

**A Dream of the Future: 125 Years of Women's Hockey in
Minnesota
Research Master**

Table of Contents:

	Game 1: The First 100 Years (Yes, Really)
4	Pregame: Women Have Always Played
9	First Period: At Least Seventeen Years of Skirts, Skates, and Sevens
27	Dakota County Spotlight: Castle Rock's Clarice Gloa Lydia Kraft Nordvall
29	First Intermission: The First Girl(s)...Again.
34	Second Period: Should a Defensewoman Cry? Backchecking is Better.
65	Dakota County Spotlight: Farmington's Lucille and Sue Korsman
67	Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Betsy Zachman
69	Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Sandy Bredt Larson
71	Second Intermission: A Winter Team Sport, On Skates, For Girls
78	Third Period: The Start of Some New Legends
95	Dakota County Spotlight: South St. Paul's Jen Retka Jacobson
97	Dakota County Spotlight: Apple Valley's Michelle Gustafson, née Sikich
99	Dakota County Spotlight: The Milbert Family of South St. Paul
101	Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Patty Oaster Mraz
	Game 2: The Twenty-First Century Goes Pro
103	First Period: But First...Hockey is Still for Everyone
114	Dakota County Spotlight: Dakota County's Joanie Baltes
115	Dakota County Spotlight: Northfield's Lisa Halvorson Silkey
116	Dakota County Spotlight: West St. Paul's Jane Osiecki Cashin
117	Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Eleanor Lynch
118	First Intermission: Five Generations
122	Second Period: Carving a Path Forward
135	Dakota County Spotlight: Farmington's Amber Hegland
137	Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Laura Slominski
139	Dakota County Spotlight: Eagan's Natalie Darwitz
142	Second Intermission: The Time is Now for this Family to Unite
146	Third Period: Professional, with a Minnesota flavor.
159	Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Lauren Bench
161	Dakota County Spotlight: Lakeville's Maggie Flaherty
163	Dakota County Spotlight: Eagan's Natalie Snodgrass
165	Overtime: A Dream of the Future
	Appendices
167	Appendix I: Hockey Then and Now
172	Appendix II: Minnesota Women's Ice Hockey Timeline
179	Appendix III: Women's Hockey Histories
181	Final Note: Tape to Tape

Almost every single woman (and man) I spoke to for this project gave me some version of the same line: “I played/coached, but I wasn’t really that big of a deal. You should really talk to [long list of other people].” After a while, I realized: these women (and men) were all incredible team players, and they saw everything as a team effort, and they instinctively wanted to spread the credit as widely as possible. The generosity of everyone who touched this project was overwhelming, and so, in alphabetical order (because impact would be impossible), thank you to the whole Dakota County Women’s Hockey History Team:

Kris Akin	Michelle Gustafson	Dave Palmquist
Diane Albright	Rebecca Hall	Don Parker
Joe Anderson	Edward Hathaway	Jana Patrick
Anonymous	Amber Hegland	Steve Patrick
Apple Valley Youth Hockey Girls	Hennepin County Library	Jill Pohtilla and Joyce Spehar
Joe Atkins	Margaret Herrmann	Harry Reeder
Gwen Bailey	Adam Imbryk	Dan Retka
Joanie Baltes	Mike Irish	Sue Ring-Jarvi
Ryan Barland	Jen Jacobson	Sarah Robbins
Leslie Bates	Lisa Jacobson	Michelle Roberts
Jake Beeson	Meg John-Testa	Chuck Scanlon
Annie Bell	Ernest Jutz	Chris Scanlon
Lauren Bench	Sharon Jutz-Langevin	Kim Scherek
Edie Boyer	Gordy and Rita Kacala	Lisa Silkey
Justin Briedel	Jack Kennelly	Nancy Sims
Mary Brown	Kelly Klein	Laura Slominski
David Byrne	Sue Korsman	Natalie Snodgrass
Pete Carlson	Lake County Historical Society	Steve Stremski
Matt Carter	Sandy Larson	The Staff of the Super Rink
Jane Cashin	Chris Lee	Todd Swanson
Rich and Mary Conley	Cindy Loehr	Joey Swartz
Natalie Darwitz	Tim Loney	Ryan Taylor
Katie Dierkes	Eleanor Lynch	Team Trans Twin Cities and D.
Kia Eldred-McGee	Jen Lynch	Renee Tierney
Mary Ellis	Grace McBride Eckels	Megan Tripicchio
Marilynn Erickson	Laura McBride	Two Harbors Library
Hannah Esselman-Calton	Jessa Michalek	University of Minnesota Archives
Tim Felton	Bob Milbert	and Mary, Ivy and Lena
Maggie Flaherty	Minnesota Wild Foundation	US Hockey Hall of Fame
Lonnie Francis	Tim Moore	TJ Weiland
Jimmy Francis	Katelyn Morken	Melissa Wendland
Kathy Frank	Patty Mraz	Shannon Young
Nissa Geisness	Lynn Olson	Betsy Zachman
	Doug Palazzari	Bryan Zollman
And Team Sponsors:		
Dakota County Tribune	First State Bank of Rosemount	Volkswagon of Inver Grove
Daley Electric	Key Community Bank	Cherry Berry

Game 1: The First 100 Years (Yes, Really)

Pregame: Women Have Always Played

When it comes to history, “first” is a complicated term. For women, the record is often forgotten, ignored, or obscured, creating generation after generation of “trailblazers” and “firsts.” Women wind up experiencing the same struggles for recognition, and fighting for a spot at the table, that the women before them already fought. While it makes for fantastic stories of resilience, breaking that cycle and creating the opportunity for other kinds of stories to be told is one of the ways that history matters to the lives of women today.

Some histories pick 1918 as a starting point for women’s hockey in Minnesota, when the ladies of the Women’s Athletic Association at the University of Minnesota put a full page in the yearbook specifically about playing ice hockey.¹ But this choice of year is incorrect on at least two points. First, the year 1918 is an error, the result of an anachronistic understanding of how yearbooks were designed and produced at the time.² Second, we know for certain that women and girls in Minnesota were chasing the puck across the ice well before that date.

Contemporary ice hockey, which developed from earlier stick and ball games, dates back to at least the 1870s, and was popular in Canada throughout the later decades of the 19th Century. While it likely developed out of several different games, in the 1870s the game initially used field hockey rules on the ice. An oft-cited 1876 article about one of the first organized games held in Montreal notes that the game was played by Hockey Association rules, the English field hockey standard of the time.³ While ice hockey quickly developed its own rules and equipment, especially the unique shape of the puck, the overlap between the two sports persisted in the general public’s mind well into the 1920s. This complicates research, as women’s ice hockey games are often misreported as field hockey and vice versa.⁴ The development of ice hockey as a unique sport in Canada has been the subject of many comprehensive histories and retrospectives over the years.⁵ Up until 1921, seven-man hockey was the standard game played in Minnesota.

That women and girls have played ice hockey from nearly the beginning is clear. Lady Isobel Stanley, the daughter of Lord Stanley—of Stanley Cup fame—grew up playing hockey with her father and brothers, and by 1890 was organizing women’s games in Canada.⁶ While few women’s games were written up in the papers, the references to the game that exist make it clear that women playing wasn’t a particular novelty. In February of 1892 *The Minneapolis Tribune* included a small announcement that Lady Isobel had broken her arm playing hockey on the front page, but the news was treated as normal society gossip, with no emphasis on her choice of

¹ *Minnesota Girls/Women’s Hockey*. Vintage Minnesota Hockey. <https://history.vintagemnhockey.com/page/show/851488-minnesota-girls-womens-hockey>. Paragraph 2. Accessed 9/4/2024; “Ice Hockey.” *The 1918 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archive. Spring 1917, p467.

² Until 1930, the *Gopher* yearbook was a junior publication, which meant that it was published in the early spring of the junior year of the class whose year appeared on the book. So the *1918 Gopher* was compiled between roughly February of 1916 and February of 1917, and published in March of 1917. As a result, Ice Hockey, as a winter sport, was between 1 and 2 years behind in the yearbooks depending on how on top of deadlines the head of sport was. When crossmatched with newspaper reports, the *1917 Gopher* appears to have photos of practices in 1915, the *1918 Gopher* provides a brief summary of the 1917 tournament, the *1919 Gopher* gives a full report of the 1917 tournament with pictures, the *1920 Gopher* reports on the 1918 season, and so on. They’re great resources for names and terrible resources for reliable dates.

³ “Hockey on Ice.” *The Gazette*. Montreal, Quebec, Canada. February 7, 1876, p4.

⁴ For one example, see “The Hockey Girl.” *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 10, 1922, p77

⁵ A few good examples include: *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game* by Arthur Farrell; *Lords of the Rinks: the Emergence of the National Hockey League 1875-1936* by John Wong; *On the Origin of Hockey* by Carl Gidén et al.; and *Hockey: A Global History* by Stephen Hardy and Andrew C. Holman. For a more worldwide look at the women’s game, *Too Many Men on the Ice: Women’s Hockey in North America* by Joanna Avery and Julie Stevens is excellent up to the late 1990s.

⁶ Avery, Joanna and Julie Stevens. *Too Many Men on the Ice: Women’s Hockey in North America*. Polestar, Victoria, BC. 1997. p57-59.

activity.⁷ That same year, in small town southern Minnesota, *The Sleepy Eye Dispatch* ran a short wire piece on how English girls make “much better cricketers and hockey players than the boys,” and while they were likely referring to field hockey, the distinction in the United States media was not well defined.⁸ An article in the *Duluth Evening Herald* in 1893, which describes and illustrates ice hockey specifically, notes that “pretty girls play hockey very well in Canada and England.”⁹

One of the most striking early discussions of women in ice hockey comes from a talented player named Arthur Farrell. In between his two Stanley Cup victories—1899 and 1900—with the Montreal Shamrocks, he published a book titled *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game*, which is still widely believed to be the first book published about the sport.¹⁰ In it, he explains some of the history of the game, discusses the prominent teams of the era, and explains the positions, rules, and basic strategies of the seven player hockey team of the day. In waxing poetic about the appeal of hockey, he had this to say about the women’s game:

The convincing, the clinching proof of the fascination of the game is this, that even the gentler sex, not satisfied with enjoying it from the stand point of spectators, have graciously added their own, to the many charms that it already boasts, by bravely lining up to meet, in gentle combat, their tender adversaries.

It is surprising how many ladies’ teams exist in Canada, and although we do not read of fast, exciting games between these graceful votaries of the sport, it is a slow, small town that can glory in not one such [sic]. Thus, hockey players may flatter themselves that their game is honored in a way that no other of the kind may claim.¹¹

Farrell also commissioned two sketches for his book, which is otherwise illustrated by photos of players, teams, and rinks of the time. One shows a comedic scene of shinny—informal pond hockey—being played by both women and men, to accompany his history section.¹² The other, drawn by Paul D’Anton, appears on the page following his discussion of women’s hockey. It shows a girl in the typical hockey kit of the time, holding her stick at hip height as she stands on the ice. He captioned it, “A Dream of the Future.”¹³

Small, scattered references to a larger culture of women playing hockey persist in Minnesota through the early years of the 20th century. In 1901 the *Warren Sheaf* notes that the “young people” of Wanger Township spend most evenings playing ice hockey, suggesting both boys and girls played the game.¹⁴ In November of 1902 *The Minneapolis Journal* reported that the University’s director of Physical Culture, Anna Maude Butner, had organized a hockey team at the University and that games had been arranged with the “several colleges and high schools throughout the state [that] already have teams,” though whether this was field or ice hockey is unclear.¹⁵ A second report on this development, in the *Minneapolis Daily Times* in December, notes the

⁷ “Broke Her Arm.” *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 17, 1892, p1.

⁸ “There is in England...” *The Sleepy Eye Dispatch*. Sleepy Eye, Minnesota. April 28, 1892, p3; A particularly irritating example is the December 6, 1914 article on page 14 of the *Battle Creek Enquirer* in Battle Creek, Michigan, titled “Girls Play Ice Hockey” but describing them as “playing field hockey” in the single line that makes up the body of the article.

⁹ Eaton, Earle H. “Hockey and Curling.” *The Duluth Evening Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 10, 1893, p3.

¹⁰ “Canada’s Royal Winter Game.” Library and Archives Canada. <https://library-archives.canada.ca/eng/collection/engage-learn/podcast/Pages/royal-winter-game.aspx> March 14, 2013. Accessed 9/11/2024

¹¹ Farrell, Arthur. *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game*. Montreal. C. R. Corneil, Printer. 1899, p45.

¹² Farrell, Arthur. *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game*. Montreal. C. R. Corneil, Printer. 1899, p22.

¹³ Farrell, Arthur. *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game*. Montreal. C. R. Corneil, Printer. 1899, p46.

¹⁴ “Our Correspondence: Wanger.” *Warren Sheaf*. Warren, Minnesota. January 31, 1901, p12. While “youths” is often used in hockey articles of the time to refer to just young men, “young people” is a typically gender neutral choice.

¹⁵ “A Girls Hockey Team” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 26, 1902, p6.

participation of University of Minnesota basketball star Sylvia Frank, and explicitly refers to the hockey in question as a “winter game.” That, along with the timing—after Christmas—and location—Northrop Field, which was partially flooded as a rink in the winter near the Armory—do make an organized women’s ice hockey team as early as 1902 a real possibility.¹⁶ Unfortunately, no references to a season were found in later yearbooks, nor could any references to games be found in the press, while girl’s basketball has considerable coverage.

By 1903, in St. Paul, hockey, “for play on ice,” is listed as the latest in outdoor exercise expected of young women of the new generation, lauded as “a great advance on any previous concession, especially from the point of view of influence on character.” Teamwork makes all the difference to the unnamed writer from *The St. Paul Globe*, who appreciated that “in hockey she is no longer an individual with individual interests, but a member of a side to which all individualism must be subordinated and sacrificed.”¹⁷ *The Winona Daily News*, on the other hand, ran a Boston wire article in January of 1906 bemoaning the “experts at ice hockey,” who bring their sticks onto public transit and whack poor fellow passengers in the head, but are far too pretty to scold.¹⁸

In February of 1906, the *Two Harbors Iron News* reported that the local high school girls, under the leadership of Irene Walker, general manager, and Lillian Griffin, captain, had organized a hockey team and had held their first practice on Tuesday, February 6th. While it is possible that this referred to a field hockey team, given the date and location in northern Minnesota, ice hockey seems more plausible. The unnamed author of the article may have described them unflatteringly as “resembl[ing] a housewife after a tramp, only they had a hockey stick instead of a broom,” but the fact of their playing did not seem to merit surprise.¹⁹

On January 16, 1909, *The Minneapolis Tribune* announced that a group of Minneapolis high school girls had formed a hockey team under the direction of a Miss Bennewitz, whom they incorrectly identified as the star of the Minneapolis Amateur Hockey Association team (MAHA—not to be confused with the later Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association). The article also discussed a potential women’s team forming at Macalester College and another in St. Paul. They pointed out, however, that the Minneapolis girls were issuing a challenge not only to other women’s teams, but also to any boys’ junior clubs willing to play them.²⁰ A *Minneapolis Journal* article from the same day more accurately referred to Miss Bennewitz as the sister of the MAHA player, and further clarified that the girls were from West High School in Minneapolis, but expressed skepticism that they would find a following.²¹ Cleveland Arthur “Cleve” Bennewitz was one of the stars of the MAHA and Lake Shores teams, and he had three sisters in 1909: 19-year-old Avis Irene (later Merry); 15-year-old Echo Idola (later Francis); and 12-year-old Nona Lucille (later Moreland).²² Based on the ages and that Miss Bennewitz coached, rather than played, her team, we suspect that the sister is Avis. Lonnie Francis, Echo Bennewitz Francis’ granddaughter, also believes the sister to be Avis, based both on the photo in the article and her recollections of her grandmother and great-aunts.²³

Miss Bennewitz’s young women did not have to wait long for a group to take up their challenge. On February 20, 1909, at 7:30pm, at the MAHA rink,²⁴ the ladies took on the young men of the Lake Shore Junior Hockey team in

¹⁶ “Hockey to be Played by College Girls” *The Minneapolis Daily Times*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 5, 1902, p10.

¹⁷ “Hockey for Athletic Girls.” *The St. Paul Globe*. St. Paul, Minnesota. February 5, 1903, p7.

¹⁸ “Hockey Girls Dangerous Neighbors.” *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. January 25, 1906, p6.

¹⁹ “High School Notes.” *Two Harbors Iron News*. Two Harbors, Minnesota. February 9, 1906, p8.

²⁰ “Feminine Hockey Team to Issue Defi.” *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 16, 1909, p16.

²¹ “Girls to Play Hockey.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 16, 1909, p8.

²² 1910 Census

²³ Email exchange with Lonnie Francis, September 2024.

²⁴ The MAHA rink was located at Lake and Girard Avenue S in Minneapolis, and was opened in 1908 for club members only. “Amateur Hockey Rink is Nearing Completion.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 29, 1908, p24

their only reported appearance. In announcing the game, an unnamed *Minneapolis Journal* reporter predicted that the game would be very interesting, as the girls “promise to show speed.”²⁵

The girls’ seven consisted of Misses Sherman, Roach, Bauman, Mason, Manahan, Calmous, and Bradford.²⁶ The lack of first names has made the girls difficult to trace, even knowing that they were students at West in 1909. A possible “Miss Manahan,” Mable Monahan, appeared in the list of Glee Club girls at West in 1909, a possible “Miss Roach,” Margaret Roche, appeared in the Glee Club listing in 1910, and a possible “Miss Mason,” Bonnie Mason, graduated in 1911, but none of these women can be confirmed for certain.²⁷ In addition, the article verifiably misreports the names of two of the boys’ players—George Paul Hodge is reported as “T.” or “C. Hodge” at different points in the article, and Gilman Waldo Bennewitz is listed as “J. Bennewitz”—making all of the names suspect. Overseeing the game was Ed Foley, of the St. Paul Mic Macs, as the referee, and Cleve was a timekeeper along with his Lake Shores teammate Charles Reiter.²⁸

Over the course of two 20-minute periods, Miss Bennewitz’s team showed their speed and skill.²⁹ While the young men managed a few goals, it wasn’t enough to stop the ladies’ right wing, Miss Sherman, and the rover, Miss Mason, from scoring two goals apiece, while the center, Miss Bauman, put another in the net. The ladies won 5-3, and Miss Bennewitz got a formal photo in the paper and the headline “Girls Win at Hockey: Lake Shore Juniors Beaten by Team Made Up of Fair Sex.”³⁰

The 1909 Bennewitz-led girls’ team does not appear to play any other games that receive newspaper coverage. Women and girls were certainly still playing, however. In 1910, Frieda Arzt, then in her early 20s, made a bit of a splash, when, on her way home from a rink in St. Paul, she fended off two grown male muggers with her hockey skates.³¹ Hockey skates, specifically for girls and women, were both regularly advertised alongside girls’ and women’s club skates throughout the era.³² In 1911, *The Duluth Herald* gave notice of a petition for girl’s hockey circulating at the University of Minnesota, specifically referencing the plan to flood Northrop field to provide the ice, though no follow-up was found.³³ In 1913, when the Minneapolis Curling Club met to propose building a new club house and rink, ice time for women’s hockey was used as a selling point to the city to justify the expense. The Reverend T.J. McCrossen, pastor of Bethany Presbyterian and no social rebel, went on record to indicate that he already had women expressing interest in both curling and women’s hockey, and put himself forward as a coach and trainer to develop the women’s league.³⁴

Then in January of 1915, the ladies of the University of Minnesota Women’s Athletics Association (WAA) publicly asked for permission to formally organize class ice hockey teams. Dr. Anna Norris, the director of Women’s Athletics and a biology professor, refused. She argued that ice hockey was too strenuous for women and even

²⁵ “Girls to Play Hockey Against Boy’s Team.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 1909, p3.

²⁶ “Girls Win at Hockey” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 21, 1909, p21.

²⁷ “The Girl’s Glee Club of West High School.” *The 1909 Hesperian*. West High School. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 1909, p33; “Members of the Girls Glee Club.” *The 1910 Hesperian*. West High School. Hahn and Harmon, Co. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 1910, p44; “Senior Photos” *The 1911 Hesperian*. West High School. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 1911, p27.

²⁸ “Ice Hockey Comes to Minneapolis – Cleve Bennewitz.” Vintage Minnesota Hockey.

<https://history.vintagemnhockey.com/page/show/5354242-ice-hockey-comes-to-minneapolis-cleve-bennewitz>. Accessed 9/5/2024

²⁹ This is a typical game length of the time. For more basic information about Hockey Then v. Now, please see Appendix I.

³⁰ “Girls Win at Hockey” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 21, 1909, p21.

³¹ “With Skates in Hand Girl Wards Off Attack.” *Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 10, 1910, p5.

³² See, for some examples: “W.K. Morrison & Co. Ad” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 27, 1906, p3; “Warner Hardware Co. Ad” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 2, 1911, p13; and “Power’s Ad” *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 15, 1912, p21

³³ “Minnesota University” Column. *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 9, 1911, p11.

³⁴ “Local Curlers Will Have New Club House” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 8, 1913, p10.

too rough for boys. “Many players have faces scarred for life by being hit with hockey clubs or pucks,” she claimed.

The coeds weren’t having it, and one even retorted that, just like they found fencing scars appealing, men would think their hockey scars were beautiful. In an attempt to compromise, Dr. Norris agreed to allow the girls to play a “gentler” game of “ice cricket” at the February 2nd carnival.³⁵ The game was announced several times, but if the ice cricket game actually happened, it was not reported. By February 11th, less than a month later, Dr. Norris gave in. *The Minneapolis Journal* reported that a second, women’s only, carnival had been organized to take place on February 20th. In the meantime, Dr. Norris and junior Kenena MacKenzie agreed to teach daily classes in speed skating, figure skating, and hockey on the rink.³⁶

While we can’t be certain, we may have pictures from those first classes. At least 11 unknown coeds shoveled off the ice in Northrop Field and played in their long wool skirts at some point before February of 1916. They took a series of photos, visibly laughing and grinning broadly, that made it onto an uncaptioned, unindexed page of *The 1917 Gopher*.³⁷ Dating the photoshoot involves some guesswork, but we do know the pictures are not from the fall of 1915, because the images show Northrop field, already flooded for ice and covered in a decently sized snowfall. The only snowfall prior to the holidays in the fall of 1915 happened over the course of about a week in November, the same week that photos from the field hockey championship preparations show the rink was not yet flooded.³⁸ This leaves either March of 1915, or January and February of 1916 as the possibilities for timeframes when hockey was occurring and that match the conditions pictured. While early 1916 is possible, it is unlikely, as the photos would have been rushed to make the yearbook deadline, making March of 1915 a very likely date. Either way, the women depicted are among the earliest to fight for a chance to play hockey at the University.

