing players on the ice and solid passing skills.

"When you combine that with his size and his overall ability to be able to move and laterally move up and down, he was a real value to their roster and certainly played a huge role in Denver East winning a state title," Gwozdecky said.

"(Capra) was the guy that when things were going a little bit crazy and there was a lot of pressure, he'd get the puck on his stick, he'd slow things down, he'd make good decisions."

— Valor Christian coach George Gwozdecky

As the team's No. 1 defenseman, Capra runs the power play, a fitting spot for a guy who's also a quarterback. Gwozdecky certainly noticed the skillset Capra brought as a quarterback, whether it was on the power play or even strength. He's a player who can be a difference maker no matter what sport he plays, Gwozdecky said.

"He's just very dynamic with what he does and how he sees the ice and moves the puck," Kopperud said. "Its unprecedented where a defenseman leads your team in goal scoring."

But it's not just the power play where Capra sees his skills between sports transfer. When he has the puck in the back, it's exactly like having the football in the pocket with teammates getting open and cutting through zones.

He was the "straw that stirred the drink," Gwozdecky said.

"He was the guy that when things were going a little bit crazy and there was a lot of pressure, he'd get the puck on his stick, he'd slow things down, he'd make good decisions," Gwozdecky said.

Capra saw the potential success for his hockey team in the fall when the team was in the CPHL championship without him while he finished up the season on the football field. Winning the state title with a 6-3 victory over Christian Valor was "the cherry on top" to the season, Capra said. He added a goal and an assist in that title game.

"I didn't stop smiling for about two straight weeks," Capra said. "It was just the best feeling in the world."

NEWS HIGHLIGHTS



EXTRA 2023 Colorado Combine: 2007 girls final selections

By Ethan Olson, SportsEngine 05/19/2023, 11:15am MDT

MEMBERS ONLY: SEE WHICH PLAYERS MADE THE COMBINE FINAL SELECTIONS FOR 2023.

Read More »

VIEW ALL | RSS

Hub Exclusives

EXTRA Mile High Mites cultivates next generation of Colorado hockey players

By Trevor Squire, SportsEngine 08/31/2023, 2:00pm MDT

HUB EXCLUSIVE: OFFERING A \$250 PACKAGE TO TRY HOCKEY FOR SIX WEEKS, THE COLORADO AVALANCHE ARE GROWING THE GAME THROUGH THE MILE HIGH MITES PROGRAM.

Read More »



EXTRA Vote for your favorite goal from the 2023 Stanley Cup playoffs

By Trevor Squire, SportsEngine 08/07/2023, 10:45am MDT

HUB EXCLUSIVE: WE SELECTED FIVE OF THE MOST IMPRESSIVE GOALS FROM THIS YEAR'S NHL POSTSEASON. YOU CHOOSE WHICH ONE WAS THE BEST.

Read More »



EXTRA New Avs' program brings an intro to hockey to elementary schools

By SportsEngine staff 07/31/2023, 1:00pm MDT

HUB EXCLUSIVE: HOCKEY 101 ROLLS OUT THIS SEPTEMBER AND GIVES FIRST THROUGH FOURTH GRADERS A CHANCE TO EXPERIENCE THE SPORT WITH FREE EQUIPMENT AND HANDS-ON INSTRUCTION.

Read More »



EXTRA VIDEO: Rachel Tos attends recent Mile High Mites gear fitting at

Ball Arena

By SportsEngine staff 07/21/2023, 12:15pm MDT

THE COLORADO AVALANCHE IN-GAME HOST FOLLOWS ONE PARTICIPANT THROUGH THE PROCESS AND FINDS OUT WHY PROPERLY FITTING EQUIPMENT IS SO IMPORTANT.

Read More »



EXTRA PHOTOS: More than 200 Mile High Mites summer participants get fitted for equipment

By SportsEngine staff 07/21/2023, 12:15pm MDT

LEARN TO PLAY PROGRAM REPRESENTATIVES HELPED KIDS GET PROPERLY FITTED FOR STICKS, SKATES, HELMETS AND ALL THE EQUIPMENT NEEDED FOR SAFELY LEARNING THE GAME IN LATE JUNE.

Read More »

VIEW ALL | RSS

Get social

Posts from
@CoAmateurHockey

Follow



Nothing to see here - yet

When they post, their posts will show up here.

View on X

Follow Us

Follow Us On Twitter »

Like Us On Facebook »

Follow Us On Instagram »

friends



Tag(s): Home Members only Original content CHSAA Hockey CHSAA 5A Leagues CHSAA 5A Metro Denver East

Share

← BACK TO PREVIOUS PAGE / PRINT THIS PAGE



HOME

AVS PROGRAMS

CAHA

SCORING/STATS

TOURNAMENTS

NEWS



[2021 Nationals Calendar](#)

[Tickets](#)
[Youth Programs](#)
[Adult Programs](#)
[Fundraising](#)
[Display Test](#)
[Game Night](#)
[Initiatives](#)
[Hub Exclusives](#)

[About Us](#)
[Policies & Bylaws](#)
[CAHA Members](#)
[Registration/Screening](#)
[SafeSport](#)
[PLAYER/PARENT CORNER](#)
[Officials Corner](#)
[Coaches Corner](#)
[Managers Corner](#)
[Registrars Corner](#)
[Goalie Corner](#)
[ADM](#)
[Move Ups 12U To 14U](#)
[Disciplinary Hearings](#)
[CAHA Forms](#)
[Colorado Combine](#)
[Donations](#)
[New Players](#)
[CAHA Affiliates](#)
[RinkAid](#)
[CAHA Grant](#)
[CAHA Job](#)
[Descriptions](#)
[Association Approvals](#)
[Meetings](#)
[Punch List](#)
[Document Collector](#)
[Old Coaches Corner](#)

[Youth Rec Leagues](#)
[Tier I](#)
[Tier II](#)
[Tier I & II Girls](#)
[Tier II WGHL Girls](#)
[CPHL](#)
[CHSAA Hockey](#)
[HPhL](#)
[HAHL](#)
[Summer Hockey](#)
[Tournament Links](#)
[Gamesheet Scoring](#)
[Help](#)
[CO Hockey Rankings](#)
[League Archives](#)
[Avs Alumni Open](#)
[Team Colorado](#)
[Tier II Girls CO](#)
[Adaptive Hockey](#)
[High School](#)

[Host A Tournament](#)
[Tournaments 2023-2024](#)
[CAHA State 2023](#)
[CAHA State 2024](#)

[Hockey News](#)
[Game Of The Week](#)
[Hub News](#)
[News Archive](#)
[Rubber Magazine](#)

MULTIMEDIA

[Video Archive](#)
[In-Game Elements](#)

RESOURCES

[AGES 8-12](#)
[AGES 13-14](#)
[AGES 15+](#)
[Colorado Ice Rinks](#)
[Find Hockey](#)
[CO Rink Protocols](#)

TOURNAMENTS

TOURNAMENTS (OLD)

[Report Abuse »](#)

This website is powered by SportsEngine's Sports Relationship Management (SRM) software, but is owned by and subject to the Colorado Hockey Hub privacy policy. ©2024 SportsEngine, Inc. [Privacy Policy](#)