³⁵ “Gopher Coeds to Play Ice Cricket” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 18, 1915, p14.

³⁶ “Co-eds to clash in skating meet.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 11, 1915, p13.

³⁷ *The 1917 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archive. Spring 1916, p230. Yearbooks in this period were published in the spring semester of the year prior, and based on other entries with more specific dates we know the submission deadline was around March 1st (so in the case of 1917, the yearbook was published in spring semester 1916 and includes events that happened at the latest in February of 1916. Most sports pages note that they explicitly cover the 1914-1915 season in their write ups, or the 1915-1916 season if the sport was a fall sport or the report was of events “up until the time of writing” which seems to cut off March 1st). This continues up until 1930, when a supplement was issued to complete reporting on the 1928-1929 school year and transition the book to a Senior Year publication.

³⁸ “Daily Data Table: MINNEAPOLIS WB DOWNTOWN - Station ID: 215433, 1/1/1915-02/29/1916.” Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/historical/daily-data.html?sid=215433&sname=MINNEAPOLIS%20WB%20DOWNTOWN&sdate=1915-01-01&edate=1916-02-29> Accessed 9/28/2024; “Coeds Shovel Snow as Men Students Look On.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 24, 1915, p1.

First Period: At Least Seventeen Years of Skirts, Skates, and Sevens

The Women's Athletic Association of the University of Minnesota saw themselves as the defenders of women's health and society. In an invitation to join the association, handed out to Freshmen in 1910, basketball star Elsa Ueland warned that "A life without physical vigor and without friends is almost bound to be futile and sad," and encouraged them to make athletics part of their college careers for both health and fellowship. "The quickest way to make friends is to do things together, and do them hard and do them unselfconsciously," she assured them.³⁹ Sport was part of the social life of University Coeds, and by January of 1916 ice hockey was one of the games enthusiastically played.

On January 21st, 1916, *The Minneapolis Journal* sent a photographer out to investigate this apparently surprising development. "What, girls play hockey? Certainly" captioned a picture of Elizabeth Lagaard, Gladys Holt, Winifred Bailey, Jeanette Walker, and Lucile Daugherty scrambling for the puck in the paper the next day.⁴⁰ Freshman Winifred Bailey, who had also played on the winning Field Hockey Reds team that previous fall, stands out in her white coat and hat, and would go on to organize a girls' exhibition ice hockey match at the Hippodrome that March.⁴¹

1916-1917

The 1916-1917 school year certainly did bring the game to a whole new level of recognition, and the women themselves noted it was the start of organized class hockey with tournament play.⁴² In December of 1916, *The Minneapolis Journal* reported that the intramural sports committee had arranged for trophies to be given to the class champions in women's ice hockey, and that the Northrop rink would be flooded over the holidays in preparation for the 100 women who had signed up to try for a team. As there were not enough men willing or able to play that year, there would be no varsity men's team, but several of the men had volunteered to coach the women.⁴³ Percy Harrison was tapped to coach the Freshmen, Larcom Randall the Sophomores, Albert Danaher the Juniors, and Harold Mergens the Seniors.⁴⁴ Arthur "Chubby" McBride appears to have also attended some practices.⁴⁵ Winifred Bailey was named the student in charge of running the program.⁴⁶

On January 21st, a snarky reporter from *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune* claimed he had attended the "first practice" of the coed hockey players and published some lovely pictures, though he seems to have worked his humorous angle to the detriment of his accuracy. He reported that Louise Nippert, a "star" (quotes his) of the Freshmen team had quipped that she didn't "know a single thing about hockey," following Percy Harrison's 15-minute lecture on the finer points of the game. Louise Nippert might well have said something of the sort, but given that she was a senior and held a number of major leadership positions in the University—including the secretary of the Women's Equal Suffrage Association—it seems unlikely it was in the tone he tried to convey. He also misidentified Winifred Bailey, then a sophomore, as a member of the faculty, likely due to her running

³⁹"Women's Athletic Association program booklet, 1909-1910." Women's Athletic Association (WAA). University of Minnesota Libraries Gallery. <https://gallery.lib.umn.edu/items/show/6214> Accessed 9/28/2024

⁴⁰ "Coed Skaters Say Hockey is Great." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 22, 1915, p6.

⁴¹ "There will be a skating tournament..." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 5, 1916, p31.

⁴² "Ice Hockey." *The 1918 Gopher*. University of Minnesota. Spring 1917, p467.

⁴³ "U. of M. Coeds will get Hockey Prizes." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 20, 1916, p23.

⁴⁴ "Gopher Hockey Team May Oppose Badgers: Men to Coach." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 16, 1917, p16.

⁴⁵ "University Girls Delight in Playing Ice Hockey; Don't Mind the Falls and Hurts." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 21, 1917, p17.

⁴⁶ "Ice Hockey will occupy..." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 23, 1917, p40.

practice. Elizabeth Nissen appears in a photo, in her only named appearance, but presumably she practiced all season.⁴⁷

On February 22, 1917, the final teams selected for tournament play were announced in both *The Minneapolis Journal* and *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, though this time the *Tribune* took a noticeably different tone. The *Tribune* called it “one of the real big events of the year at the University of Minnesota,” and took time to interview the coaches, who assured them that the women had all “acquired the ice game easily” since they had been playing pick-up games since the year before, and had no fear of injury, which was “all in the game.”⁴⁸ The *Journal* took a more dramatic approach, promising “violent purple thrills,” fraternity-emptying hockey costumes, fights to be settled by “Marchioness of Queensbury Rules,” and sports betting with “the entire output of the Eastside fudge kitchens.”⁴⁹ Both papers reported the expected lineups for the planned Freshmen-Junior and Sophomore-Senior match-ups:⁵⁰

	Freshmen (Class of 1920)	Sophomores (Class of 1919)	Juniors (Class of 1918)	Seniors (Class of 1917)
<i>Center</i>	Ione Kadletz	<i>Winifred Bailey</i>	Helen Jenswold	Natalie Grim
<i>Rover</i>	<i>Magdalene Huchthausen</i>	Elizabeth Lagaard	May Kellerhals	<i>Kathryn Urqhart</i>
<i>Left Wing</i>	Eleanor Schwerin	Jeanette Walker	Mary Martin	Roberta Hostetler
<i>Right Wing</i>	Birdie Brill	Ruth Evenson	Marian Poole	V'lora Welch
<i>Cover Point</i>	Dorothy Kueffner	Marietta Fournier	<i>Caroline Helmick</i>	Amanda Larson
<i>Point</i>	Marian Irwin	Kathleen O'Brien	Margaret Egan	Mary B. Smith
<i>Goal</i>	Ethel Wilk	Sarah Paper	Katherine Yerxa	Harriet Anundsen

Team captains indicated by Italics

On Friday, February 23rd, 1917 at 12:30pm, the Freshmen met the Juniors for the first game of the tournament.⁵¹ The Freshmen had purchased new hockey costumes, and showed up ready for a fight. On the Junior side, Frances Ek stepped in for Marion Poole at wing. There may have been a substitution on the Freshmen team, as an untraceable “Marion Edwards” is listed as playing instead of Marion Irwin. This is likely to be a mistake; Mabel Edwards, who would continue to play point for the same class in later years, is the likely substitute if Marion Irwin did not actually play. Alice Rochford also appears in two photos with the other freshmen, though not any roster, and may have been a secondary sub after Mabel Edwards was called up.⁵² Larcom Randall served as the referee. In the single report of the game, an unnamed *Minneapolis Morning Tribune* reporter couldn't resist opening with a joke about the girls getting away with violence on the ice by playing coy with Randall, but had to admit, “Seriously, though, it was a real game.” Freshman Magdalene Huchthausen was the breakout star, netting three goals, including one after an impressive drive across the entire ice, outmaneuvering the Junior defense along the way. Ione Kadletz scored a fourth goal for the Freshmen. Poor Mary Martin then sealed the Juniors' loss when, in the midst of a scrimmage in front of the net, she attempted a back check and instead

⁴⁷ “University Girls Delight in Playing Ice Hockey; Don't Mind the Falls and Hurts.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 21, 1917, p17.

⁴⁸ “Hockeyettes at ‘U’ to Play First Game on Friday Noon; Juniors to Meet Sophomores.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 22, 1917, p15.

⁴⁹ “Campus in a Quiver; Coed Hockey Cause!” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 22, 1917, p12.

⁵⁰ Names have been adjusted to spellings verified through yearbooks, birth certificates, and other data, wherever possible, to be consistent throughout this piece.

⁵¹ “Hockeyettes at ‘U’ to Play First Game on Friday Noon; Juniors to Meet Sophomores.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 22, 1917, p15.

⁵² A plausible “Marion Edwards” does not appear in any yearbook or census in this period, but Mabel Edwards and Marion Irwin do both exist, and given the substitution the error is very plausible. Additionally, the woman pictured in the *Tribune/The 1918 Gopher* team photo, which includes Alice Rochford, looks like Mabel Edwards.

knocked the puck in for an own-goal. The Freshmen won 5-0, and advanced to the final.⁵³ The *Tribune* had also sent a camera man and published pictures of the game the following Sunday.⁵⁴

On Saturday the 24th, the Sophomores, also in new hockey kit, and the Seniors met for their match. Albert Danaher served as the referee, and by this point the *Tribune* reporter was clearly taking the tournament seriously, reporting the matches in a similar tone and style to men's matches at the time. Sophomore Winifred Bailey was the standout, in a game featuring "close guarding and clever defensive work." In the first half, the Sophomores quickly netted two goals, one by Bailey and a second by Elizabeth Lagaard. Sophomores Marietta Fournier, Kathleen O'Brien, and Sarah Paper put up a masterful defense, and despite the noted efforts of Kathryn Urquhart and V'lora Welch, the Seniors never got close to the Sophomore goal. In the last five minutes of the game Winifred Bailey collided with Amanda Larson on a drive and had to be carried, injured, from the ice, but the Sophomores still won the day 2-0.⁵⁵

The Minneapolis Journal sent a photographer and a reporter to the Senior-Sophomore match, but the reporter was clearly only angling for jokes. He did note that the crowd was enthusiastic, and that he was placing his money on the Freshmen—whom he had not seen but claimed "the dope" (1920s slang for popular opinion) favored—to win the championship.⁵⁶ In announcing the tournament Final on Monday, the *Tribune* was more reserved and comprehensive, noting that both teams had "succeeded in administering the whitewash to the upper class sevens," and that while the Freshmen were considered a little better at taking the shot and had many capable players, the Sophomores had "the big star" in a freshly recovered Winifred Bailey. Both teams, in their estimation, had good defensive work.⁵⁷ The *Journal* announced the game in the morning paper on Tuesday the 27th, but stuck to insisting the Freshmen were the favorites.⁵⁸

That afternoon, the weather was chilly and clear, and the Sophomores and Freshmen met for their match at 12:30pm.⁵⁹ Neither report mentioned the referee, but he is visible in a few of the pictures from the day and is wearing a large "W" letter sweater, making it likely that it was either Arthur McBride or Harold Mergens, both of whom had attended Weyburn College.⁶⁰ Through the first half and the early minutes of the second half, the Freshmen showed excellent team play and were able to keep the puck near the Sophomore net, but couldn't manage to shoot a goal. In the final minutes, the Sophomores became the aggressors, but regular time ended without either side able to penetrate the opposing defense. The game went into the typical ten-minute

⁵³ "Girls' Hockey Contest Is Anything But Tea Party; Freshmen Defeat Juniors." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1917, p19.

⁵⁴ "As the Tribune Camera Man Saw the University Co-eds Play Hockey." *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1917, p41.

⁵⁵ "Winifred Bailey is Star of Sophomore Hockey Win Over Senior Girls at 'U'." *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1917, p41.

⁵⁶ "Senior Girls Lose to 'Soph's' on Ice." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 1917, p6.

⁵⁷ "The Sophomore and Freshman girls hockey teams..." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 1917, p28.

⁵⁸ "Coed Hockey Sevens in Final Game Today." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 1917, p13.

⁵⁹ "Daily Data Table: MINNEAPOLIS WB DOWNTOWN - Station ID: 215433, 2/22/1917-02/29/1917." Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/historical/daily-data.html?sid=215433&sname=MINNEAPOLIS%20WB%20DOWNTOWN&sdate=1917-02-22&edate=1917-02-28> Accessed 10/9/2024;

"Coed Hockey Sevens in Final Game Today." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 1917, p13.

⁶⁰ "Ice Hockey Champions '16-'17." *The 1919 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1918, p286; Both Arthur McBride and Harold Mergens had previously attended Weyburn College in Saskatchewan, and were both pictured in hockey sweaters with the Weyburn W in their time in MN (for example: "Some of the Hockey Players After Places on the New Local Team." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. January 14, 1917, p5.) The W sweater pictured looks more like the one Arthur McBride seemed to favor, but the pictures are not clear enough to make a certain determination.

overtime period of the era, and the Sophomores were dominant despite some bursts of speed from the Freshmen.⁶¹ The *Tribune* had rightly suspected the Winifred Bailey was going to be the “big star” of the game, as she clinched it for her side:

“Miss Winifred Bailey, center for the Sophs, scooped the puck out of the danger zone in front of her own net and wriggled and circled the entire ice, evading every one of the Freshmen team, and shot the disk into the cage for the lone counter of the game and the championship.”⁶²

Even the *Journal* finally had to give Bailey her due, noting that she scored the only goal and got the win, even though it “upset the dope.” In a much more subdued article than previous efforts, they praised the “aggressive tactics” of the Freshmen and the “stellar defensive work” of the Sophomores.⁶³ Ice Hockey’s Intramural Sports Committee cup was the only Women’s Athletics prize that year not won by the Seniors, and Winifred Bailey accepted it on behalf of her team. Bailey was also the only underclassman to receive the WAA Seal for 1917—the equivalent of lettering for women between 1913 and 1922.⁶⁴ Hockey playing Seniors Roberta Hostetler and V’lora Welch, and Junior Marion Shepard—who would play in the 1918 Tournament and may have played in ’16-’17 without making a tournament team—also received their Seals that year.

1917-1918

With the US entry into the First World War in April of 1917, and men’s stars like Mergens and McBride deploying overseas, the 1917-1918 school year found the men’s program struggling while the women’s flourished.⁶⁵ Winifred Bailey was again put in charge of the season, and nearly all of the prior year’s players who had not graduated returned.⁶⁶ The rink by the Armory on Northrop Field was prepped and ready at the end of December, and by early January the ladies were meeting daily at noon for practices, under the coaching of Winifred Bailey.⁶⁷

⁶¹ “Sophomore Girls Win Ice Hockey Honors at ‘U’.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 28, 1917, p13.

⁶² “The Sophomore and Freshman girls hockey teams...” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 1917, p28; “Sophomore Girls Win Ice Hockey Honors at ‘U’.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 28, 1917, p13.

⁶³ “Sophomore Coeds Win Hockey Title.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 28, 1917, p15.

⁶⁴ The cup, which was named for the Intramural Sports Committee who provided it, is identified by name in the *Women’s Athletic Association Constitution and Bylaws, 1918*. University of Minnesota Libraries Gallery. <https://gallery.lib.umn.edu/items/show/6202> Accessed 10/10/2024; “Seniors Take Honors.” *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 27, 1917, p13; Two sources, (“Gopher Co-eds May be Granted ‘M’s’ For Athletic Skill.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 11, 1913, p8.) and (“The 1922 M Winners.” *The 1924 Gopher*. University of Minnesota. Spring 1923, p402-403.) set a loose timeframe for the period when the Seal was equivalent to the M. After 1922 the Seal remains but becomes a higher honor awarded by committee to women considered “all-round” girls and athletes.

⁶⁵ “M’Bride and Mergens Slated to Drive Tanks.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 10, 1917, p23. Mergens and McBride had been raised in Canada and were serving with the Canadian forces by fall of 1917. We have been able to find draft cards for Larcom Randall and Percy Harrison, a record of Harrison serving as a POW escort in France in 1919, as well as the Arlington Cemetery records for Albert Danaher showing that he served in WWI, but have not verified when they deployed. All five 1917 Tournament coaches survived the war; “Prospects of Hockey at Minnesota...” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 3, 1917, p8.

⁶⁶ “Gophers Will Play Hockey.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 31, 1917, p8.

⁶⁷ “Hockey Play Is Planned for University Coeds.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 31, 1917, p13; “Winifred Bailey...” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 7, 1918, p10; “Girls Play Hockey.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 14, 1918, p10.

On January 15th, the women announced that the Freshmen had retained Henry Jenswold as a coach, while the Sophomores and the Juniors had retained Charles Cantieny and George Sawyer, respectively.⁶⁸ By January 27th, the Seniors had retained George J. Andersch, and 60 girls were vying for the 28 tournament places for the year, with teams due to be picked on January 30th. Jeanette Walker had stepped up to assist Winifred Bailey in managing the sport, and they had arranged for each class to have a designated color of socks and toques for the tournament. The *Tribune* took a set of photos and noted that returning Seniors Caroline Helmick, May Kellerhals, and Helen Jenswold were practice standouts, as were returning Juniors Bailey, Walker, and Elizabeth Lagaard. Magdalena Huchthausen and Birdie Brill were newly sharing the spotlight with Lydia Lux for the Sophomores, and Alberta Chandler was the Freshman to watch.⁶⁹

On Friday, February 1st, the *Tribune* published a notice that one of the women's inter-college hockey matches was planned to take place the next day at an ice carnival the coeds were hosting, but did not follow up or indicate which other college might have participated.⁷⁰ On Friday, February 8th, *The American Jewish World* paper proudly announced that Bertha Fineman and Sarah Paper had made the Junior team, with Goldie London designated a sub, and that Birdie Brill and Ethel Wilk had both made the Sophomore team. They also indicated that there was to be another Ice Carnival on March 1st.⁷¹ On February 10th, the *Tribune* finally announced the full team rosters, and indicated that the tournament was intended to be held in March and that an exhibition game would be happening at an ice carnival on "the first Saturday of next semester."⁷² The *Journal* released almost identical information a week later, though they said the carnival would be on the "first Saturday of the new semester," and that the initial matchups would again be Seniors v. Sophomores and Juniors v. Freshmen.⁷³ The rosters were as follows:

	Freshmen (Class of 1921)	Sophomores (Class of 1920)	Juniors (Class of 1919)	Seniors (Class of 1918)
<i>Center</i>	Anne Haedecke	Dorothy Kueffner*	Winifred Bailey*	Helen Jenswold*
<i>Rover</i>	Almira Ruchhoft	Magdalene Huchthausen*	Elizabeth Lagaard*	May Kellerhals*
<i>Left Wing</i>	Elizabeth Hoy	Lydia Lux	Jeanette Walker*	Katherine Yerxa*
<i>Right Wing</i>	Alpha Mo	Birdie Brill*	Kathleen O'Brien*	Frances Ek*
<i>Cover Point</i>	Louise Campbell	Veronica Krueger	Mary Tracy	Caroline Helmick*
<i>Point</i>	Blanche Martin	Mabel Edwards*	Bertha Fineman	Marion Shepard
<i>Goal</i>	Filomena Alway	Ethel Wilk*	Sarah Paper*	Evelyn Andrews
<i>Sub</i>			Goldie London	

* Indicates a known returning player from a prior year.

As it is unlikely that the tournament was going to be put off until September, both papers seem to have been working from a notice given to them sometime prior to February 9th, the first Saturday of the Spring semester.⁷⁴ Neither paper followed up in March, though the cup was inscribed with March 14, 1918 as the date of the

⁶⁸ "'U' Hockey Stars Will Coach Co-ed Sevens for Games." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 15, 1918, p10.

⁶⁹ "Co-ed Hockey Players Vie for Places on Class Teams; Sixty Out for Practice." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 27, 1918, p14.

⁷⁰ "University Girls to Stage Ice Carnival." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 1, 1918, p15.

⁷¹ "Jewish Coeds Make Hockey Team." *The American Jewish World*. Saint Paul, Minnesota. February 8, 1918, p14.

⁷² "The Women's Athletic Association..." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 10, 1918, p29.

⁷³ "Co-Eds Chosen for Hockey Tournament at the University." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 17, 1918, p33.

⁷⁴ *The Bulletin of the University of Minnesota, 1917-1918*. University of Minnesota. 1917, p8.

final.⁷⁵ The tournament was won by the Sophomores of that year, per the cup and the list of the winners that year reported in the *Journal*.⁷⁶

1918-1919

Our only knowledge of the 1918-1919 school year comes from *The 1920 Gopher*, which explains that unfavorable weather prevented a tournament from being held. A photograph of Elizabeth Hoy standing with other hockey girls in front of the Hippodrome survived in the Patrick family collection, and is likely from this season, as the following girls did play on informally organized teams and must have acquired ice time indoors:⁷⁷

Freshmen (Class of 1922)	Sophomores (Class of 1921)	Juniors (Class of 1920)	Seniors (Class of 1919)
Margaret Lee	Elizabeth Hoy*	Mabel Edwards*	Winifred Bailey*
Gundborg Sund	Nora Anderson	Gertrude Wellisch	Elizabeth Lagaard*
Margaret Strange	Ingeborg Sund	Magdalene Huchthausen*	Esther Larsen
Agnes Haedecke	Florence Shapiro	Clarice Kraft	Kathleen O'Brien*
Louise Fineman	Anne Haedecke*	Birdie Brill*	Mary Tracy*
Olga Wellberg	Alberta Chandler*	Alice Rochford*	Bertha Fineman*
Betty Sullivan	Filomena Alway*	Marion Irwin*	Sarah Paper*
Lenore Alway			
Gladys McHugh			

* Indicates a known returning player from a prior year.

The return of Marion Irwin, who was chosen for a team in '16-'17, and Alberta Chandler, who stood out at practice in '17-'18, but neither of whom appeared on tournament teams in 1918, is a small hint of the bigger community behind the records. Marion Irwin, and indeed any woman who only appears for a year or two, may have played ice hockey every year they were at university, along with others whose names simply never made a list.

1919-1920

The 1919-1920 school year saw the ladies of the WAA opening with a carnival and exhibition match between two teams. Announcing the carnival, the *Tribune* noted that Elaine Ruchthaisen, Agatha Kruger, Mabel Prothers, Eugenia Murphy, Helen Haines, Margaret Cross, Harriet Bower, and Dorothy Humiston would be the women to watch.⁷⁸ The *Journal* did not mention the planned hockey game, but did name a number of dominant skaters to watch in the race portion, all of whom played hockey the year prior, and which included Margaret Lee, Birdie Brill, Mabel Edwards, Clarice Kraft, Alice Rochford, Elizabeth Hoy, Ingeborg Sund, Alberta Chandler, Florence

⁷⁵ *The 1919 Gopher* notes on p285 that the 1918 Tournament has not yet been played, and uses its space for Ice Hockey to show images of the final game of 1917, which had not made it into the *The 1918 Gopher* which instead showed pictures from the 1917 Freshman-Junior game taken by the *Tribune*.

⁷⁶ "'U' Girls Compete For Champion Cup in Field Events." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 27, 1918, p14.

⁷⁷ "Ice Hockey." *The 1920 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1919, p195; In the 1919 write up in *The 1920 Gopher*, Gladys McHugh is listed as a Freshman on the ice hockey page, but she graduated from East High in spring of 1917, which would have put her on track to matriculate in fall 1917, be a Freshman during the 1918 spring, a Sophomore during the 1919 spring, and a Junior during the 1920 spring, when she is on the Junior-Senior team in *The 1921 Gopher*. We don't have a record of her graduating, so our best guess is that her East High School graduation and 1920 team status means she was either informally playing down a team in 1919 or they just put her name in the wrong column (especially as the Freshmen column has nine names and it's far more likely that two teams had one sub then that one team had two); In person interview with Jana Brown Patrick and Margaret McKenna Herrmann, Elizabeth Hoy's granddaughters. Prior Lake, Minnesota. May 21, 2025.

⁷⁸ "Skating, Skiing, and Race to Feature 'U' Winter Carnival." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 18, 1920, p52.

Shapiro, Nora Anderson, Margaret Strange, Gladys McHugh, Betty Sullivan, Olga Wellberg, and Louise Fineman.⁷⁹ Both papers erroneously reported the hockey game as the co-ed “championship.”

On a bright, cold January 24th, 1920, the carnival saw two mixed class teams take to the ice as the Greens and the Reds, with a Junior, Gordon Cummins, refereeing.⁸⁰

	Reds	Greens
<i>Center</i>	Anne Haedecke* (Junior)	Magdalene Huchthausen* (Senior)
<i>Rover</i>	Almira Ruchhoft* (Freshman?)	Mabel Edwards* (Senior)
<i>Left Wing</i>	Ingeborg Sund* (Junior)	Louise Fineman* (Sophomore)
<i>Right Wing</i>	Alpha Mo* (Junior)	Marion Irwin* (Senior)
<i>Cover Point</i>	Gladys McHugh* (Junior?)	Veronica Krueger* (Senior)
<i>Point</i>	Blanche Martin* (Junior)	Ruby Peterson (Freshman)
<i>Goal</i>	Filomena Alway* (Junior)	Ethel Wilk* (Senior)

* Indicates a known returning player from a prior year.

The game was fast and marked by clever teamwork on the part of the Reds, who ended up winning the day, 3-0. The crowd was enthusiastic and apparently broke into “storms of applause” throughout the game.⁸¹ The *Journal* noted that the girls’ game drew “most of the crowd.”⁸² Both papers sent photographers to the Carnival, and the *Tribune* photos appeared in *The 1921 Gopher*.⁸³

We don’t know when exactly the women’s tournament of 1920 happened, except that it was sometime prior to the yearbook deadline—so likely February or early March—as *The 1921 Gopher* has both a write-up of the tournament and two additional photos of the teams that made the final. They had enough women to field three teams:

Freshmen (Class of 1923)	Sophomores (Class of 1922)	Junior-Seniors (Class of 1921 and 1920)
<i>Almira Ruchhoft*</i>	<i>Olga Wellberg*</i>	Anne Haedecke* (Junior)
Bernice Langtry	Myrtle Rubbert	<i>Blanche Martin*</i> (Junior)
Jane Sedgwick	Eleanor Allman	Mabel Edwards* (Senior)
Lillian Bullis	Grace Johnson	Gladys McHugh* (Junior?)
Ruby Peterson	Florence Shapiro	Rachel Carleton (Senior?)
Helen Stodola	Vivian Holmgren	Veronica Krueger* (Senior)
Harriet George	Sarah French	Ethel Wilk* (Senior)
Rosehelen Hoy (Sub.)	Bessie Shapiro (Sub.)	

Italics indicates a Captain. * Indicates a known returning player from a prior year.

Practice for the tournament seems to have happened frequently, as the yearbook notes that “This winter it has been quite the usual thing for the passerby, looking in thru the gates of Northrop Field, to see the rink fairly swarming with girls armed with most ferocious-looking sticks and speeding around on skates with little or no regard for life or limb.” The first three games of the tournament saw scheduled match-ups between all teams,

⁷⁹ “‘U’ Carnival to Take Place at Northrop Field.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 18, 1920, p32.

⁸⁰ Almira Ruchhoft played for the Freshman team in the Spring of 1918, which corresponds to her 1917 Graduation from East High School. We don’t have records of her graduating, or of her playing in 1919, so the best guess about her reappearance as a Freshman again in 1920 is that she took a year off and came back, starting again, as they are unlikely to have replaced the team Captain.

⁸¹ “Alpha Tau Omega Team Win ‘Ski-fording’ Race at Carnival: ‘Red’ Hockey Team Carries Off Championship in Co-Eds Hard Contest.” *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 25, 1920, p31.

⁸² “Sorority Girls Battle at Hockey in ‘U’ Carnival.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 25, 1920, p9.

⁸³ “The Winter Carnival” and “Ice Hockey.” *The 1921 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1920, p243 and p332.

with the Junior-Seniors first beating the Sophomores 3-1; then the Freshmen beating the Sophomores 4-0; and finally the Freshmen beating the Junior-Seniors 2-0. The Freshmen then took the Seniors on again for a final match, which was tied 1-1 at the end of regular time. The Freshmen won 2-1 in overtime.⁸⁴

1920-1921

1920-1921 would wind up as a practice year only, as the mild winter and variable weather meant no tournament could be scheduled. Teams were never picked, and so the women's names are unknown, although Louise Fineman, Harriet George, Bernice Langtry, and Betty Sullivan all played in '19-'20 and '21-'22, so there is a decent chance they were among the women playing in '20-'21. Chester Bros, Norman Peterson, and Bernard Bros were thanked for their coaching in the yearbook. At least 14 women did get together for a formal photo, which provides a very clear look at a goal frame of the time. Framed with something that looks to be about 3" wide, the overall shape is formed with chicken wire and this particular one was also wrapped in fabric. Many of the women are also holding their skates, which vary in style.⁸⁵

1921-1922

The 1921-1922 school year also experienced bad weather. On January 23rd 40 women started practice for ice hockey, with the newly hired official men's varsity hockey coach, I.D. MacDonald, also volunteering to assist the women, along with players Merle De Forest, Frank Pond, and John Prins. The tournament was planned for the week of February 18th. The *Tribune* named Harriet George, Lenore Alway, Bernice Langtry, Erma Schurr, Else Bockstruck, Lucille Brock, Eleanor Piper, Helen Sweat, Betty Morrison, Ruth Palmer, Ruth Campbell, Betty Sullivan, Lucille Larson, and Mabel Prothers as the skaters to watch, so we know they all attended at least the first practice.⁸⁶ That year, the Armory rink was doubled in size, so there was plenty of ice for the ladies to practice, but it seems that the sport had some attrition, as eventually only De Forest and Pond remained as coaches, and only two teams were chosen for tournament play:

	Fresh-Juniors (Class of 1925 and 1923)	Soph.-Seniors (Class of 1924 and 1922)
<i>Center</i>	Sylvia Hendrickson (Junior)	Agnes Jones (Sophomore)
<i>Right Wing</i>	Miriam Huhn (Junior?)	Louise Fineman* (Senior)
<i>Left Wing</i>	Marian Davis (Junior)	Myrtle Rubbert (Senior)
<i>Right Guard</i>	Bergliot Strand (Freshman)	Lenore Alway (Sophomore)
<i>Left Guard</i>	Violet Anderson (Junior)	Grace Goldsmith (Sophomore?)
		* Indicates a known returning player from a prior year.

The reason for the lack of goalies listed in the yearbook is unclear. Six-man hockey had existed conceptually since the early 1900s and had slowly grown more common in Minnesota over the war years in the United States, dropping the rover position from the forwards, though the University of Minnesota men were still playing the seven-man game at least as late as 1919.⁸⁷ The six-man version of the game was the official system for men's varsity hockey in the 1921-1922 season, however, so it is likely that Coach MacDonald and his players had the women switching over as well. It is possible that they did not have enough women by the end of the season to field full squads, but it is also possible that they were simply left out of the yearbook by mistake. However the

⁸⁴ "Ice Hockey" *The 1921 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1920, p332.

⁸⁵ "Ice Hockey" *The 1922 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1921, p376.

⁸⁶ "Practice Opens Tomorrow for Over 40 Girls." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 22, 1922, p34.

⁸⁷ "Interfraternity Hockey." *The 1920 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1919, p184.

game was played, the teams only were able to get a single game before bad weather closed their season, and it ended with a 1-1 tie.⁸⁸

At some point in 1922, though it's not clear if it was in the late spring of '21-'22 or the fall of '22-'23, nine women were awarded athletic letters just like the men, for the first time since the early 1900s. Five of those nine women—Harriet George, Lenore Alway, Ruth Campbell, Faye Farmer, and Marian Davis—played ice hockey at least once.⁸⁹

1922-1923

The 1922-1923 season began initially with Bill Spaulding, football coach and head of the Physical Education Department, assigning men to coach four women's teams.⁹⁰ While 27 women came out for the sport, some coeds struggled with the new WAA rules that included a C-average requirement, resulting in an eventual pool of 15. The coaching system also broke down at some point in practices. Bonita LaFavor took over as the student manager of the sport, and two mixed teams were finally chosen:

	Black Team	Blue Team
<i>Center</i>	Hazel Smith	Kathryn Ranta
<i>Right Forward</i>	<i>Vivian Holmgren*</i>	Mildred McGowan
<i>Left Forward</i>	Faye Farmer	Bella Hershkovitz
<i>Right Guard</i>	Aili Oja	Dorothy Gasch
<i>Left Guard</i>	Elizabeth Bray	Virginia Butts
<i>Goal</i>	Katherine Foot	Harriet Cross

Italics indicates a Captain. * Indicates a known returning player from a prior year.

The teams met five times in an intended best-of series, but tied the first two games. The Blues then won the third game, but were beaten twice in a row by the Blacks, who were declared the victors. "It would have been impossible for the girls to play against the forbidding odds they met with if they had not been a plucky group," the yearbook concluded.⁹¹

1923-1924

January 8th, 1924, was the first practice of the 1923-1924 school year, with Bella Hershkovitz leading the sport. A championship at the WAA Carnival between two teams was planned for March 14th.⁹² Instructor Helen Hazelton coached. The season saw 25 girls coming out for the sport and they chose 17 to play on two squads. The Senior/Freshmen "Sen-Fro" team played against the Junior/Sophomore "Ju-So" team, and it is clear from the write up that some institutional knowledge had been lost. They perceived the sport as "new" to the University—despite it being verifiably the 10th consecutive school year the game had been played in one form or another—and described the rules as "indefinite" and "not modified to make it ideally fitted for girl players." The names of the women who played other than Bella Hershkovitz were not recorded, although 13 women did pose for two

⁸⁸ "Ice Hockey" and MacDonald, I.D. "Minnesota Hockey Team Makes Debut." *The 1923 Gopher*. University of Minnesota. Spring 1922, p237 and p184.

⁸⁹ "The 1922 M Winners." *The 1924 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1923, p403.

⁹⁰ "A rink on Northrop field..." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 28, 1923, p48.

⁹¹ "Ice Hockey." *The 1924 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1923, p408-409.

⁹² "Winter Sports Hold Attention of Co-eds at 'U'." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. January 20, 1924, p54.

photos of the squads. The yearbook noted, “Coach and manager alike must have determination and unquenchable enthusiasm for they must meet all the trials of pioneers in a sport.”⁹³

1924-1925

The 1924-1925 school year saw the women’s program get a boost from the assistance of men’s coach Emil Iverson, who was “very anxious that ice hockey should become a popular sport for girls.” They began the season the first week of December 1924 indoors, focusing on puck and stick handling and the strategy of the game. After the holiday, the women were given their own rink, located near the back of the old library, to allow for more practice periods. While basketball and field hockey remained the dominant women’s sports that year, the ice hockey team was proud of its enthusiasm and rare opportunity for girls to play. At least 18 women appeared with Coach Iverson in the group shot for the yearbook.⁹⁴ Sophomore Ruth Schroeder, who was the WAA student manager of the sport, made sure the *Tribune* knew that their competition was beginning on February 10th, and the final rosters of their tournament squads:⁹⁵

Senior Freshmen First Squad

(Class of 1925 and 1928)

Hazel Patten (Freshman)
Bella Waisbren* (nee Hershkovitz) (Senior)
Vivian DiMarco (Senior?)
Helen Dalton (Freshman)
Marion Sargent (Freshman)

Senior Freshmen Second Squad

(Class of 1925 and 1928)

Nadine Mills (Freshman)
Elizabeth Didrickson (Freshman)
Lola Voightlander (Freshman)
Marda Greenberg (Freshman)

Junior Sophomores First Squad

(Class of 1926 and 1927)

Lorraine Chalmers (Junior)
Vivian Franti (Junior)
Marjorie Keyes (Junior)
Harriet Cross* (Junior)
Florence Tenney (Sophomore)
Loretta Horejs (Sophomore)

Junior Sophomores Second Squad

(Class of 1926 and 1927)

Florence Erickson (Sophomore?)
Agnes Guaghan (Sophomore?)

* Indicates a known returning player from a prior year.

The tournament did not receive further coverage, so we don’t know the details, but the yearbook does clarify that the Junior-Sophomores won. The uneven sizes of the team make it difficult to fully understand how many players they were fielding, or if anyone was missing from the *Tribune* list as well. Bella Hershkovitz Waisbren’s name change, after her marriage to Martin Waisbren on September 6, 1923, is a rare but delightful example of a woman staying at University after her marriage.⁹⁶

1925-1926

The next year, in the 1925-1926 school year, Coach Iverson was back to lend his support. Once again, the women started practice in December indoors, moving to the rink after the holiday break. This is the first year the yearbook expressly notes the difficulty in recruiting girls away from basketball and swimming, the competing

⁹³ “Ice Hockey.” *The 1925 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1924, p394.

⁹⁴ “Ice Hockey.” *The 1926 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1925, p328.

⁹⁵ “For competition in the women’s hockey games...” *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 1, 1925, p44.

⁹⁶ “Waisbren-Hershkovitz.” *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. July 13, 1924, p58.

winter sports, but they still managed to fill two teams in a Senior/Sophomore and Junior/Freshman mix, with portmanteau names given to the squads:

SOS

(Class of 1928 and 1926)

Marjorie Keyes* (Senior)
Charlotte Fosberg (Sophomore)
Vivian Franti* (Senior)
Lorraine Chalmers* (Senior)
Agnes Bros (Sophomore?)
Minnie Fineman (Senior)

Jufro

(Class of 1927 and 1929)

Eleanor Di Marco (Junior)
Loretta Horejs* (Junior)
Elma Troth (Freshman)
Ruth Schroeder* (Junior)
Sara Bashefkin (Freshman)
Margaret Huttner (Freshman)

* Indicates a known returning player from a prior year.

The teams met for a best of three, but the SOS team took the championship in two, winning 1-0 and 3-1 successively.⁹⁷

1926-1927

1926-1927 kept the same system in place, with Coach Iverson kicking off the season with his support, practices taking place indoors in December—this year they explicitly added “checking” to the list of skills they practiced indoors—a move to the rink after the holidays, and two squads cobbled together from anyone they could coax away from basketball and swimming. The juniors were the only class able to field a full squad, although they were expressly referred to as a “quintet” in the yearbook, suggesting a five-woman game was played. The other classes formed the “O.C.s” together, and while their names were not recorded, senior Eleanor DiMarco, who led the sport, almost certainly played for them. On the Junior team, Charlotte Fosberg returned as captain to lead possible newcomers Effie Norris, Ada Pankow, Jean Moore, and Peterine McKay. Once again, the winning team clinched the championship in two games.⁹⁸

1927-1928

Sophomore Milla Kara Jacobsen took over as the student head of sport for 1927-1928, with Coach Iverson and Miss Helen Hazelton lending their support. The season looked promising, as enough girls turned out for them to field three teams: Senior, Junior, and Sophomore-Freshmen. Mother Nature was not on their side, however, as the rink became affectionately known as “the pool” and practices had to repeatedly revert to stick handling sessions indoors. In the end, two unnamed squads made up of Senior-Sophomore and Junior-Freshman combinations were able to hold an indoor game in the arena, which ended up fast despite the significantly larger size rink than they were used to. The Junior Freshmen won 3-2, and despite the issues the team considered it a gratifying, enthusiastic season.⁹⁹

1928-1929

The 1928-1929 school year is lost to time, as *The Gopher* staff decided to transition the yearbook from a Junior to a Senior publication, making it more like the yearbooks we expect today. A Supplement was issued to bridge

⁹⁷ “Ice Hockey.” *The 1927 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1926, p281.

⁹⁸ “Ice Hockey.” *The 1928 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1927, p267.

⁹⁹ “Ice Hockey.” *The 1929 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1928, p237.

the gap, but did not include women's sports.¹⁰⁰ The 1930 yearbook does indicate that a season took place, but that the weather prevented a championship.

1929-1930

1929-1930 saw Emil Iverson spending some time coaching the women's team, with instructor Alice Timberman doing the main coaching and senior Marjorie Merritt student managing. The yearbook stated that the season gave no opportunity to play, but did have a picture labeled, "The Freshmen Champions", suggesting that something informal still took place.¹⁰¹ The University had announced in January that the intention was to field three mixed class teams, and advertised Coach Iverson's mentorship.¹⁰² The 1930 Penny Carnival program indicates that practices were held from 3:30pm-5:30pm daily through the winter, and encouraged anyone who could, liked to, or wanted to learn to skate should come out for ice hockey.¹⁰³

The 1930s

Ice hockey doesn't make another full page yearbook appearance in the era, although Virginia Pettigrew is listed as the student head of ice hockey in 1931.¹⁰⁴ An April 1931 *WAA Bulletin* showed Gertrude Hall as the student head (presumably newly elected, based on prior schedules), although *The 1932 Gopher* listed a "Constance Lieb"—who we believe to actually be Cass Lieb—as the head instead, and she is the last one so designated to appear in the yearbooks.¹⁰⁵ Sara Bashefkin, who played in 1926 and returned to complete her degree in 1935 recalled playing between 1931 and 1935 in her memoir.¹⁰⁶ The 1935 WAA Constitution still listed ice hockey as a seal qualifying sport, and a 1936 bulletin mentions both field hockey and a separate "hockey club" for something "new and different," which may be ice hockey.¹⁰⁷ Ultimately, however, ice hockey seems to have petered out at the University by the mid-30s.

And Beyond

Hockey may have been temporarily over for the University, but the coeds who were a part of it lived up to the promises of the WAA. In 1924, Dr. Anna Norris wrote:

The girl who is interested in athletic sports is usually found to be the girl who has a physique that can carry out her plan of action in games or in life with a goodly degree of smoothness and harmony; and conversely a physique such as she develops is one that forms a sound fundamental support for sane emotional life and well balanced judgement...Winners of the Seal form a group of young women who will be influential wherever they are found.¹⁰⁸

The women we were able to trace beyond their college years lived up to this concept wholeheartedly. Some championed children as working professionals in one capacity or another. Helen Dalton, V'lora Welch Smith, and

¹⁰⁰ *The Gopher Supplement for 1930*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1929.

¹⁰¹ "Ice Hockey." *The 1930 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1930, p282.

¹⁰² "Girls Play Hockey." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. January 31, 1920, p8.

¹⁰³ "Ice Hockey." *Women's Athletic Bulletin*. University of Minnesota Archives. January 1930, p2.

¹⁰⁴ "W.A.A. Board." *The 1931 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1931, p222.

¹⁰⁵ "Your W.A.A. Board" *Women's Athletic Bulletin*. University of Minnesota Archives. April 1931, p5; "W.A.A. Board." *The 1932 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1932, p314.

¹⁰⁶ Ryder, Sara Bashefkin. *Of Thee I Write: I am a product of the St. Paul West Side Flats*. Master Graphics. New Ulm, Minnesota. 1989.

¹⁰⁷ "Constitution of the Women's Athletic Association." University of Minnesota Archives. September 1935, p15; "Hockey Club." *Coed Chatter*. Women's Athletic Association. University of Minnesota Archives. Fall 1936, p4.

¹⁰⁸ "The Women's Athletic Association." *The 1923 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1922, p223.

Louise Fineman Joseph became playground supervisors after graduation.¹⁰⁹ Faye Farmer was the general supervisor of playgrounds for Minneapolis in 1923.¹¹⁰ Loretta Horejs became the Physical Director of the Seton Club.¹¹¹ Violet Anderson Bell became a mother and a school nurse in California.¹¹² Filomena Alway Robinson and Erma Schurr Hoyt both worked professionally with the YWCA.¹¹³ Margaret Cross spent her career as a social worker, spending her early years with the Girl Scouts, and eventually became the director of Georgetown House, a prominent settlement house in Washington, D.C.¹¹⁴ Nadine Mills Flemming was the chairwoman for children's health and welfare for the Red Wing League of Women Voters.¹¹⁵ Elenore Piper Riley was a Girl Scout camp counsellor.¹¹⁶

Many of the former ice hockey players, like Eleanor Allman Conant, Kathleen Gemmel Hartwell, Gladys Holt Peterson, Marjorie Keyes Remington, Marjorie Merritt Burris, Alpha Mo Kingsley, Louise Nippert Ueland, Myrtle Rubbert Buenger, and Jean Moore Cook, married and raised children, working with community groups and raising the next generations.¹¹⁷ Alice Rochford Hubbard died young from complications in childbirth, but her infant daughter grew up to also be an athlete.¹¹⁸ Minnie Fineman Saliterman paired motherhood with supporting the arts and regularly painting.¹¹⁹ Lone Kadletz Baker served as her daughter's troop captain for Girls Scouts Troop No. 66 Interlachen Park in the 1930s.¹²⁰ Catherine "Cass" Lieb Gorton did the same for her children in Camp Fire and the Boy Scouts.¹²¹ Betty Morrison Cranston was the president of the Women's Auxiliary of Doctor's Memorial Hospital and loved being a grandmother.¹²² Sarah Paper Oransky worked as the secretary for her husband's department store while raising her children.¹²³

¹⁰⁹ "Playgrounds of City will Open Season June 17." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 12, 1929, p3; "Dixie Playground Plans are Made." *The Palm Beach Post*. West Palm Beach, Florida. March 12, 1926, p24; "Positions Allotted Playground Chiefs." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota, June 21, 1921.

¹¹⁰ "General Supervisor Engaged." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 10, 1923, p70.

¹¹¹ "Seton Club names Physisal [sic] Director." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 20, 1926, p51.

¹¹² "Red Cross to Hold Evening Classes." *The San Diego Sun*. San Diego, California. December 29, 1932, p7; "Virgil Bell Dies in Culver City." *New Pilot*. San Pedro, California. December 21, 1960, p18.

¹¹³ "Miss Alway Will Represent North Central 'Y' Field." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 30, 1921, p54; "Group of Girls to Attend Y.W.C.A. Geneva Conference." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 25, 1926, p37.

¹¹⁴ "Did You Happen To See---Margaret Cross." *Times Herald*. Washington, DC. May 24, 1947, p2.

¹¹⁵ "Local Women Attend Meeting of Voters League at Mill City." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. October 13, 1936, p1.

¹¹⁶ "Girl Scouts Give Toys to Cripples." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 8, 1921, p5.

¹¹⁷ "Marilyn Conant" *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 13, 1952, p51; "Word received today..." *The Brainerd Daily Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. February 28, 1930, p2; "R.W. Petersons return from the West." *The Minneapolis Times-Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 15, 1940, p18; "To Vacation at Lake Hubbert." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 6, 1932, p19; "Burris." *The Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 20, 1994, p32; "Mrs. N.W. Kingsley." *The Montclair Times*. Montclair, New Jersey. August 12, 1971, p6; "Ueland" *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 15, 1978, p54; "Buenger." *The Cincinnati Enquirer*. Cincinnati, Ohio. September 4, 1962, p21; "Cook." *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 28, 1972, p38.

¹¹⁸ "Mrs. Hubbard Funeral Will Be Held at Home of Parents Tomorrow." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. May 15, 1924, p18; "On Guard." *The 1940 Cehisean*. Central High School. Saint Paul, Minnesota. Spring 1940, p76.

¹¹⁹ "Artists Holiday." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 28, 1950, p14.

¹²⁰ "Girls Scout Badge Presentation Will Be Held Sunday." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 30, 1930, p48.

¹²¹ "Five year, three year..." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. May 12, 1944, p9; "Members of the council..." *Neighborhood News*. St. Louis, Missouri. March 12, 1960, p5.

¹²² "Here's a Quick Look at the Women's Auxillary..." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 7, 1959, p12.

¹²³ "Order Drawn in Store Sale." *Des Moines Tribune*. Des Moines, Iowa. January 8, 1932, p5.

Bertha Brill Schiff attended graduate school at the University of Washington, and later accompanied her husband and children to his job as a research scientist for the Navy in Maryland.¹²⁴ Kathryn Urqhart Simmons formed a small collective of military wives during World War I who volunteered with the Red Cross and supported each other while their husbands were deployed.¹²⁵ Lucille Daugherty Conway became a military wife and mother, deploying with her children and husband across the globe.¹²⁶ Elizabeth Lagaard James became a bit of a sensation when, in 1941, the Japanese occupied the Philippines, where she and her husband had been raising their two children. Believed dead or captured for three years, the James family finally smuggled a letter out in early 1945, reassuring their families that they had been hiding in the jungle for most of those years, where Mrs. James had been running a school for refugee children while her husband fought with the resistance forces.¹²⁷

Like many in their generations, some of the WAA members actively served in war time and a few even made careers out of it. Kathleen O'Brien Bowers was hired by the Council of National Defense during World War I to tour schools, educating children about the war effort.¹²⁸ Lieutenant Helen Sweat enlisted in the WAVES in World War II and was quickly promoted to senior officer at the WAVES training school at Oklahoma A and M.¹²⁹ Elma Troth Partridge began her career in the Naval Supply Depot and moved into the Social Security Administration in later years.¹³⁰

Nora Anderson Rosholt became a mother, farmer, and teacher who served as a precinct chairwoman for the Republican party and worked to try to solve the rural teacher shortage in Minnesota. She also volunteered with the Red Cross, the Farm Bureau and 4-H. In 1944 she ran for the legislature in a special election in Otter Tail County—had she won, she would have been the only woman to serve in that legislature. “Women are asked to take responsibility from the farm to the factory. Why shouldn’t they help make our laws?” she argued.¹³¹

Many former skaters went into teaching. Evelyn Andrews was a teacher at Hopkins High School, where she not only taught history but also coached basketball and was an assistant boys football coach. After retiring from teaching, she moved into social work for Hennepin and Anoka Counties. She lived the last 30 years of her life with Carolyn Robertson. When Andrews passed away in 1988 at the age of 92, Robertson made sure that the *Star Tribune* reported her joy at getting to see the Twins win the World Series.¹³²

Frances Ek taught math at Mechanics Arts High School and was a major supporter of St. Mary’s College alongside her mother.¹³³ May Kellerhals taught biology, also at Mechanic Arts, where she became notorious for

¹²⁴ “Miss Birdie Brill...” *The American Jewish World*. Saint Paul, Minnesota. December 31, 1920, p4; “Samuel A. Schiff dies; retired research chemist.” *The Baltimore Sun*. Baltimore, Maryland. November 23, 1982 p37.

¹²⁵ “Mrs. Donald B. Simmons...” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 17, 1918, p35; “Rumor comes from...” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*, September 1, 1917, p28.

¹²⁶ “Mrs. Myron J. Conway...” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 16, 1933, p11; “Captain, Mrs. Conway, Sons, to Sail Jan. 12.” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota, November 9, 1935, p24.

¹²⁷ “First Word in 3 Years from Kin in Philippines.” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 14, 1945, p13; “Liberated Family of 3 Holds Own Celebration.” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 9, 1945, p21.

¹²⁸ “University Students will Lecture on War.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 2, 1918, p10.

¹²⁹ “Two ‘U’ Graduates Sworn Into WAVES.” *The Minneapolis Star*. August 23, 1942, p4; “State Trained WAVES Assigned to Navy Head.” *Muskogee Daily Phoenix and Times Democrat*. Muskogee, Oklahoma. March 3, 1943, p7.

¹³⁰ “Elma J. Partridge.” *Ogden Standard Examiner*. Ogden, Utah. August 24, 1984, p2C.

¹³¹ “Mrs. Rosholt, Too.” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 30, 1944, p9; “Way Left Open for Women in Legislature.” *The Minneapolis Daily Times*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 1, 1944, p9.

¹³² “M. Evelyn Andrews; was teacher, social worker.” *Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 4, 1988, p28.

¹³³ “Anonymous SMC donors announced.” *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. May 21, 1971, p17.

the snake she kept in her classroom as a pet and object lesson in not giving into fears.¹³⁴ Agnes Gaughan taught in Redwood County.¹³⁵ Vivian Holmgren Hanbury taught English at Marshall High School.¹³⁶ Milla Kara Jacobsen Garrettson taught English in Austin, MN.¹³⁷ Peterine McKay Desannoy—who went by Julia in later life—taught high school in Bricelyn and Tower, MN and also worked as a librarian and bookkeeper over the years.¹³⁸ Elizabeth Hoy John taught elementary school in Browerville, and continued teaching through the births of her six children and raising her niece.¹³⁹ Rose Helen Hoy Holland taught band at Nokomis Junior High until the 1930s, when she was asked to leave to make room for a man to have the job.¹⁴⁰ Dr. Elizabeth Nissen was a professor of Italian and French at the University of Minnesota and according to her obituary was the first woman to be made a full professor there.¹⁴¹ Ada Pankow Sims taught physical education in Milwaukee for six years before her marriage.¹⁴² Hazel Patten taught physical education at Central High School and coached boy's baseball at Longfellow Elementary.¹⁴³ After serving as a nurse in World War I, Mary Smith Hughart went on to teach in several states, including Alaska.¹⁴⁴ Ingeborg Sund Sjoldal taught at Bethel College.¹⁴⁵ Gertrude Wellisch was both a teacher at Harding High School and a part time lighthouse keeper on Lake Superior.¹⁴⁶

Sara Bashefkin Ryder spent her entire life advocating for women and children. She was an English teacher and later principal at Davis, Edgemoor, Bancroft, and Randolph Heights schools, where she kept closets of food and warm clothing to make sure her students never went without. A product of a poor Jewish family in the West Side Flats, she wrote a memoir of her youth in 1989. She was also instrumental in the teachers' strike of 1946, and testified before the legislature of the need for Minnesota teachers to have health insurance coverage, prompting the chairman to ask "Does anybody in this room have the temerity to refuse Sara Ryder?" When she died, her nieces and nephews made sure the *Star Tribune* knew that their adored aunt had played ice hockey for the University.¹⁴⁷

A significant number of the former puck chasers went into medicine. Dr. Harriet Bower Farnham practiced medicine in Glendale, California, for her entire life, alongside raising three daughters.¹⁴⁸ Dr. Harriet Anundsen went on to study medicine in Missouri and ended up in Monroe, Wisconsin, where she spent 45 years as an osteopathic physician and surgeon. She notoriously travelled around on a bicycle pulled by a team of dogs, and was an eccentric, beloved member of the community.¹⁴⁹ Bertha Fineman Horowitz became a bacteriologist for

¹³⁴ Fisher, Bernice. "Growing Up in Saint Paul." *Ramsey County History Vol 39.1*. Ramsey County Historical Society. Spring, 2004, p28-29.

¹³⁵ "Miss Agnes Gaughan..." *The Redwood Gazette*. Redwood Falls, Minnesota. December 5, 1928, p13.

¹³⁶ "Swedish Royalty Writes Teacher at Marshall High." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1938, p13.

¹³⁷ "Rotarians Entertain New Teachers Today at Club Luncheon." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. September 8, 1930, p4.

¹³⁸ "Julia Peterine Dessanoy." *The Mesabi Tribune*. Virginia, MN. January 12, 2010. Archived from the original at https://www.mesabibitribune.com/obituaries/julia-peterine-desannoy/article_73148a0b-4f15-5d7a-9ef6-9ee07d32402d.html Accessed 10/18/2024.

¹³⁹ In person interview with Jana Brown Patrick and Margaret McKenna Herrmann, Elizabeth Hoy's granddaughters. Prior Lake, Minnesota. May 21, 2025.

¹⁴⁰ Email with Jana Patrick, Rosehelen Hoy's great-niece, following up on a conversation with Rose's daughter Lenore. May 27, 2025.

¹⁴¹ "Nissen, Elizabeth." *The Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 10, 2001, p18.

¹⁴² "Ada Sims." *The Argus-Leader*. Sioux Falls, South Dakota. November 2, 1981, p18.

¹⁴³ "Write With Your Toes and Save Your Feet." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 4, 1927, p65; "Sub Hurler Wins Crown for Schiller." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 8, 1933, p21.

¹⁴⁴ "Women and War Work." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 6, 1918, p4; "Stevens Point Chapter NSDAR." *Stevens Point Journal*. Stevens Point, Wisconsin. June 24, 1994, p6.

¹⁴⁵ "Ingeborg Sund Sjoldal." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 29, 1966, p23.

¹⁴⁶ "Teacher Gets Summer Long Thrill." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 27, 1926, p15.

¹⁴⁷ "Sara Ryder, teacher, principal, and advocate, dies." *Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 10, 1992, p28; "Students Serve Coffee to Striking Teachers." *St. Cloud Times*. Saint Cloud, Minnesota. November 27, 1946, p1.

¹⁴⁸ "Dr. Harriet Bower Farnham." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 6, 1949, p25.

¹⁴⁹ "Dr. Harriet G. Anundsen is Dead at Age 79." *The Capital Times*. Madison, Wisconsin. March 23, 1973, p2.

the United States Public Health Service.¹⁵⁰ Dorothy Gasch worked as a dental hygienist.¹⁵¹ Dr. Grace Goldsmith did graduate work at Mayo, and became a famous nutritionist and professor of tropical medicine at Tulane University.¹⁵² Dr. Caroline Helmick began her medical career with the Red Cross during World War I, and later worked as a resident physician at both Carleton College in Northfield and at Duke University.¹⁵³ Dr. Magdalena Huchthausen Corr became the director of health for City schools in Riverside, California, and worked on accessibility issues for children with cerebral palsy.¹⁵⁴ Lydia Lux Wetzel was a haematologist at Veterans' Hospital in Minneapolis for 17 years, and went on to teach medical technology at the University of Minnesota.¹⁵⁵ Jane Sedgwick Pirkey became a famous nutritionist and food administrator for California State Institutions. She was responsible for designing a nutrition program for Folsom State Prison.¹⁵⁶

Gladys McHugh had always loved art, but also had a deep passion for biology, and wound up becoming a pioneer of medical illustration during her graduate studies at Johns Hopkins. Performing her own dissections, she developed the technique of painting each layer of a given organ onto acetate, enabling the reader to look through the layers as if they were participating in the dissection themselves.¹⁵⁷ *TIME* profiled her in 1944 and the Association of Medical Illustrators featured her work at their conference in 2021.¹⁵⁸

Some of the hockey girls went into other professional fields. Katherine Foot was a legal secretary and later a banker in Kalispell, Montana, as well as an incredibly active member of her community.¹⁵⁹ Roberta Hostetler became a lawyer and served as the legal advisor to the Minneapolis League of Women Voters.¹⁶⁰ Miriam Huhn was a researcher for the National Bureau of Economic Research.¹⁶¹ Goldie London became a regional director for Americanization work for immigrants in South Dakota.¹⁶² Eugenie Murphy was the employment manager of Hahne and Co. in Newark, New Jersey, where she met her lifelong friend and companion, Mary Weston, a fellow executive there.¹⁶³ She gave talks to local school girls about professional careers in business, and once participated in a record blood drive for the Red Cross.¹⁶⁴ Effie Norris Laplante led the Division of Libraries Cataloguing Section of the Chicago Board of Education for the bulk of her career, and eventually set up the Vandercook School of Music in Chicago.¹⁶⁵ Katherine Yerxa worked for the Minneapolis Public Library.¹⁶⁶ Mabel

¹⁵⁰ "Miss Bertha C. Fineman..." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 19, 1921, p55.

¹⁵¹ "For the annual national convention..." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 17, 1928, p51.

¹⁵² "35 Mayo Foundation Alumni to Be Cited at Convocation." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 12, 1964, p15; "Dr. Grace Goldsmith." *The Daily News*. New York, New York. April 29, 1975, p37.

¹⁵³ "Women and War Work." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 6, 1918, p4; "Dr Helmick Joins Carleton Faculty." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 10, 1935, p11; "Dr. Helmick, Duke Women's College Physician, Retires." *The Herald-Sun*. Durham, North Carolina. June 7, 1962, p19.

¹⁵⁴ "The Welcome Mat." *Riverside Daily Press*. Riverside, California. April 1, 1949, p9.

¹⁵⁵ "Mrs. Lydia L Wetzel, 71" *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 1, 1969, p15.

¹⁵⁶ "Surprise Menus Replace Stew, Beans at Folsom." *The Sacramento Union*. Sacramento, California. July 13, 1942, p1.

¹⁵⁷ "Career Pairs Scientific and Artistic Skills." *The Chicago Tribune*. Chicago, Illinois. November 25, 1945, p2.

¹⁵⁸ "Medicine: Peeling an Eye." *TIME*. February 7, 1944. Retrieved from the archives at <https://time.com/archive/6782244/medicine-peeling-an-eye/> Accessed 10/17/2024; "The Human Eye in Anatomical Transparency." AMI 2021 Virtual Annual Conference. <https://meetingarchive.ami.org/2021/gladys-mchugh/> Accessed 10/17/2024.

¹⁵⁹ "Katherine Foot, 77." *The Daily Inter Lake*. Kalispell, Montana. September 17, 1976, p2.

¹⁶⁰ "The chairmen of the Minneapolis..." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 5, 1938, p48.

¹⁶¹ "Miss Miriam Huhn..." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 8, 1926, p39.

¹⁶² "Aid Foreigner Plan of State." *The Argus-Leader*. Sioux Falls, South Dakota. August 30, 1919, p20.

¹⁶³ "Two Former Residents Killed in Auto Accident." *The Montclair Times*. Montclair, New Jersey. October 9, 1975, p6.

¹⁶⁴ "On Thursday, Miss Eugenie..." *The Montclair Times*. Montclair, New Jersey. April 7, 1955, p40; "Sixty Pints in One Hour Sets Blood Donors' Record." *The Montclair Times*. Montclair, New Jersey. March 1, 1945, p1.

¹⁶⁵ "Effie Laplante." *The Chicago Tribune*. Chicago, Illinois. November 27, 1997, p351.

¹⁶⁶ "The Nature of a Reunion..." *The Minneapolis Daily Times*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 18, 1946, p9.

Prothers Shoemaker began her career as a teacher but became a merchandiser for B. Altman and Co. in New York after her marriage.¹⁶⁷ Olga Wellberg Johnson became a popular interior decorator.¹⁶⁸

Dr. Betty Sullivan was a pioneer in the field of chemical engineering. Having studied in Paris with Madame Curie after graduation and returning to Minnesota for her PhD, she went on to become the chief chemist for Russell Miller Milling Company. She was a frequent award winner, and the first woman to receive the Garvan Medal from the American Chemical Society.¹⁶⁹

Quite a few of the athletes went on to champion women's sport at Universities, or other organizations, around the country. Florence Tenney furthered her studies in England at Bedford College, and taught at Columbia University in New York and later at the University of Minnesota. She considered physical education an important part of the nation's war time preparedness, and during World War II returned to England to serve with the Red Cross.¹⁷⁰ Professor Else Bockstruck stayed on at the University of Minnesota and taught women's physical education well into the 1960s.¹⁷¹ Agnes Jones Cashman did her Master's in physical education at Northwestern and stayed on as an associate professor and co-head of the physical education department.¹⁷² Dr. Dorothy Humiston spent most of her career heading the physical education department at the University of Denver, and co-wrote a book entitled *Fundamentals of Sport for Girls and Women* that outlined techniques for teaching a number of sports, and included extra information for instructing left-handed students.¹⁷³ Ruth Palmer was hired by the YWCA to run its swimming program in Minneapolis and spent time advocating for girls to learn to swim.¹⁷⁴ Virginia Pettigrew Perry was an instructor in Physical Education at the University of Minnesota in the 1940s.¹⁷⁵ Marion Shepard Mattern taught Physical Education at UCLA after her marriage.¹⁷⁶

Winifred Bailey was a professor who spent the last 13 years of her life as the head of physical education at Wellesley College in Wellesley, Massachusetts. A featured alumni in *The 1926 Gopher*, she was "an enthusiastic advocate of the democratic Western state university for undergraduate study." During her summers she returned to Ely, MN, where she was the director of Camp Kiwadinipi for a decade. There, she helped hundreds of girls swim, camp, hike, and canoe through both Girl Scouts and Camp Fire Girls. She died young, at the age of 41, in 1938. In one of the strangest coincidences in Minnesota hockey history, 36 years after her death, a group of men's hockey stars picked Camp Kiwadinipi as the site for their new boys' hockey summer camp. Doug Woog eventually took over the program, and hundreds of young men sharpened their hockey skills in the same place once run by one of Minnesota's first female ice hockey superstars.¹⁷⁷

¹⁶⁷ "Mabel Shoemaker." *The Madison Eagle*. Madison, New Jersey. October 29, 1981, p10.

¹⁶⁸ "Homes Campaign Attracts Crowds." *The Stoughton Courier-Hub*. Stoughton, Wisconsin. April 21, 1927, p1.

¹⁶⁹ Barrett, Pru. "Betty Sullivan." Mills Archive. June 2, 2021. <https://new.millsarchive.org/2021/06/02/betty-sullivan-1902-1999/> Accessed 10/18/2024.

¹⁷⁰ "Miss Tenney Returns from East and England." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 27, 1929, p7; "'U' Coeds Learn to Play Tennis During Winter." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 28, 1941, p34; "Only Service Women..." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 21, 1944, p7.

¹⁷¹ "Coeds achieve health and grace..." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 27, 1960, p140.

¹⁷² "Agnes Jones to be Bride." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota, May 23, 1940, p15.

¹⁷³ Humiston, Dorothy and Dorothy Michael. *Fundamentals of Sport for Girls and Women*. The Ronald Press Company, New York, 1965.

¹⁷⁴ "Y.W.C.A. Swimming Classes Are Extended for the Spring Season." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 14, 1926, p60; "Ruth Palmer Heads 'YW' Health Work." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 13, 1925, p44.

¹⁷⁵ "10 Recreational Leaders Off to St. Louis Meet." *The Minneapolis Daily Times*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 8, 1946, p7.

¹⁷⁶ "Bertha B. Shepard." *West Los Angeles Independent*. West Los Angeles, California. November 14, 1947, p6.

¹⁷⁷ "Winifred Bailey." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 8, 1938, p16; "Winifred Bailey, B.A. '19" *The 1926 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring, 1925, p107; "Camp Kiwadinipi Program, 1933." Alice Gortner Johnson Papers. Minnesota

Dr. Lenore Alway also stayed involved with women's sports, starting with a kittenball league in Hibbing in her early years as a high school teacher and eventually becoming the head of Physical Education at SUNY Cortland from 1941-1965, where the award for outstanding female physical education student teachers still bears her name.¹⁷⁸ During World War II she served in the Coast Guard as a SPAR.¹⁷⁹ Like many of her contemporaries, Alway opposed varsity sport for women out of concerns that it would cause women's sport to become elitist.¹⁸⁰

Gundborg Sund Andresen's athletic career at University was already impressive, given that she had miraculously survived being shot in the head during an incident of domestic violence in high school.¹⁸¹ She would go on to promote women's sport by example, becoming a regular figure of the sports columns in Minnesota. She won multiple golf and tennis championships, and eventually married one of the men's tennis champions of her era, Earling Andresen. They would play mixed doubles together throughout their lives.¹⁸²

Charlotte Fosberg never missed an opportunity to plug women's sports. Denied enlistment in World War II, as she was the only support for her mother, she spent the years getting her master's degree instead.¹⁸³ As the Program Supervisor for the Minneapolis Park Board for 43 years and a fabulously colorful character, she made sure that "in Minneapolis we have not forgotten the girls in favor of the men."¹⁸⁴ She brought women's golf, basketball, volleyball, skiing, skating, archery, tennis, softball, bowling, and hiking clubs to prominence throughout her career.¹⁸⁵ Interviewed constantly over the years, she often took opportunities to point out that, for example, women's softball drew "bigger crowds than the men's teams" did.¹⁸⁶ In 2000 she was one of 13 women inducted into the Gopher's women's athletic department Hall of Fame for significant achievement that pioneered women's athletics.¹⁸⁷

The Women's Athletic Association of the University of Minnesota promised and delivered with its ice hockey players. In the meantime, women's and girls' ice hockey in Minnesota would continue to survive, and eventually thrive.

Women's Athletic Association Intramural Ice Hockey Players, 1916-1932

149 of the players we were able to identify from this era can be found in the *Women's Athletic Association Intramural Ice Hockey Players 1916-1932.pdf* document.

Historical Society; "Kiwadinipi Sports Colony." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 31, 1974, p35; "Kiwadinipi Camp." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 11, 1989, p42.

¹⁷⁸ "Kittenball Leagues being Formed Throughout State." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 9, 1926, p35; "Six Physical Education Majors Receive Awards." *The Bulletin*. Issue 12. SUNY Cortland. Cortland, New York. March 8, 2010. <https://www2.cortland.edu/bulletin/issues/bulletin-09-10/bulletin-12--march-8.dot?expanded=true> Accessed 10/17/2024.

¹⁷⁹ "Only Service Women..." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 21, 1944, p7.

¹⁸⁰ "Cortland History Flashcards." <https://quizlet.com/446017261/cortland-history-flash-cards/> Accessed 10/17/2024.

¹⁸¹ "Girl's Assailant Arraigned." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 4, 1916, p3.

¹⁸² "Gundborg Sund Wins Riverside Net Title." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 18, 1925, p9; "Mrs. Gundborg Andresen." *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 1964, p20; "Clausen-Robinson Win Park Title." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 3, 1929, p14.

¹⁸³ Hengen, Bill. "43 Years Without A Pass." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 2, 1972, p31.

¹⁸⁴ "Softball Curves are not All on Ball." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 29, 1947, p37.

¹⁸⁵ "Girls Here Take Up Ancient Sport in Park Board Archery Club." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 2, 1928, p39; "Park Board Ice Clubs Start Season Saturday." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota, December 16, 1932, p23; "What Is It? It's People." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 23, 1966, p13; "Dinner Planned to honor Miss Fosberg." *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 21, 1972, p51.

¹⁸⁶ "Swinging Styles for Summer." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune Picture Magazine*. Minneapolis Minnesota. August 11, 1963, p161.

¹⁸⁷ "'U' Women to induct 13." *The Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 6, 2000, p36.

Dakota County Spotlight: Castle Rock's Clarice Gloa Lydia Kraft Nordvall

WAA Player 1918-1920

On January 16, 1897, 27-year-old local farmer Conrad Kraft and his 21-year-old wife, Catherine Ann "Kate" Sanders Kraft, welcomed their first child, Clarice Gloa Lydia Kraft, to their 40-acre farm in Castle Rock Township.¹⁸⁸ They lived at the parcel located near town hall, with members of the extended Kraft family.¹⁸⁹ While little is known of her childhood, she seems to have been an active child. On September 27, 1902, a little over a month after her sister Evelyn was born, she fell and broke her arm, marking her first appearance in the *Northfield News*.¹⁹⁰ Her youngest sister, Juanita, completed the family in 1915, and Clarice would remain close to them throughout her life, regularly visiting each other through the years.¹⁹¹

Clarice seems to have been clever, as her family opted to send her to board for high school in Farmington for the 1912-1913 school year.¹⁹² After the original Farmington school building was sold in 1913, Clarice switched instead to Northfield High School.¹⁹³ She graduated in the spring of 1916, and the yearbook gave her quote as "A mind not much the worse for wear."¹⁹⁴ In "The Seniors in Alphabet Land," a comic poem in the Literary section, her stanza reads "C is for Clarice, who's going on to college,/ There she expects to acquire much knowledge."¹⁹⁵

Outside of playing ice hockey and her skill as a skater, we can piece together a few things about her life during her college years. She had close friends, such as fellow Northfield High alum Kathryn Ripple, for whose wedding she served as attendant.¹⁹⁶ She regularly visited her family back in Castle Rock, and spent most winter holidays with them.¹⁹⁷ The January 30th, 1920, the *Northfield News* reported that she had recently broken her arm while skating—likely shortly after the January 24th WAA Carnival, as it would have made the press write-ups if it had happened at the carnival itself—which may explain why she doesn't appear on a tournament team that year.¹⁹⁸ She graduated with her Bachelor of Arts in Education that spring, and in the yearbook listed her activities as the YWCA and the Women's Self Governance Association.¹⁹⁹ After a summer of visits with friends, Clarice was hired by the school district in Dassel, Minnesota, where she spent the 1920-21 school year.²⁰⁰

¹⁸⁸ Dalby, John. Minnesota Cemetery Inscription Index, Select Counties [database on-line]. Provo, UT, USA: Ancestry.com Operations Inc, 2003. <https://www.ancestry.com/discoveryui-content/view/288713:3775> Accessed 10/19/2024

¹⁸⁹ 1900 Census. Castle Rock Township, Dakota County, Minnesota. Sheet 6, Family 107; Pinkney, B.F. *Plat of Castle Rock*. Township 113 North. Range 19 West. Section 16, Northwest ¼, South ½, North ½. 1896.

¹⁹⁰ "Clarice Kraft, oldest child..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. September 27, 1902, p3; Evelyn Margaretha Kraft Ehlers. Find a Grave. <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/74276947/evelyn-margaretha-ehlers> Accessed 10/19/2024.

¹⁹¹ 1920 Census. Castle Rock Township, Dakota County, Minnesota. Sheet 7A, Family 135; "Castle Rock Center: Mr. and Mrs. Glen Nordvall..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. November 14, 1924, p8; "Castle Rock Center: Juanita Kraft is spending..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. July 17, 1925, p8.

¹⁹² "Castle Rock Center: Miss Clarice Kraft spent..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. February 8, 1913, p7.

¹⁹³ Malloy, Theresa. "Farmington High School Through the Years." https://www.hometownsource.com/sun_thisweek/farmington-high-school-through-the-years/article_e0fa4da1-7c1a-5bdc-8a32-2f93a1a6390e.html Accessed 10/19/2024; "Castle Rock Center: Lydia and George..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. October 10, 1913, p6.

¹⁹⁴ "Clarice Kraft." *The Orange and Black Vol II*. Northfield High School. Northfield, Minnesota. May, 1916, p23.

¹⁹⁵ "The Seniors in Alphabet Land." *The Orange and Black Vol II*. Northfield High School. Northfield, Minnesota. May, 1916, p70.

¹⁹⁶ "Schrader-Ripple." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. November 16, 1917, p8.

¹⁹⁷ For a few of many examples: "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft is spending..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. January 4, 1918, p7; "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft of the university..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. January 3, 1919, p2; and "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft of the university..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. April 11, 1919, p9

¹⁹⁸ "Castle Rock Center: Several accidents..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. January 30, 1920, p9.

¹⁹⁹ "University of Minnesota Will Graduate Nine Hundred Students in Class of 1920." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 6, 1920, p19; "Clarice Kraft." *The 1920 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1919, p132.

²⁰⁰ "Castle Rock Center: The Misses Blanchard..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. September 3, 1920, p10; "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft has gone..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. September 17, 1920, p11; "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft is

We don't know the details of how they met, but in July of 1921, Glen William Nordvall visited Clarice in Castle Rock for the first of many visits he would make to her family over the next few years.²⁰¹ Glen was three years younger than Clarice, and was studying engineering at the University of Minnesota.²⁰² Their romance continued as Clarice was hired at Hastings High School, where she would remain on the Faculty lists through the '23-'24 school year.²⁰³ On a cold but clear Saturday, March 15, 1924, Clarice and Glen were married in Saint Paul.²⁰⁴

The Nordvalls' first child, a daughter named Lois Elaine, was born in 1927. They lived in Minneapolis' 12th Ward, in a nice family home not far from Lake Nokomis, where Clarice was working as a dressmaker as well as a homemaker.²⁰⁵ Their son, David, was born in 1933.²⁰⁶ The family raised German shorthaired pointers, the dogs began winning show trials in the mid-1940s.²⁰⁷ One particular dog, Ace Von Schwarenborg, became briefly famous in 1948 because he had befriended an injured duck. "Quacky" and Ace lived with the family in their home.²⁰⁸ They celebrated Lois' marriage that same year.²⁰⁹

On March 15, 1950, Clarice Kraft Nordvall passed away at the age of 53, survived by her husband, children, sisters, and mother.²¹⁰ She was buried near her father in Castle Rock Valley Cemetery.²¹¹

entertaining..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. June 24, 1921, p7. (A later article--"Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft, who teaches..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. February 18, 1921, p7—suggests this was Dawson, MN, instead, but others that record Dassel before and after—like "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft of Dassel..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. April 1, 1921, p8—suggest this was in error.)

²⁰¹ For some examples: "Castle Rock Center: Glen Nordvall of St. Paul..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. July 1, 1921, p8. "Castle Rock Center: Glen Nordvall of St. Paul..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. July 22, 1921, p6. "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft of Hastings..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. January 6, 1922, p7. "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft is at home..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. June 16, 1922, p11. "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft of Hastings..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. February 23, 1923, p13.

²⁰² "Glen Nordvall." *The 1923 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1922, p580.

²⁰³ Hastings High School Faculty and Alumni Lists. Dakota County Historical Society Collections.

²⁰⁴ "Daily Data Table: ST PAUL - Station ID: 217377, 3/15/1924-03/15/1924." Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/climate/historical/daily-data.html?sid=217377&sname=ST%20PAUL&sdate=1924-03-15&edate=1924-03-15> Accessed 10/23/2024; "Castle Rock Center: Clarice Kraft, daughter of..." *Northfield News*. Northfield, Minnesota. March 21, 1924, p25.

²⁰⁵ 1930 Census. 12th Ward, Block 202. Minneapolis, Hennepin County, Minnesota. Sheet 4a, Family 66.

²⁰⁶ "Births" *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 2, 1933, p20.

²⁰⁷ MacGaheeran, Joe. "Mostly About Dogs." *The Minneapolis Daily Times*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 24, 1946, p16.

²⁰⁸ "Wild Mallard Follows Pointer Pal Everywhere." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 30, 1948, p24.

²⁰⁹ "Lee-Nordvall." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 2, 1948, p63.

²¹⁰ "Services for Mrs. Clarice Nordvall." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 16, 1950, p51.

²¹¹ Clarice Gloa Kraft Nordvall." Find a Grave. https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/126583873/clarice_gloa_nordvall Accessed 10/23/2024.

First Intermission: The First Girl(s)...Again.

Surrounding and following the University intramural years, women and girls played hockey all over Minnesota. The brief notes that made the papers again hint at a much broader women's hockey culture than what was considered newsworthy.

As the University women started training in 1916, Duluth recreation director J.R. Batchelor organized a grade school girls' league in Duluth, that ran through at least 1919.²¹² When the University coeds were holding their first tournament in 1917, girls were playing hockey at Logan Park "mornings, noons, and nights," right alongside the boys.²¹³ The Dakota County Historical Society collections includes a locally purchased 1916 commencement book in which women's ice hockey was the sole illustration for the "Athletics" page, indicating its commonality.²¹⁴ In 1918 the "tomboy of the past [was] the graceful athletic girl of today," and socialites like Frances Van Tilberg were known to play ice hockey when home on their winter breaks from schools back East.²¹⁵ In 1921, a collective of store clerks in Duluth put together a petition for the formation of a girls' industrial hockey league to the city's recreation department.²¹⁶ A team and practice squad were formed, and the initial players included manager Estelle Ransbottom, alongside Gladys Nicholson, Dorothy Jones, Louise Cyr, Helen Sugars, Anna Mae La Flamme, Henrietta Olsen, Gladys Pero, Elsie Seaberg, Margaret Wares, Doris Thorstad, Mildred Almstrom, and Martha Palm.²¹⁷

In Minneapolis, Bernice Sweatt, Alice Wheelwright, Dorliska Lewis, and Evelyn and Katherine Searle, all young members of the Minikahda Club, were reported organizing an ice hockey team to take on another team that had been formed in St. Paul in 1922.²¹⁸ Meanwhile, in Eveleth, the local high school girls organized a team, apparently in response to Duluth "recently" starting "the first girl's hockey team in the United States," composed of Helen Cerveney at goal, Julia Burke at right defense, captain Julia Ross at left defense, Rose Grancel at right wing, Helen Weisel at left wing, and Doris Walton at center. Other girls practicing with the team included Eva Baldi, Jane Carleson, Florence Smith, Lydia Saarikoski, Lila Saari, Bernice Seigel, and Lucinda Mulligan.²¹⁹

On January 27, 1923, a team of Duluth girls from the Longview Club took on a boys team for "the first time in the history of the city when a girl's hockey team has played against boys." The team was comprised of captain Ann Andrews at center, Ellen Wearne at left defense, L.F. Brewer at right defense, Lucy Locker at left wing, Mary Horr at right wing, Marie Louise Hanson at goal, and Helen Zachow, subbing.²²⁰ In 1925 Duluth was also still fielding at least two women's industrial teams, as the Wasps, led by Winifred McHale of Minnesota Power and Light, and the Bumblebees, led by Cecilia Morriseau of *The Herald*, were set to play their finals match on March

²¹² "Organizes Hockey Club for Girls." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 12, 1916, p2; "Batchelor's Vacation Ends." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. September 16, 1919, p13.

²¹³ "Everybody Goes There." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 11, 1917, p11.

²¹⁴ Boynton, Elizabeth F. *A Girl's Commencement: Rosebud Memories*. 5th Edition, 1916. DCHS Collections. This copy was owned by Reine Withy, née Pino, who graduated in 1917 from Central High School in St. Paul, Minnesota, and filled in with signatures and notes from kids in the classes of 1917, 1918, and 1919.

²¹⁵ Taaffe, Lillian E. "Graceful Athletes Among Members of Younger Society Set." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota, March 3, 1918, p33.

²¹⁶ "Girls Would Organize." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. November 26, 1921, p14.

²¹⁷ "Two Girls Hockey Teams to be Formed." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. November 30, 1921, p2.

²¹⁸ "Out-of Door Sports Make Up for Dearth in Entertainment." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 22, 1922, p29.

²¹⁹ "Girls Organize High School Hockey Team." *The Eveleth News*. Eveleth, Minnesota. January 19, 1922, p9.

²²⁰ "Longview Girls to compete with Boys in Hockey Past Time." *The Duluth Herald*, Duluth, Minnesota. January 26, 1923, p23.

20th, between the periods of the men's city finals.²²¹ Two "leading" girls' teams, the Skyrockets and the Arrows, were asked to play an exhibition game for the Duluth Kiwanis Ice Classic in 1925 as well.²²²

In January of 1926 a highly publicized girls hockey game between the "Logan Lassies"—which was a girl's sporting club at Minneapolis' Logan Park field house—and the "Logan Cubs" was announced for the Winter Sports Carnival, but was uncovered as a ruse—both teams were apparently Logan Park juniors in drag.²²³ Later that winter, however, the *Minneapolis Star* was willing to print the team photos of the two women's Minneapolis Arena teams. Vera "Chic" Stolte, Violet Evans, Myrtle Johnson, Ruth Botts, Mildred Bjock, and Irene Heier played for Team No. 1, also identified in a game report as the "Chics;" and Elsie Stodola, Blanche Stodola, Ruby Peterson, Hazel Bolstad, Grace Hedlund, and Mildred Broms placed for Team No. 2, also identified as the "Roosters."²²⁴ Ruby Peterson may be the same Ruby Peterson who played for the University in 1920—the pictures we have are believably of the same woman—but we could not confirm her identity. She did, however, score an initial goal for the Roosters in an exhibition game played during the intermissions of a Minneapolis-Winnipeg men's game on February 22, 1926. Elsie Stodola scored the game-winning goal for the Roosters in the second period.²²⁵ At least some combination of women from these two teams played the 1925-'26 University of Minnesota coeds in a charity game in March to benefit paralyzed West High School football player Bud Henderson.²²⁶ The arena teams also played for certain in 1927, and the announcements for two of Vera Stolte's marriages—in 1930 and 1934—made note of her time as the team captain. *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune* in 1934 specifically said that "the bride will be remembered as an outstanding ice skater and former captain of the Minneapolis girls' hockey team."²²⁷

Both Duluth's Longview Girls and at least one of the Industrial teams were still playing in 1926, when a reporter apparently needed to fill half an inch, and made a brief report that the Longview Girls beat Minnesota Power and Light Co. 6-0, with Virginia Grady scoring 4 goals, and Katherine Cosgrove and Ruth Gall one each.²²⁸ There were at least three ladies' teams playing that year—and probably more—as a team from the Woodland Community Center and the Longview team were considered the two "best" girl's sextets.²²⁹ The Woodland Community Center itself had significant turnout, as the Woodland Winter Carnival fielded two teams of girls' hockey at the Cobb rink each year from 1926-1931, with captains Olive Kolstad and Evelyn Martin named as heading exhibition teams in 1926.²³⁰ Hibbing also may have had a women's league in 1926, as they had indicated

²²¹ "Hockey Games End this Week so Society Must Revise." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 18, 1925, p13.

²²² "Kiwanis Ice Klassic Pleases." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 7, 1925, p6.

²²³ "Scamper to Warming House." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 1926, p12.

²²⁴ "Girls Hockey Teams will Clash at Arena on Monday Night" *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 1926, p15.

²²⁵ "Roosters 'Outpeck' Chicks in Girls' Hockey Game t Arena and Win, 2-0." *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1926, p16.

²²⁶ "Girl Hockey Teams Will Take Part in Benefit Contest." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 20, 1926, p16.

²²⁷ "Girls Hockey Teams to Play Game Wednesday." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 8, 1927, p11; "Vera Stolte is married." *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 29, 1934, p38; "Mr. and Mrs. CW Stolte..." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 28, 1930, p17.

²²⁸ "Longview Girls Win." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 30, 1926, p6.

²²⁹ "Girls Team in Tie." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 5, 1926, p29.

²³⁰ "Woodland Girl Hockey Sextets to Play Friday." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 4, 1926, p15; "Woodland Winter Carnival Saturday: Many Big Events." *The Duluth Herald*. February 13, 1928, p14; "Seventeen Fancy Skaters to Show on Woodland Card." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 11, 1927, p26; "Woodland Club will Have Fine Ice Carnival." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 4, 1927, p26; "Woodland Club Ice Carnival is Grand Success." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 10, 1930, p19; "Woodland Club Puts Over Best Ice Carnival." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 2, 1931, p14.

the intention to field four teams made up of young career women and divided into teachers, nurses, business women, and a set of society ladies from Chisholm.²³¹

In 1929, the city of Duluth organized two city and county employee women's teams for Sports Week, the "Municipal Marvels," and the "Library Wildcats." Captain Mildred Hurd, Celia Walt, Irene Daugherty, Verna Lindquist, Bess Branscombe, Eva Shearsmith, Margaret Kielly, Lucille Strom, Dorothy Grochau and Ingrid Bouveng practiced for the Wildcats. Captain Stella Weirich, Ethel Schaeffer, Ruth Williams, Mabel Matthews, Anna Erickson, Ann Morgan, Ethel Brown, Aileen Forsman, Eleanor McKibbin, and Grace Schuett practiced for the Marvels.²³² In 1930 some formation of these women's teams were playing in the intermissions of the men's games, as advertised in the *Herald*.²³³ Girls playing hockey was clearly normalized in Duluth, as in 1930 13-year-old Doris Carlson won a dollar for her short story "How Babs Saved the Day," about a new girl at school struggling to make friends, who rescues the school's girls hockey team by uncovering a plot by a rival school's team to steal their signals, and re-strategizing with the tricks she uses playing with her brother's team.²³⁴

Carleton College had coed hockey in Northfield by 1930.²³⁵ In 1932 Albert Lea had a girl's roller hockey league, with at least two teams and "teamwork equal to the boys teams."²³⁶ In 1933, Two Harbors announced the "first ever organized here" girls hockey team—27 years after the 1906 team—with Ruth Beddie coaching and at least one game versus the boys organized.²³⁷ That same year Eveleth was claiming to have one of the few girls' ice hockey leagues in the country, with multiple games occurring weekly and "rousing receptions" from fans, though almost no news coverage.²³⁸ It likely existed throughout the '30s, however, as an article in 1939 about the boys' leagues casually mentioned that the girls' teams championship schedule would also be set.²³⁹ In 1935 Duluth's Riverside Community Club featured girls' hockey for its Winter Frolic.²⁴⁰ The Eveleth Hippodrome schedule for February 4, 1939, lists a ladies' hockey game happening from 7:30-10:30pm.²⁴¹ Walt Gerzin, of the Crookston Pirates, was reportedly coaching a local girls' team in Crookston in 1940.²⁴²

Also in 1940 came a backhand reference to the prevalence of girls' playing pick-up hockey, in the plight of Loretta Galvin, assistant director of women's activities for the Minneapolis Parks Board. So many little girls wanted to play hockey on the "big boy's" rinks that she was reportedly lying awake at nights unable to sleep over it. Her solution was an "original" game called "snow hockey," which resembled broomball, but was played on snowy fields instead of the ice. At least 66 girls came out to play, as they had enough girls to organize a formal league of 11 teams, in addition to the kids playing casually. Galvin admitted it was a "screwy game," but "keeps the girls off hockey rinks, anyway [...] and yet it satisfies the competitive spirit hockey engenders."²⁴³

²³¹ "Hibbing Planning Two More Hockey Leagues." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 28, 1925, p10.

²³² "City and County Groups Prepare for Sports Week." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 1, 1929, p7.

²³³ "Hockey Tonite [sic]" Advertisement. *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 13, 1930, p2.

²³⁴ Carlson, Doris. "Prize Story: How Babs Saved the Day." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. April 26, 1930, p8. While the story doesn't specify ice, boys didn't typically play field hockey, so the use of tricks from her brother's team indicates ice hockey.

²³⁵ "Women Tumblers to Get Final Tryouts at School." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. December 24, 1929, p21.

²³⁶ "Local Girls Hockey Teams Play First Game: Six Shooters Win." *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. January 14, 1932, p10.

²³⁷ "Two Harbors Ice Carnival Sunday." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 3, 1933, p22.

²³⁸ "Eveleth Claims Only Girls' Hockey Team." *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. February 20, 1933, p12; Of the 38 editions of *The Eveleth News* in 1933 that mention hockey, none appear to reference the girl's league. The closest is a mention in "Here, There and Everywhere" by "Eddie" on November 30th that hockey is the favorite pastime of all "residents," a potentially intentional gender-neutral term.

²³⁹ "Post-Season Games Slated for All-Star Sextets." *The Eveleth News*. Eveleth, Minnesota. March 9, 1939, p7.

²⁴⁰ "Mixed Events will Feature Winter Frolic." *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 4, 1935, p9.

²⁴¹ "The Sports News" Column. *The Eveleth News*. Eveleth, Minnesota. February 2, 1939, p4.

²⁴² Markson, Bob. "Listen" Column. *The St. Cloud Times*. Saint Cloud, Minnesota. January 27, 1940, p8.

²⁴³ Connor, Jack. "Now It's Snow Hockey!" *The Minneapolis Times-Tribune*. January 19, 1940, p25.

Dorothy Tenney, who worked with the Minneapolis Park System under Charlotte Fosberg, may have been part of the problem, as at some point between 1936 and the 1940s she organized a girls' ice hockey team at Camden Park that took on boys' teams.²⁴⁴

In 1941 Richfield announced that its Ice Carnival would include girls' hockey in the evening program, and Donna LaCroix was photographed as part of the publicity in her hockey uniform and gear.²⁴⁵ No report of the game seems to have been produced, but the carnival did attract 10,000 fans.²⁴⁶ In 1942, 14-year-old Joyce Ellersich of Eveleth put out a call, reported by Halsey Hall, for a boys team to take her on, as she found the girls' teams not competitive enough.²⁴⁷ *The Eveleth Clarion* had more on her story—the boys did not want to sign her, as they were afraid she'd outshine them, something she'd done on "many occasions already." Apparently, the year before, she'd challenged a boys' sextet sponsored by Ronald Drobniak—presumably with a team of girls, though the article is not clear—and trounced the boys' team 6-0.²⁴⁸

In 1951, Bonnie Shea joined the boys at Congdon Park on their bantam team, as the "first girl to play organized hockey in Duluth." She played for eight years, until she was recruited by the coach at East High School. East High's principal, horrified, banned girls from playing hockey specifically to stop her joining the varsity team.²⁴⁹ By 1956, Halsey Hall had apparently forgotten he'd written about Joyce Ellersich, as he reported that 12-year-old Judy Westby—the little sister of the Minnesota hockey famous Westby brothers—was the "first girl hockey player to cause a protested game" when her Pillsbury House Midget team beat Sibley 3-0 in the Park League. Sibley challenged the game on the grounds that the Park league rules said "boys' teams," and Judy's presence meant it was not a legitimate boys' sextet. The league allowed the game to stand, but banned Judy permanently. She responded by saying that while she felt bad about losing her "only chance to play hockey," she planned to still play football.²⁵⁰ She was also selling herself short: among other amazing successes in sports and life, Judy Westby Jungwirth would go on to play in the earliest years of the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota (WHAM), as would Bonnie Shea. Both women have helped to grow the game for other girls and women and still play to this day.²⁵¹

The year 1960 saw International Falls claiming to have "the nation's first organized girl's hockey program." The league had started with the parks department finally allowing pickup games in 1958—after apparent non-stop

²⁴⁴ "Dorothy Frances Tenney" Legacy Remembers. September 19, 2004.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/legacyremembers/dorothy-tenney-obituary?id=26955621> Accessed 1/9/2026; "Girls compete in floor tests." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 13, 1936, p22; a note on Dorothy Tenney: while she and her sister Florence Tenney (later Baker) were both celebrated athletes at North High School and later in life, they do not seem to be related to the Florence Tenney of West High School who played ice hockey at the University in 1926 when the Tenney sisters were just starting high school. The ice hockey rosters from the 1930s have not been found, and both Tenney sisters were skaters, so it is entirely possible they were also hockey players at the University.

²⁴⁵ "Richfield Puts on Ice Carnival Sunday." *The Minneapolis Times-Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 1941, p21; "Skate at Fete." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 22, 1941, p2.

²⁴⁶ "10,000 See Northfield Winter Ice Carnival." *The Minneapolis Times-Tribune*. January 27, 1941, p20.

²⁴⁷ Hall, Halsey. "It's a Fact" Column. *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 20, 1942, p18.

²⁴⁸ Elkin. "Sports Shorts" Column. *The Eveleth Clarion*. Eveleth, Minnesota. January 8, 1942, p3.

²⁴⁹ Cowardin, David. "I'll play til I can't." *UMD News*. March 15, 2023. <https://news.d.umn.edu/articles/bonnie-shae-2023>. Accessed 8/30/2025.

²⁵⁰ Hall, Halsey. "Hockey for Men Only? Judy, 12, Stars at It." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 19, 1956, p44.

²⁵¹ "From the Weedpatch in South Minneapolis..." Minneapolis Hockey Hall of Fame. February 9, 2017.

https://www.mpls-hockey.com/news_article/show/755557-from-the-weedpatch-in-south-minneapolis Accessed 11/8/2024; Blount, Rachel. "At 68, she's on trail she helped to blaze." *The Star Tribune*. January 31, 2012. <https://www.startribune.com/blount-at-68-she-s-on-trail-she-helped-to-blaze/138369304> Accessed 11/8/2024; In person interview with Sue Ring-Jarvi. Roseville, Minnesota. May 6, 2025; Cowardin, David. "I'll play til I can't." *UMD News*. March 15, 2023. <https://news.d.umn.edu/articles/bonnie-shae-2023>. Accessed 8/30/2025.

pestering by local girls asking for ice time—and then a formal four-team league in 1960, with the Eighth Street Hot Shots winning the league. Frank “Butch” Larson, the former hockey All-American from the University of Minnesota, coached for a team including his daughter, Mary Larson, at goal. Other known players included Sandy Cronkhite, Carol Ahlstrom, Charmay Lonergan, Terry Cousineau, Iris Phair, Julie Burnette, and Sandy Olson. Richard Hougland and Larry Roche, who played for the Falls High School boys team, were referees for the league, alongside recreation director Bill Howard.²⁵²

Burnsville High School held a powder-puff hockey game for the first big event of Snow Week on January 31, 1967, with two teams. A photo of the event suggests it was a combination of broomball and hockey, as it was played on skates, but with a ball rather than a puck.²⁵³ The game was played again in 1968, still on skates, while Farmington High School had traditional broomball—without skates—at their Sno-Days that year.²⁵⁴ Robbinsdale High School held a boy versus girl ice hockey game for their 1968 Sno-Week.²⁵⁵

The 1950s and ‘60s did see some broader pushback against girls playing. Unlike the regular ads for both club and hockey skates for both genders, that had run since at least 1906, the ‘50s and ‘60s saw stores like Dayton’s and Centennial Hardware shifting their advertising to “figure skates for the girls,” and “hockey skates for the rugged boy.”²⁵⁶ In a lovely bit of irony, Gary Olson began his November 9, 1969, column by bemoaning that any opinion he expressed would be wrong before he published.²⁵⁷ After discussing various men’s teams, he ended the column by referencing Michigan’s Karen Koch playing goalie for the Marquette Iron Rangers, though he did not bother to name her. He declared, “I have played hockey and am a firm believer that it is no place for a member of the fair sex,” and made a few cracks about the Marquette equipment team having to buy her lipstick.²⁵⁸ Naturally, like the six decades of women who came before them, there were girls in the wings in Dakota County just waiting for their chance to prove him wrong.

²⁵² Associated Press. “Hockey Isn’t for Men Only, Now Girls Take Over.” Printed in *The St. Cloud Times*. Saint Cloud, Minnesota. January 28, 1960, p20; Swan, Roy. “Girls Play a Man’s Game.” *The Minneapolis Sunday Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 28, 1961, p30 and 31.

²⁵³ “Snow Week Planned at Burnsville HS.” *The Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 26, 1967, p13C; “One girl hits the ice...” *The Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 9, 1967, p6C.

²⁵⁴ “Fun on the ice...” *The Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 15, 1968, p1E; “‘Sno-Days’ to Liven Winter Doldrums.” *The Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 22, 1968, p1B-2B.

²⁵⁵ “Robbinsdale Clubs Prepare for Sno-Week.” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 20, 1968, p16.

²⁵⁶ For just a small number of examples of the early style of advertising: “W.K. Morrison & Co.” Ad. *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 27, 1906, p3; “Given Hardware Co.” Ad. *The Bemidji Daily Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. December 17, 1912, p11; “Given Hardware Co.” Ad. *The Bemidji Daily Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. November 25, 1921, p2; “Sears Roebuck and Co.” Ad. *The Duluth Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 5, 1930, p13; “Still Plenty of Gifts at Firestone” Ad. *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. December 20, 1943, p7. For the later style, see: Cleveland’s “It’s Skating Time” Ad. *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. December 13, 1950, p16; “Centennial Hardware Sports” Ad. *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. December 6, 1969, p4; “Jubilee Price Busters” Dayton’s Ad. *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 20, 1967, p19.

²⁵⁷ This comment was in reference to disparaging comments he’d made in his previous column about Murray Warmath, that had been undermined by Warmath’s performance the night before the column was published. It manages to apply to everything else in the column as well, however.

²⁵⁸ Olson, Gary. “Column.” *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. November 9, 1969, p20.

Second Period: Should a Defensewoman Cry? Backchecking is Better.

In later years, Louis Schmitz and his family would remember having girls' hockey in Farmington as early as 1965. Mr. Schmitz, a father of five boys and four girls, founded the Farmington Youth Hockey Association in 1954. He stepped up to organize and coach the boys who were casually playing at the outdoor Farmington Youth Commission rink, which he and his wife Jean maintained.²⁵⁹ His attitude to coaching was both inclusive and expansive, explaining that "Kids are 99 percent good. I love them all. Why not give them a chance to enjoy something?"²⁶⁰ While no contemporary paper record of a formally organized girls' team prior to 1970 has been found, Louis Schmitz did reach out through the *Dakota County Tribune* in 1966 specifically to encourage girls' organizations to book ice time.²⁶¹ Former players from the era, including women, remember him gathering up any child hanging out at the rink for practice, making it completely plausible that he had already begun recruiting girls into games and practices as early as 1965.²⁶²

Without a doubt, however, Farmington had girls' hockey by 1970. In an unsourced newspaper clipping marked only "1970" in the Korsman family scrapbook, Coach Schmitz announced that they had enough girls for three teams, and were issuing a challenge to any takers. The announcement requested that challengers, preferably but not exclusively other girls' teams, "hurry before the ice is gone," suggesting that it may have been from late February or March of 1970. Eighteen girls were photographed in a wide variety of gear with Coach Schmitz. Those early players included Toni Carey, Connie Corcoran, Mary Fisher, Susan Gilbertson, Terri Gilbertson, Susan Korsman, Cindy Krubsack, Karen Maki, Lynn Orndorff, Robin Raymond, Diane Satriano, Christine "Chris" Schmitz, Shelly Schmitz, Julie Simonsen, Pam Siple, Diane Thelen, Wendy Weierke, and Shelly Youngkrantz.²⁶³ Organizing and funding a formal girls team was also on the agenda of the December 7, 1970 meeting of the Hockey Booster Club of Farmington, suggesting that interest in, and the need for such a team was already established.²⁶⁴ While no follow-up was found, the girls were certainly casually playing, at the very least, that year. Meanwhile, on the northern side of the metro, roughly thirty girls in the Mounds View school district began a girls' program in the Lake Region intracity league in January of 1971, under the coaching of Jerry Smith and Pete Paulos.²⁶⁵

1971-1972

By December of 1971, the Farmington team for girls was fully organized. On the same schedule that signups for boys were announced, girls from seventh to twelfth grade were instructed to either register at the rink or call the Schmitz family's number to sign up for the girl's team, with a plan in place pending numbers for a league that would "play during the week just as the boys do."²⁶⁶ The *Dakota County Tribune* didn't opt to cover their games or mention their competitors, but did post a photo of 20 of the 31 players at the end of the season. The

²⁵⁹ Louis Schmitz Foundation. "About." <https://louisschmitzfoundation.org/about-donations/> Accessed 1/4/2025; "Rink Now Back in Shape." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 24, 1966, p7A; "Figure Skating Offered in Farmington." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 9, 1965, p9B.

²⁶⁰ "Farmington Hockey Team Subject of Newspaper Article." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 12, 1970, p8B.

²⁶¹ "Skating Rink Schedule is Set Up." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 22, 1966, p5B.

²⁶² Fleming, Jess. "Farmington coach, mentor Louis Schmitz dies at 85." *Twin Cities Pioneer Press*. Saint Paul, Minnesota. November 9, 2015. <https://www.twincities.com/2012/01/04/farmington-coach-mentor-louis-schmitz-dies-at-85/> Accessed 1/4/2025; Phone interview with Sue Korsman. South St. Paul, Minnesota. September 26, 2024.

²⁶³ "Ready or Not!! Girl's Hockey Season Starts." Unsourced newspaper clipping hand-labeled 1970 and pasted in to the Korsman family scrap book prior to clippings verified as early 1971. The clipping uses multiple fonts as well as a typical *Dakota County Tribune* ad border, and may have been a supplemental ad that was not preserved in the transition to microfiche. In addition, the presence of Louis' daughter Shelly Schmitz, but not her sisters Lisa and Jody, who played in '71-'72, lends credence to placing the clipping before that year.

²⁶⁴ "Hockey Booster Club Officers for 70-71." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 3, 1970, p12B.

²⁶⁵ "Powder Puffs Not In Their Equipment." *Minneapolis Star*. January 16, 1971, p16A.

²⁶⁶ "Hockey for Girls is Planned." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 16, 1971, p7D.

intent to properly support the team from the previous year was clearly successful, as the girls all wore matching Farmington uniforms. The paper called them “one of the most enthusiastic groups Farmington has had,” and noted that it was their first “active” year, and their record for the season was 5-1-1. All eighteen girls who had played in ‘70-’71 returned, and were joined by Peggy Bauer, Diane Duff, Peggy Fettig, Betsy Gorgos, Penny Grove, Patty Jenson, Chris Knutson, Dawn Lindberg, Cheryl Magnuson, Jody Schmitz, Lisa Schmitz, Sherrie Steele, and Karen Summers.²⁶⁷ Coach Schmitz’s youngest daughter, Lisa, was six-years old at the time, suggesting that they had opened the group to all ages. She was likely an outlier, however, as the paper gave her a special feature a week later as “Dakota county’s youngest hockey star.”²⁶⁸

The *Dakota County Tribune* did report on a Mother-Daughter game that was held on Sunday, February 27, 1972, where the “Farmington All Stars”—made up of girls from the regular season team—took on the “Golden Girls”—made up of mothers, women from the community, and at least one older sister. Nancy Bauer, Patti Gilbertson, Joanne Gorgos, Judy Kirchner, Delores Maki, Betty Mohn, Bev Schmitz, Jeanne Simpson, Shirley Tix, Marge Weierke, and Charlotte Wieben joined team Manager Lucille Korsman, Coach Schmitz’ wife Jean, and the oldest Schmitz daughter Sandy for the Golden Girls. From the pictures, the women appear to have arrived in matching uniforms. In a game marked by ruthless goal tending and blocking on the part of the All Stars defense, the Golden Girls took a thorough beating from their daughters, nieces, friends, and little sisters, losing 11-1. By the end of the game things got silly—including one of the older women reverting to her softball skills and pitching the puck into the net by hand—but momentum and community support for the girls was clearly building.²⁶⁹

While no real time coverage was found of Farmington’s competitors in the seven games they played in ‘71-’72, Burnsville, Lakeville, and White Bear Lake were later recalled by the Korsman family as the first four teams in the Twin Cities Girls’ Hockey League.²⁷⁰ The Lake Region girls’ program that had begun in January 1971 would begin showing up in game reports in ‘72-’73, so were likely still playing intracity games in ‘71-’72.²⁷¹ Roughly 6 years later, Marlys Broberg would cite her daughters’ dismay, at the ages of 11 and 13, that there weren’t opportunities for them as the reason she started that program, placing Burnsville’s beginning between around 1971.²⁷² The formation of a Burnsville Hockey Booster Auxiliary in October of 1972 to support the already existent girls and boys programs also suggests that a team was playing the season prior.²⁷³ The Lakeville Athletic Association (LAA) acknowledged the interest in girl’s hockey in the Fall of 1972, and promised a survey on the subject, but an independent team unrecognized by the association could easily have existed prior to that date.²⁷⁴ Farmington, Burnsville, Lakeville, and White Bear Lake would all go on to play in verified games in ‘72-’73, though three other city teams also played in the league that year, making the year of only four in-league teams likely ‘71-’72.²⁷⁵

1972-1973

While conversations around gender equality in sports had been happening in Minnesota for some time—the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) had put an op-ed in local papers in December of 1971 bragging

²⁶⁷ “Girls’ Hockey Team.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 2, 1972, p5D.

²⁶⁸ “Age 6 Not Too Young for Girls’ Hockey Team.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 9, 1972, p7D.

²⁶⁹ “Golden Girls Lose to All Stars 11-1” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 2, 1972, p6D.

²⁷⁰ “Lucille Korsman WHAM Hall of Fame Nomination” 2006 Inductees Class, document provided to DCHS by Sue Korsman.

²⁷¹ “Powder Puffs Not In Their Equipment.” *Minneapolis Star*. January 16, 1971, p16A.

²⁷² Gilbert, John. “Hockey Column.” *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 13, 1977, p6C.

²⁷³ “Hockey Club Auxiliary Forming.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 5, 1972, p7D.

²⁷⁴ “Final Hockey Sign-Up Set At Lakeville.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 12, 1972, p5D.

²⁷⁵ “Farmington Hockey Rink Schedule.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 21, 1972, p5C.

about their 30,000 girls in varsity sport—the passage of Title IX in June of 1972 seems to have kicked news coverage of girls’ sports into high gear.²⁷⁶ In Dakota county, most athletic associations at least mentioned girls hockey in the fall of 1972. Signups for Burnsville Athletic Commission (BAC) indicated that the girls’ league of ‘72-’73 would be using the boys Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) rulebook for play, but reassured parents that girls could use the figure skates they already owned.²⁷⁷ Farmington Youth Hockey made plans for girls’ development programming, with training planned for boys peewee and small girls over the Christmas vacation, alongside team practices for the older kids.²⁷⁸ The LAA announced that Gregg Johnson would be coaching an officially sponsored girls’ team in Lakeville.²⁷⁹ By early December, team manager Sharon Blanchette reported that 75 girls had signed up to play for Burnsville with the BAC, but that they were still accepting late applications to fill out positions on the teams.²⁸⁰ Burnsville Parks Department also proudly announced that eight of the 28 warming house attendants hired to supervise and maintain the hockey and skating rinks that year were high school aged girls.²⁸¹

Before the Christmas vacation practices—daily from 3-4pm for grade school girls (juniors) and 4-5pm for senior girls—began in late December, Farmington was actively recruiting more coaches for the girls’ teams, and announced that their league that year would include teams from Farmington, Burnsville, Lakeville, White Bear Lake, New Brighton, Elk River, and Anoka.²⁸² The Farmington girls picked up a corporate sponsor in Thelen’s Grocery for the season.²⁸³ Burnsville managed to recruit 85 girls, enabling them to field two teams at the senior level—with a select combined team for intercity play—and two teams at the junior level, which they distinguished as Burnsville Sioux Trail and Burnsville Neill.²⁸⁴

Outside of that particular seven city league, the Edina Park Board established their own girls’ league, which formally banned checking and claimed a turnout of 100 girls in their first year.²⁸⁵ Bloomington, Cottage Grove, and Minnetonka had also organized girls’ teams, as they would play against many of the teams from Dakota county in invitational games and tournaments later in the season.²⁸⁶ At least one girl on the Cottage Grove team, Laurie Cashman, was from South St. Paul and known to regularly play pick-up hockey at the local rinks, while her teammates Cheryl Johnston, Peggy Holtan, and Patty Holtan were known for practicing every night with the boys at Park High School. The *West St. Paul Sun* would also mention the existence of teams and leagues in St. Paul Park, Rosemount, Brooklyn Park, and Como Park.²⁸⁷ In the Mend-Eagan Athletic Association no mention of young girls playing was found, but in 1973 they held the first of what was to become an annual Mothers Benefit game, which saw at least 42 hockey moms lace up their skates to play in front of 1600 fans and raise money for

²⁷⁶ Minnesota State High School League. “In Minnesota-30,000 Girls in Interschool Sports.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 23, 1971, p6A.

²⁷⁷ “Still Time to Sign Up for BAC Hockey.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. November 9, 1972, p9D.

²⁷⁸ “Sign Ups Being Taken for Youth Hockey.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. November 16, 1972, p5D.

²⁷⁹ “LAA Names Hockey Coaches.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. November 30, 1972, p8C.

²⁸⁰ “BAC Girls Hockey Teams Being Formed.”

²⁸¹ “Burnsville Hires Girls as Warming House Attendants.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 14, 1972, p7D.

²⁸² “Farmington Hockey Rink Schedule.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 21, 1972, p5C.

²⁸³ “Farmington Girls Wallop LHS in Hockey.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 11, 1973, p6B; According to the Farmington Centennial Book, the whole Thelen family was active in youth sports in Farmington at the time and owned the Grocery at 1017 3rd Street. Diane Thelen’s cousin Jeff Thelen was also the president of the youth board in Farmington during her time on the team.

²⁸⁴ “BHS Girls Hockey Team Wins Trophy.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 22, 1973, p8D; “Burnsville Squirts in Hockey Action.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 11, 1973, p9B.

²⁸⁵ Gordon, Dick. “Hockey for girls, too.” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 8, 1973, p43.

²⁸⁶ “Girls Hockey Tournament Set Saturday.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 8, 1973, p7D; “Farmington Girls Team Has Busy Week.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 15, 1973, p8C; “Burnsville Squaws Win Tourney Title.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 15, 1973, p7C-8C.

²⁸⁷ “Girls Hockey Booming.” *West St. Paul Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. February 21, 1973, p21.

their sons' teams.²⁸⁸ Roseville had at least one women's team in 1973 playing as well, and a later report on the Amateur Hockey Association of the United States (AHAUS, the precursor to USA Hockey) membership would report that there were three formally registered women's hockey teams in Minnesota that season. These teams and a back yard pickup game would start Sue Ring-Jarvi and her mother Jane Ring on their own hockey careers.²⁸⁹ Chisolm and Hibbing put together a powder puff hockey league that would persist into the 1980s.²⁹⁰

While no contemporary reference to a West St. Paul league was found during the season, the *West St. Paul Sun* would report that the intracity league was in its second season of play the following year, and that 20 girls had played under coaches Jim Rogers and Art Miller in '72-'73.²⁹¹ Further, when Harmon Park prohibited figure skating on the hockey rinks, which were the only rinks with lights, a protesting letter to the editor from a young woman claiming sex discrimination backhandedly acknowledged that a minority of girls did play hockey there, making it clear that the league was known.²⁹² In wider Minnesota, Mrs. Gail A. Wolfe would coach all three of her daughters and twenty other girls on a team in Austin, which was sponsored by Russell Godfredson's R&F Bike Shop, but that group wound up playing boys peewee teams locally.²⁹³ Other teams may well have existed but were simply not considered newsworthy, or had coverage in local papers whose archives are not currently accessible.

The *Dakota County Tribune* began reporting many Dakota county related games right away in January of 1973. Almost every week, girls' hockey received around ten inches of space in the newspaper, with detailed game reports including the timing of goals and particularly impressive plays. Girls like Lori Bocklund, Robin Boeser, Cindy Brettschneider, Michele Cleveland, De Ferrera, Julie Goldstein, Zandy Krause, and Pam Paris stood out among the junior level teams in Burnsville during league play, while Shelley Boeser, Sue Ferrera, Kathy Hetterick, Rhonda Pickett, and Cindy Storm appeared regularly among the leading scorers and goalies from the teenaged Burnsville girls. In Farmington, Toni Carey, Betsy Gorgos, Patty Jensen, Sue Korsman, Cindy Krubsack, Cheryl Magnuson, Christine Schmitz, Shelly Schmitz, Julie Simonsen, and Shelly Youngkrantz dominated the headlines for their teams.²⁹⁴

In Lakeville Debbie Brennan was the standout star, but the overall Lakeville team's enthusiasm for growing the game received significant positive press. The Lakeville team had eighteen girls, and had earned the money to purchase their jerseys by selling concessions at boys youth hockey tournaments. The team put out a call for

²⁸⁸ "Mothers to Play in Benefit Game." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 21, 1974, p7B; "Mothers Play Hockey For Mend-Eagan." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 27, 1975, p11B.

²⁸⁹ Schmitt, Mary. "Women's hockey gaining popularity in Minnesota." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 25, 1977, p39; Sheppard, Nathaniel Jr. "Women's Hockey growth phenomenal." *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. March 23, 1978, p20; In person interview with Sue Ring-Jarvi. Roseville, Minnesota. May 6, 2025.

²⁹⁰ Parsons, Jim. "Pulling Ahead with Icy Determination." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 17, 1980, p2B and 6B.

²⁹¹ "Area girls hockey flourishes." *West St. Paul Midweek Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. January 2, 1974, p40.

²⁹² Kulenkamp, Julie. "Girls Need Lights to Skate Too." *South St. Paul Sun*. South St. Paul, Minnesota. January 24, 1973, p4.

²⁹³ "Austin Girls Are Hockey Players." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. February 6, 1973, p7.

²⁹⁴ "Burnsville Squirts in Hockey Action." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 11, 1973, p9B; "Neill Girls End Season with Win." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 1, 1973, p8D; "Sioux Trail Girls Win Hockey Title." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 1, 1973, p9D; "FHS Girl Pucksters Down Burnsville." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 18, 1973, p10B; "Farmington Girls Wallop LHS in Hockey." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 11, 1973, p6B; "Girls' Team Downed by White Bear." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 18, 1973, p11B; "FHS Girls Team Topped by White Bear." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 1, 1973, p10A; "Farmington Girls Score Two Wins." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 8, 1973, p5D; "Girls Hockey Team Takes 2." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 15, 1973, p6C; "FHS Girls Hockey Team Loses to Burnsville." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 22, 1973, p7D; "Farmington Girls Team Has Busy Week." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 15, 1973, p8C; "Girl Pucksters End Year." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 29, 1973, p9D.

more players in the February 22 *Dakota County Tribune*, and suggested that girls who joined up might be able to help them pick a team name. Despite their comparatively scrappy start, they managed to hold the impressive Burnsville team to at least one tie during league play that year.²⁹⁵

The Burnsville seniors attended the Winter Fest Tournament in Cottage Grove on February 7-8, where they lost to White Bear Lake in the first round, 1-0. They were the first team to hold White Bear to a single goal that year. In the second round they met Cottage Grove—who had also lost their initial match—, with Kathy Hetterick scoring in the first period for Burnsville. Rhonda Pickett scored in the third period on an assist from Shelley Boeser. Goalie Sue Ferrera let one goal in from Cottage Grove but was praised for her good work throughout the game, and Burnsville won 2-1. Their win got them the third-place trophy, which they presented to the Burnsville Arena for safe keeping.²⁹⁶

Shoreview and Midway Arenas played host to a five-team tournament with teams the *Minneapolis Star* identified as the Minnesota Girls Hockey Conference on March 2-4, 1973. The Farmington seniors lost to Elk River 3-1 at the Shoreview Arena on Friday, with Christine Schmitz scoring their only goal. Elk River then lost to New Brighton in the semi-finals match on Saturday. Anoka beat White Bear Lake in the second semifinal that same night. White Bear Lake beat Farmington 3-1 in an overtime shootout victory in the consolation match on Sunday, with Diane Thelen scoring the only regulation time goal for Farmington and Sherry McElmury scoring two goals in three chances during the shoot out for White Bear Lake. New Brighton took the tournament with a 7-1 victory over Anoka, with Sue Szczech and Jodi Bjugstad sharing MVP with two goals each.²⁹⁷

On March 10, Burnsville held an invitational hockey tournament at the Burnsville Arena. Lakeville, Cottage Grove, and White Bear Lake accepted the senior girls' invitation. A crowd of 400 filled the Burnsville Arena to watch the matches, in which speed and fierce checking were the overwhelming takeaways. The first game saw the newly dubbed Burnsville Squaws beat the Lakeville Senior Girls 3-1. Burnsville's Cindy Storm had the first goal of the game off a pass from Terri Ottum. Denise Grazzini also scored on a breakaway for Burnsville in the first period. In the second period a Lakeville power play resulted in no score, followed by a goal for Burnsville from Julie Anderson, assisted by Connie Crowl. Debbie Brennan made Lakeville's only goal on an assist from Karen Sletten and Mary Wren. Both Natalie Broberg and Sue Ferrera shared goal tending duties for Burnsville, stopping 8 shots from Lakeville. Burnsville finished with 17 shots on goal. Game 2 of the tournament saw the newly christened White Bear Lake Fighting Angels defeat the Cottage Grove Rumper Bumpers 3-1, setting up a final match between Burnsville and White Bear Lake.

The tournament final opened with White Bear's Kathy Greene scoring first. After a slow opening, Rhonda Pickett assisted Shelly Boeser to the first goal for Burnsville. Terri Ottum then scored again for Burnsville on a breakaway assisted by Cindy Storm at the top of the second period. Shortly thereafter defenseman Ann Thompson put a goal in off a pass from Cindy Storm. The Angels' George Lindbeck responded with a goal to

²⁹⁵ "LHS Girls Form Hockey Team" *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 22, 1973, p8D; "FHS Girls Hockey Team Loses to Burnsville." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 22, 1973, p7D.

²⁹⁶ "BHS Girls Hockey Team Wins Trophy." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 22, 1973, p8D.

²⁹⁷ "Farmington Girls Team Has Busy Week." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 15, 1973, p8C; "Girl Hockey Tourney Set." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 1973, p39; "New Brighton girls six wins." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 5, 1973, p23.

finish the second period. Kathy Hetterick then clinched the 4-2 victory for Burnsville with an assist from Ann Thompson. Burnsville took the first place trophy for the event.²⁹⁸

Burnsville announced a final tournament for the season on March 17, with their first matchup against Bloomington Lincoln at the Wakota Arena.²⁹⁹ While the tournament appears to have been invitational with only four teams, and no specific write up of the individual games or tournament structure was found, the Cottage Grove Rumper Bumpers won and the press declared them the winner of “State Girls Hockey” for the year, having beaten White Bear Lake 3-2, and Bloomington Lincoln 7-3. Burnsville came in third place.³⁰⁰

1973-1974

The following season saw teams all over the state looking to better organize play and tournaments statewide with the formation of the Minnesota Girl’s Hockey Association, who operated under the MAHA.³⁰¹ Farmington’s Lucille Korsman was the first woman ever elected to the MAHA board and would serve from 1974-1977.³⁰² In Lakeville, Greg Johnson and Len Nelson with the LAA announced girls’ sign ups at three age levels—Seniors, Juniors, and Elementary—and bragged that 50% of the games would be held indoors.³⁰³ Marlys Broberg had arranged a very well-organized girl’s program in Burnsville in October of 1973. The BAC announced three registration dates in late October and early November, and held five days of hockey clinics for girls between October 20-27, with try-outs for the travelling team to be held on the 28th.³⁰⁴ A newly renamed Farmington Junior Hockey Association—with a board of directors including Ron and Doris Thelen, and Lucille Korsman, as well as Louis Schmitz continuing to coach at all levels—announced a skate and equipment exchange, girls and boys registrations and fees, and practices starting October 15.³⁰⁵ Farmington also arranged trips for both the boys and girls to travel to Shattuck Arena for indoor practices in November.³⁰⁶ West St. Paul’s league had grown to 50 girls and played at the West St. Paul Civic Center on Wednesday nights. They remained intracity and did not allow checking, but Coach Jim Rogers hoped they could form a traveling team.³⁰⁷ Northfield also began a team, drawing girls from both Dakota and Rice counties, under the coaching of Dana Benbow.³⁰⁸

Across the state, other cities were also forming teams. Albert Lea’s Jim Wodash recruited girls to play in an intracity league, and 75 girls came out to play, forming four teams of mostly high school aged girls and a traveling team that would play some southern teams.³⁰⁹ Don Clark, the MAHA secretary-treasurer, estimated that there were around 200 girls’ teams participating in MAHA hockey across the state.³¹⁰ Anoka, Coon Rapids,

²⁹⁸ “Girl Pucksters to Meet at Burnsville Tourney.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 22, 1973, p12D; “Girls’ Hockey Tournament Set Saturday.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 8, 1973, p7D; “Burnsville Squaws Win Tourney Title.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 15, 1973, p7C-8C.

²⁹⁹ “Burnsville Squaws Win Tourney Title.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 15, 1973, p7C-8C

³⁰⁰ “Rumper Bumpers Win State Girls Hockey.” *The West St. Paul Sun*. West. St. Paul, Minnesota. April 11, 1973, p14.

³⁰¹ “Girls Can Sign Up for LAA Hockey.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 18, 1973, p7B.

³⁰² “Lucille Korsman WHAM Hall of Fame Nomination” 2006 Inductees Class, document provided to DCHS by Sue Korsman.

³⁰³ “Girls Can Sign Up for LAA Hockey.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 18, 1973, p7B.

³⁰⁴ “BAC Girls’ Hockey to Begin Soon.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 18, 1973, p7B.

³⁰⁵ “Hockey Club Names Officers.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 11, 1973, p9B; “Skate Exchange is Saturday.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 11, 1973, p8B.

³⁰⁶ “Youth Hockey Practice Times Listed.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. November 1, 1973, p8B.

³⁰⁷ “Area girls hockey flourishes.” *West St. Paul Midweek Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. January 2, 1974, p40.

³⁰⁸ “Girls Finish Season.” Unsourced clipping in the scrapbook of Lisa Halvorson Silkey. The clipping indicates that they had just finished their first season and is glued alongside her 1973-74 Northfield Girls Team hockey patch, so can confidently be dated to that season.

³⁰⁹ “Organizational Meeting is Tomorrow for Girls Hockey” *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. January 6, 1974, p14; “75 Girls Show Up for Albert Lea Hockey League.” *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. January 8, 1974, p6; “Girls Make Their Debut In Albert Lea Youth Hockey.” *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. March 17, 1974, p16.

³¹⁰ “State Girls Hockey Tourney.” *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. February 5, 1974, p8.

Cottage Grove, Duluth, East Grand Forks, Elk River, Lake Region/New Brighton, New Hope, Phalen, and White Bear Lake are a few of the other teams in the state that can be directly confirmed, as they received statewide press coverage or made appearances in the State tournaments.³¹¹ In places where enough girls for a team could not be mustered, girls began appearing again on boys teams. Finnegan “Finney” Johnston—who would later play for Cottage Grove and Burnsville—played hockey for at least some of the year on the boys team at West Junior High in Richfield. She had the support of her male teammates: when the school district considered banning mixed sports, they publicly explained that they didn’t want to lose a player that “can help the team.”³¹² At the University of Minnesota, Sue Ring—now considered the “godmother of Minnesota Hockey”—fell in love with the game after playing briefly with her mother Jane and Marlene Brodt in Roseville, and formed a women’s club team that would come to play some of the girls’ teams in later years.³¹³

Burnsville forward Rhonda Pickett caught columnist Jim Klobuchar’s eye in November when she signed up for the 1973 Burnsville Junior Miss contest with hockey listed as one of her talents. In a rare contemporary interview with a female hockey player—and her objecting boyfriend—a picture of women’s hockey as a legitimately rough and competitive sport emerged. The boyfriend, who is never actually named but identified as a varsity wrestler, is dismayed by “what they do along the boards,” and demanded she stop playing after injuries. Rhonda acknowledged that one of their competitors had “a girl who must have used the penalty box for a bassinet, she’s that rough,” but shrugged off both his concerns and Klobuchar’s implications that hockey isn’t lady-like. Acknowledging major rivalries with Cottage Grove, fights on the ice, and regular bruises, Pickett managed to redirect the conversation to the lack of hockey gear properly fitted for women’s hips. “I don’t know what being lady-like has got to do with it [...] We just like to skate and chase the puck,” she asserted. When asked if a defensewoman should cry, she perfectly responded, “Backchecking is better.”³¹⁴

While the overall organization for girls seems to have improved, newspaper reporting dropped off slightly in 1974, with game reports compressed into biweekly and monthly summaries. The metro league received little reporting at all until late January, although the Korsman family saved the typewritten schedule for the midget teams from that season, showing twenty-five scheduled games from December through February among the five teams of Burnsville, Lakeville, Farmington, New Brighton, and Cottage Grove. Only Farmington seems to have sent in game reports to the summaries, so the standout performances of Farmington’s Betsy Gorgos, Patty Jensen, Sue Korsman, Cindy Krubsack, Shelly Schmitz, Julie Simonsen, and Pam Siple are the only ones found for league play that year.³¹⁵

Northfield’s all ages team played invitational games all year, with generally older and better-established metro teams. As a result, they ended the season with one win and five losses. Their lone win against Elk River, and

³¹¹ Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association. *Girls Peewee & Midget Hockey Championships Program*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 1, 1974; “The biggest thing about to boom...” *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 10, 1974, p40.

³¹² Paulu, Nancy. “Finny’s no sissy on the ice...” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 4, 1973, p29; Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association. *Girls Peewee & Midget Hockey Championships Program*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 1, 1974; Minnesota Amateur Girls Hockey Association. *1974-1975 Midget Program*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 7, 1975.

³¹³ Ring-Jarvi, Sue. *Can You Keep Up?*. Beaver’s Pond Press. Saint Paul, Minnesota. 2025; In person interview with Sue Ring-Jarvi. Roseville, Minnesota. May 6, 2025; Schmitt, Mary. “Women’s hockey gaining popularity in Minnesota.” *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 25, 1977, p39.

³¹⁴ Klobuchar, Jim. “No Place for Powder and Lace.” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 8, 1973, p7.

³¹⁵ “FHS Girls Shutout Lakeville.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 24, 1974, p9B; *Girls Hockey Schedule 1973-1974*. Saved in the Korsman Family files and provided to DCHS by Sue Korsman; “FHS Girls Defeat the Undefeated.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 7, 1974, p8B; “FHS Girls Team Splits Results.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 14, 1974, p9B; “FHS Girls Tie, Win.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 21, 1974, p7B; Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association. *Girls Peewee & Midget Hockey Championships Program*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 1, 1974.

standout performances from Lisa Halvorson, Penny Gilomen, and Kristi Robinson, were enough to give them “Hockey Fever,” however. Every girl on the team was hooked, and pledged to return the following year.³¹⁶

The weekend of February 23 and 24, 1974, the first MAHA sanctioned statewide girls’ hockey tournament was held for bantams (11-13 year olds) at Cooke Arena in Coon Rapids. Lake Region/New Brighton, New Hope, Burnsville, Anoka, Elk River, Duluth, East Grand Forks, and Coon Rapids teams all made the tournament that year. Lake Region/New Brighton emerged as the 1974 State Girls Bantam Hockey Tournament Champions in a 6-1 victory over New Hope featuring a hat trick by Sue Smith. Burnsville took consolation honors after a drawn out match with Anoka, 4-3. Tied 3-3 at the end of regulation, Burnsville and Anoka played four overtime periods before finishing with a shoot-out.³¹⁷

The following weekend, March 1-3, Marlys Broberg and Buzz Martin hosted the first MAHA sanctioned peewee (8-10 year olds) and midget (14-18 year olds) tournament at the Burnsville Ice Arena. Competing at the peewee level were White Bear Lake, Farmington, Lake Region/New Brighton, Phalen, Burnsville, and New Hope. At the midget level, Burnsville, Lake Region/New Brighton, Farmington, and the Cottage Grove Rumper Bumpers all played in the tournament. At least one young player, Sue Smith of Lake Region, competed again at the midget level after competing in the bantam level tournament, and Richfield’s Finney Johnston appeared on the Cottage Grove roster.

At the midget level, the first game of the tournament featured the Lake Region/New Brighton midgets beating the Burnsville midgets 7-1. The Rumper Bumpers then beat the Farmington midgets 11-3. In the midget level consolation round, Burnsville’s Cindy Storm had a four goal game in a 6-1 victory over Farmington. In the championship game Lake Region/New Brighton became the 1974 State Girls Midget Hockey Tournament Champions, with the Cottage Grove Rumper Bumpers taking second place.

For the youngest girls, the Farmington peewees opened by losing to the White Bear Lake peewees, 7-1. Phalen’s peewees then had a 1-0 win over the Lake Region/New Brighton peewees in a shoot-out after a single overtime period produced no score. Burnsville peewees initial match up against New Hope was missed in the tournament report, but based on the other games Burnsville appears to have won. In the consolation bracket Farmington rallied to beat Lake Region/New Brighton 2-0, but fell to New Hope 4-2, leaving New Hope with the consolation honors. In the winners’ bracket, White Bear Lake beat Burnsville 3-2 in the semi-final round, and then dominated Phalen 7-1 to become the 1974 State Girls PeeWee Hockey Tournament Champions. The MAHA representatives at the tournament were impressed, and reportedly told Marlys Broberg that “girls’ hockey will catch on throughout the state, and will be something that will be watched with increasing interest.”³¹⁸

³¹⁶ “Girls Finish Season.” Unsourced clipping in the scrapbook of Lisa Halvorson Silkey. The clipping indicates that they had just finished their first season and is glued alongside her 1973-74 Northfield Girls Team hockey patch, so can confidently be dated to that season. “Hockey Fever,” is what a young Lisa wrote in bright red marker across the page.

³¹⁷ Age Categories for the girls in this era were slightly different from the boys, who had additional levels to break up age groups. As the girls did not have Mites or Squirrels, their age ranges were different. In addition, it was not uncommon for girls to play up an age category, and for exceptional younger girls to play on both their age group team and the older teams at the same time; “Lake Region wins girls hockey title.” *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1974, p25.

³¹⁸ Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association. *Girls Peewee & Midget Hockey Championships Program*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 1, 1974; “Girls State Hockey Finals This Weekend at Burnsville.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 28, 1974, p8B.

1974-1975

By the fall of 1974, girls' sport around the state was booming, driven for the most part by a desire from the girls themselves to get to play.³¹⁹ Lakeville Athletic Association announced girls teams at all three levels for the season right away in October.³²⁰ Burnsville organized girls' hockey clinics again for the end of October with tryouts for the traveling teams to follow, and secured sponsorship from Roy and LoWanna Cogswell of Crosstown Standard.³²¹ Women who played on the team would later recall a strong sense of community support in Burnsville, with the whole community pitching in to hand down equipment, arrange carpools, and pay for ice time to make sure all girls who wanted to play could.³²² Farmington also set their registration for the end of that month, so that MAHA registration deadlines could be met for both the boys and girls. The Schmitz family also announced a more casual intracity recreational league in Farmington for elementary aged girls and boys.³²³ Northfield secured funding for its girls' teams from the Northfield Mrs. Jaycees and the VFW Auxiliary.³²⁴ Don Nelson of New Hope, Marly Broberg of Burnsville, and Keith Howard of Coon Rapids announced the formation of a Metro Area Girls Hockey Association (MAGHA), again under the auspices of the MAHA, to coordinate the second annual Girls State Hockey Tournament.³²⁵

Albert Lea, Anoka, Burnsville, Coon Rapids, East Grand Forks, Elk River, Farmington, Fergus Falls, Lake Region, Lakeville, New Hope, North St. Paul, Northfield, Phalen, Richfield, and White Bear Lake teams can all be confirmed thanks to seasonal or tournament appearances.³²⁶ 12-year-old Mary Brown briefly made the boys B-team at Roosevelt, but her mother refused to let her play. Fortunately, she spotted a poster for a girls' hockey team in Richfield at an open skate, and convinced her mother to let her play girls' hockey there.³²⁷ According to later histories, Wayzata also began their girl's team this year.³²⁸ While Apple Valley did not have girls' hockey, at least one girl, Laura Anderson, played for the Kings, the Valley Regional Hockey Associations' squirt champions that year, and the organization surveyed for interest in starting a girls program.³²⁹ A gap in the archives of the *Sun Current* between June of 1974 and 1978 makes the exact timeline of West St. Paul's transition from girls'

³¹⁹ Braun, Carol. "You've Come a Long Way, Baby." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 10, 1974, p10B.

³²⁰ "LAA Hockey Signup Saturday." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 10, 1974, p8B

³²¹ "Burnsville Sets Girls' Hockey Clinics." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 17, 1974, p9D; "Burnsville Undefeated in MAHA." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 6, 1975, p11B.

³²² In-person Interview with former 1970s Burnsville player Sandy Bredt Larson. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 19, 2024; Email Interview with former 1970s Burnsville player Betsy Zachman. December 14, 2024.

³²³ "Farmington Plans Hockey Registration." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 9, 1975, p12B; "Farmington Hockey Sign Up is Saturday." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 17, 1974, p7D.

³²⁴ "Check presented to hockey girls" and "Funds Earned at Dinner." Unsourced clippings in the scrapbook of Lisa Halvorson Silkey. The photos in the clippings indicate that they took place on the same date, June 15, and that was a Saturday in 1974, which tracks for the event. They are also on the same page as the 1973-1974 season clipping and patch, so it suggests the sponsorship was offered for that next 1974-1975 season.

³²⁵ "Metro Girls Hockey Association Formed." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 11, 1974, p38.

³²⁶ Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association. *PeeWee Girls State Tournament 1975 Program*. Hopkins, Minnesota. March 21, 1974; "Girls Bantam hockey team did well in state." *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. March 3, 1974, p12; Metro Area Girls Hockey Association. *1974-1975 Midget Program*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 7, 1975.

³²⁷ Phone interview with Mary Brown, former Richfield player and later coach at several schools. June 5, 2025.

³²⁸ Vintage Minnesota Hockey. "Minnesota Checkers Womens Hockey." <https://history.vintagemnhockey.com/page/show/1207586-minnesota-checkers-womens-hockey> Accessed 3/27/2025.

³²⁹ "Kings Win VRHA S squirt Ice Championship Title." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 3, 1975, p12B; "VRHA May Form Girls' Program." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 17, 1975, p12B.

hockey to girls' ringette unclear, but players remember the transition coming in the late 70s and involving the same teams, so hockey was likely still happening in the 1974-75 season.³³⁰

To kick off the upcoming season, Burnsville held a Hockey Day for both boys and girls on November 30, 1974, opening with a game between the Burnsville midget girls and the Farmington midget girls, after which the day was dedicated to boys' games.³³¹ At the midget level, Robin Boeser, De Ferrera, Finney Johnston—who had left the Cottage Grove team for Burnsville—, Teri McClure, Patty Oaster, and Cindy Storm led the Burnsville statistics in league play for the year.³³² Patty Jensen, Sue Korsman, Cindy Krubsack, Dawn Lindberg, Cheryl Magnuson, Shelly Schmitz, Julie Simonsen and Pam Siple were the standout players for Farmington.³³³

Among the younger girls, something truly special was coming together in Burnsville. The peewee level girls, under the coaching of Buzz Martin, started their season with a bang. On December 26 they beat Farmington 8-2. Heidi Herold opened the scoring in the first period for Burnsville, but one of the Schmitz sisters—either Jody or Lisa at that level that year, as unfortunately identified only by last name in the report—responded almost immediately to tie the game for Farmington. Farmington again scored at the top of the second period, but Burnsville responded nine seconds later with a goal from Kindra Stirtz, with Sue Thompson assisting. Lori Hjermstad, again with an assist from Thompson, put Burnsville ahead to finish out the period. The third period was then nothing but padding, as Thompson scored a hat trick, with one assist from Herald, and Stephanie Svenson and Herald each made an additional goal.³³⁴ They spent the rest of the regular season in the same form, a reign of terror that received endless press and excitement locally. Aside from Herald, Hjermstad, Stirtz, Svenson, and Thompson, the Burnsville papers were full of goals and stellar defensive work from girls like Sue Blanchette, Ann Bougetz, Sandy Bredt, Carol Broberg, Jeanne Burgoyne, Marcie Martin, Kim McDermott, Leigh Nordstrom, Barb O'Neill, Dana Sondrall, Patsy Sauer, Bonnie Schultz, and Kindra Stirtz.³³⁵ Goalie Ginny Staudt finished the season with seven shut outs and a Goals Against Average stat of 0.769, and the Burnsville peewees went undefeated, winning twelve and tying twice in regular season play.³³⁶

At last, it was state tournament time, with trophies that finally featured hockey playing figurines with ponytails at the top.³³⁷ The State Girls Bantam Hockey Tournament was again held in Coon Rapids, from February 28 to March 2, 1975. The "Otter Tail Power Company Kilowatts" of Fergus Falls had enabled their season by inviting girls' teams from the cities to come up for weekends and stay with them at their homes, and Coon Rapids returned the favor by hosting the Fergus Falls bantam girls for the tournament.³³⁸ Albert Lea, Anoka, Burnsville, Coon Rapids, East Grand Forks, Elk River, Fergus Falls, and North St. Paul all appeared in the single elimination

³³⁰ Phone Interview with Jane Osiecki Cashin of Minnesota Special Hockey, and a West St. Paul player in the late 1970s. December 11, 2024.

³³¹ "Hockey Day Saturday at Burnsville." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. November 28, 1974, p6B.

³³² "BAC Girls Midget Team Scores Win." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 12, 1974, p15B.

³³³ Maki, Karen. "Farmington Girls' Ice Team is 1-1." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 16, 1975, p11B; "Farmington Girls Split Results." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 30, 1975, p11C; "Farmington Girls' Ice Team Wins 4." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 20, 1975, p14B; "Farmington Girls' Team Wins 3 of 4." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 13, 1975, p13B.

³³⁴ "Burnsville PeeWees Off to Good Start." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 2, 1975, p10B.

³³⁵ "Burnsville PeeWees Score Win, Tie." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 9, 1975, p12B; "Burnsville Icewomen Win 2, Lose 1." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 30, 1975, p11C; "PeeWee Girls Overcome Lakeville." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 6, 1975, p12C; "Burnsville PeeWees Win 2." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 13, 1975, p13B; "Burnsville Wins PeeWee Championship." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 20, 1975, p14B.

³³⁶ "Burnsville Undefeated in MAHA." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 6, 1975, p11B.

³³⁷ In-person Interview with former 1970s Burnsville player Sandy Bredt Larson. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 19, 2024.

³³⁸ "Fergus girls' hockey team in state tourney." *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. February 27, 1975, p8.

tournament, with East Grand Forks falling first, 11-0, to Elk River. Also in the first round Fergus Falls defeated their hosts, Coon Rapids, 4-2, and Albert Lea lost 6-0 to North St. Paul. Burnsville bested Anoka 3-2 in overtime. In the semi-finals, the Fergus Falls Kilowatts fell 7-0 to Elk River, and Burnsville advanced past North St. Paul. East Grand Forks won the consolation game. In the finals on Sunday, Elk River took the 1975 State Girls Bantam Hockey Tournament Champion title in a 4-0 win over Burnsville.³³⁹

The State Girls Midget Hockey Tournament for 1975 was held at the Augsburg Arena in Minneapolis March 7-9, with elevated stakes—the MAHA had been invited to send their champions to spots at the peewee and “teen” levels in the first National Invitational Girls’ Hockey Tournament to be held in Westland, Michigan that April. Burnsville, Farmington, Fergus Falls, Lake Region, New Hope, and Phalen qualified for the state tournament in the midget division. While most teams eschewed names, the Burnsville girls registered as the “Bravettes,” and the Fergus Falls midgets were listed as “O’Mera’s Shamrocks.” The tournament was organized with six pre-arranged games, with a finals and a third place match up determined from the results. Based on the tournament results found, Fergus Falls appears to have fallen to New Hope in the first game Friday evening in Arena A. Over in Arena B, Burnsville decimated Phalen 13-0, although Kim Timlin, Phalen’s goalie, stopped 30 of the 43 shots on goal. Finney Johnston, De Ferrera, Patty Oaster, Denise Grazzini, Cindy Storm, Teri McClure, and Julie Goldstein all made goals, with Robin Boeser and Oaster both recording assists. Goalies Sue Ferrera and Natalie Broberg combined for the shutout. Jane Breckner, who broke her ankle in the first game of the season, made her triumphant return in the game. Saturday morning New Hope lost to Lake Region, while Farmington took on Phalen. Farmington won 4-0, with a hat trick from Patty Jensen and an additional goal from Julie Simonsen. Diane Satriano took the shutout at goal.³⁴⁰

That afternoon, the two Dakota County teams, Burnsville and Farmington, met for their scheduled showdown. At 1:16 of the first period, the Bravette’s De Ferrera and Robin Boeser got the puck to Holly Burkard for the opening goal. Just under a minute and a half later, Suzie Goldstein found Patty Oaster who hit a wrist shot from eight feet in the slot, bringing the score to 2-0. At 3:31 Finney Johnston scored on an assist from Cindy Storm. Farmington’s Patty Jensen responded with the first Farmington goal, but Johnston made a pass to Teri McClure, who hit it in to close the period at 4-1. Johnston came off the bench to score again at the top of the second, but Farmington rallied quickly, with Sue Korsman and Shelly Schmitz both scoring in three minutes. Johnston scored two more times in the third, sealing Burnsville’s victory despite an additional Farmington goal from Cheryl Magnuson.³⁴¹

With Lake Region beating Fergus Falls in the final pre-arranged game on Saturday, Sunday saw the third place and championship games set. Farmington took on New Hope for third place, winning 4-3 in overtime with goals

³³⁹ Johnson, Roger. “Girls Bantam hockey team did well in state.” *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. March 3, 1975, p12.

³⁴⁰ “Burnsville Girls Win State Title.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 27, 1975, p11B; “Farmington Girls Ice Team Places in State.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 13, 1975, p12B; Metro Area Girls Hockey Association. *1974-1975 Midget Program*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 7, 1975; A brief note about the Bravettes: When first seeking more information about these years, a newspaper article with this team name resulted in pushback from some former players, who insisted that they were never called that and that the Bravettes were only ever the Burnsville dance team. It is, however, the name listed in the State Tournament and National Tournament programs for the midget/teen level Burnsville girls in 1975, so is verifiably a name that was used by the coaches who submitted the roster. It was also the name used in many submitted articles about the midget level team in 1976 to the *Dakota County Tribune*. None of the women who objected played at that specific level those two years, so much like the “Burnsville Squaws” it appears to have been a legitimate name used by one iteration of the team, at one level only.

³⁴¹ “Burnsville Girls Win State Title.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 27, 1975, p11B; “Farmington Girls Ice Team Places in State.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 13, 1975, p12B; Metro Area Girls Hockey Association. *1974-1975 Midget Program*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 7, 1975.

from Patty Jensen, Sue Korsman, Sue Magalis, and Shelly Schmitz.³⁴² The championship game saw a fired-up Burnsville ready to take on a strong Lake Region team. Teri McClure started the night strong with a goal off a rebound at 1:56 for Burnsville. Lake Region's Ann Grindatti then scored off a pass from Teri Gregory at 3:41, besting goalie Natalie Broberg. Grindatti attempted a clearing pass that was picked off by De Ferrera and pushed past Lake Region goalie Sandy Platzer for a Burnsville score at 7:44. Sue Smith responded for Lake Region, intercepting a Burnsville pass to close the period with the score tied at 2-2. Burnsville on the whole struggled with penalties, killing a total of eight during the game. Four of them happened in the second period, which saw Finney Johnston make the only goal of that period at 1:28. The third period started slow, with De Ferrera finally scoring off a pass from Johnston at 6:15, bringing the score to 4-2. Terri Gregori snuck a goal past Sue Ferrera, but McClure responded almost immediately. Cindy Storm closed the game with an assist from Johnston to make the Burnsville Bravettes the 1975 State Girls Midget Hockey Tournament Champions.³⁴³

The final state tournament for the year was the youngest girls, and took place at the Blake Arena in Hopkins March 22-23, 1975. Burnsville, Elk River, Farmington, Lake Region, Lakeville, Richfield, St. Paul Phalen, and White Bear Lake all sent peewee teams to the competition. The single elimination tournament opened with Burnsville goalie Ginny Staudt recording her eighth shutout of the year as the undefeated Burnsville peewees beat Lake Region 6-0, with four goals from Sue Thompson, two from Heidi Herold, and assists for Lori Hjermstad and Kindra Stirtz. In the other three predetermined matches, Farmington beat Lakeville, St. Paul Phalen toppled Richfield, and White Bear Lake defeated Elk River. In the first semifinal matchup, Burnsville took on a tough Farmington team and managed a 6-4 victory, with a Thompson hat trick and single assist, two goals and two assists for Herold, one goal and two assists for Hjermstad, and assists for Marcie Martin and Dana Sondrall. Meanwhile, St. Paul Phalen defeated the White Bear Lake peewees to determine the final matchup.³⁴⁴

At 3:45pm on Sunday, March 23, 1975, St. Paul Phalen and Burnsville met for the final, only to have a series of power outages consistently disrupt the flow of the game. Unable to find a way around Phalen's goalie Lani Arones, Burnsville trailed 4-0 by the end of the second. Despite two Sue Thompson goals in the third, assisted by Heidi Herold and Lori Hjermstad, the Burnsville peewees suffered their very first defeat of the season in the championship game, and St. Paul Phalen walked away the 1975 State Girls PeeWee Hockey Tournament Champions.³⁴⁵

Despite the disappointing finish, the Burnsville peewees would get a reprieve: not enough of the Phalen girls were able to make the April tournament dates, so they released their spot to the second-place team. With Burnsville teams at both age levels headed for Nationals, the excitement locally was high. *The Minneapolis Star* ran a short feature on the girls' National aspirations, giving Marlys Broberg a chance to talk about Finney Johnston's spectacular wrist shot, one "most boys would like to have." Johnston had been given the opportunity to work on her shot with the help of coaching from Bill Goldsworthy and the North Stars. For the peewees, 11-

³⁴² "Farmington Girls Ice Team Places in State." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 13, 1975, p12B.

³⁴³ "Burnsville Girls Win State Title." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 27, 1975, p11B.

³⁴⁴ "Burnsville PeeWees Take Second in State." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 3, 1975, p12B; Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association. *PeeWee Girls State Tournament 1975 Program*. Hopkins, Minnesota. March 21, 1974. Sandy Bredt Larson kept a copy of this program with the winners penciled in for the matches that mattered to Burnsville, so we have some results otherwise unclear from the new articles.

³⁴⁵ "Burnsville PeeWees Take Second in State." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 3, 1975, p12B; Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association. *PeeWee Girls State Tournament 1975 Program*. Hopkins, Minnesota. March 21, 1974. Sandy Bredt Larson kept a copy of this program with the winners penciled in for the matches that mattered to Burnsville, so we have some results otherwise unclear from the new articles.

year-old Ginny Staudt, with her “miserly” GAA of 0.769 was the player to watch.³⁴⁶ The girls sold lightbulbs and team coffee mugs door to door in Burnsville to raise money for the trip, and received enthusiastic support. Jack Bredt, Sandy Bredt’s father and an assistant coach for the team, was a pilot with North Central. He arranged for a chartered plane to take the girls and their families to the tournament. All of the girls except for Ginny Staudt, whose father was a pilot for the rival NorthWest Airlines, flew together to Michigan, alongside their parents and some siblings. At one point on the flight an emergency bullhorn was discovered, and a raucous party atmosphere with cheering erupted, that would persist throughout the tournament.³⁴⁷

The Lake Region midget level team received an additional invitation to compete at Nationals for Minnesota. Held April 10-13, 1975 at the Ice Hockey Arena in Romulus, Michigan, the tournament was intended to serve as both a National championship and as part of a petition to be submitted to the Amateur Hockey Association of the United States (AHAUS, the predecessor to USA Hockey) at their national convention in June of 1975 to officially recognize and sanction girls’ hockey. Six “Juniors” (under 12s) and twelve “Teens” teams from state leagues in Massachusetts, Michigan, Minnesota, and New York were invited to play. The Juniors included Minnesota Burnsville—the Burnsville peewees squad—, Buffalo Clarenceville (NY), Ecorse Mussil’s Sport Center (MI), the Melbourne Panthers (MI), the Taylor Rangerettes (junior, MI), and the Westland Kit-Kats (MI). The Teens included the Burnsville Bravettes and Minnesota Lake Region—both the same midget squads who had competed at state—as well as the Allen Park Big Bulls (MI), Clarence Girls (NY), Ecorse Tommes (MI), Fraser Flyerettes (MI), Massport Jets A Squad (MA), Massport Jets B Squad (MA), the Rochester Irondequoit (NY), the Southfield Squaws (MI), the Taylor Rangerettes (teen, MI), and the Westland Wildcats (MI).³⁴⁸

The first game involving a Minnesota team saw the Minnesota Burnsville juniors take on Buffalo Clarenceville at 6pm on Friday, April 11. Burnsville won in a brutal 12-0 shutout, with six goals from Sue Thompson, a hat trick and two assists from Heidi Herold, three assists from Bonnie Schultz, single goals from Sandy Bredt, Kim McDermott, Jeanne Burgoyne, Kindra Stirtz, Dana Sondrall, and Patsy Sauer, and additional assists from Carol Broberg and Lori Hjermstad. Ginny Staudt and Kris Kudebeh shared the shutout. The Burnsville Bravettes went up next at 8:10pm, and lost in a 6-3 game to the Massport Jets A squad. Closing out Friday night, Minnesota Lake Region beat the Clarence Girls in a game that started at 10:20pm. On Saturday, the Burnsville Bravettes and Minnesota Lake Region each won their double-headers, Burnsville against the teen Taylor Rangerettes and the Southfield Squaws, and Lake Region against the Fraser Flyerettes and the Allen Park Big Bulls. In the juniors division Staudt and Kudebeh again shared shutout honors in a 5-0 victory over the Melbourne Panthers, with a hat trick by Thompson, goals by Hjermstad and Leigh Nordstrom, and assists by Burgoyne, Nordstrom, Thompson, Hjermstad, and Sondrall. Early Sunday morning, at 9:05am, the junior girls from Burnsville held off the Michigan State PeeWee Champion Westland Kit-Kats until the final minute of the game, but still managed to win 2-1. Thompson and Hjermstad scored for Burnsville with assists from Sauer and Thompson. This win secured the Minnesota Burnsville juniors a place in the finals.³⁴⁹

Midmorning Sunday, in the teen division, Minnesota Lake Region took on the Massport Jets A squad in one semifinal, while the wildcard slot Burnsville Bravettes took on the Massport Jets B squad in the other. Lake

³⁴⁶ “Suburban girls in hockey wars.” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 10, 1975, p47; “Burnsville PeeWees to Vie In National Competition.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 27, 1975, p12B.

³⁴⁷ In-person Interview with former 1970s Burnsville player Sandy Bredt Larson. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 19, 2024.

³⁴⁸ “Girls Hockey Tourney Set for Romulus.” *Detroit Free Press*. Detroit, Michigan. April 5, 1975, p28; Westland Hockey Association. *1st National Invitational Girls’ Hockey Tournament Program*. Romulus, Michigan. April 11, 1975.

³⁴⁹ “Burnsville Girl Ice Teams National Runners-Up.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 17, 1975, p11B; “Massport Jets: national champs in girls’ ice hockey.” *The Daily Item*. Lynn, Massachusetts. April 15, 1975, p19; Westland Hockey Association. *1st National Invitational Girls’ Hockey Tournament Program*. Romulus, Michigan. April 11, 1975.

Region fell 7-1, but the Burnsville ladies beat the B Jets 4-2, setting up a rematch between Burnsville and the Massport A squad for the teen final. Unfortunately, Sunday afternoon the toll of the busy weekend caught up with the Minnesota girls, and first the Burnsville juniors fell 6-2 to the Ecorse Mussil's Sport Center team, who claimed the Junior Girls National Championship. At 4:30pm, the Burnsville Bravettes fell as well, losing 9-1 to the Massport A squad.³⁵⁰ When the older girls returned to the hotel, the younger squad lined up outside to cheer them into the building, singing "We're from Burnsville, couldn't be prouder, if you can't hear us, we'll yell a little louder."³⁵¹ On the return trip home, Ginny Staudt's father let her fly back with her team.³⁵²

The Massport team manager, Tony Marmo, crowed about whipping Minnesota, who he said "claim[ed] to be the hockey capital of the United States," and that the only difficulty they had was making their flight home.³⁵³ Burnsville's Jack Thompson, on the other hand, was proud of the Burnsville teams' second in the nation finishes. Speaking to the *Dakota County Tribune*, he said:

The entire trip was a great experience for all the girls and Burnsville and the state of Minnesota should be extremely proud of the representation that these young ladies exhibited in not only ability but also in sportsmanship, enthusiasm and in their general behavior throughout the entire tournament. All the girls played their hearts out and deserve a lot of credit.³⁵⁴

1975-1976

By the fall of 1975 youth hockey in Dakota county seemed to assume the presence of girls' teams and girl players in most cities, and started their seasons before the Christmas break. Farmington Youth Hockey signed boys and girls up together for travelling hockey in September and intracity hockey in December, and Burnsville Athletic Club was announcing their annual girls' clinics by early October.³⁵⁵ Many of the girls from the national teams the year prior returned to Burnsville, and at least some of the graduating women went on to join or form club teams, including Sue Ferrera, who played intramural hockey at Normandale.³⁵⁶ Rosemount used the term "youth" in their registration notice, which was not necessarily gender neutral in the period, but also actively recruited women willing to coach, so may have been open to girl players.³⁵⁷ While Northfield still only had enough girls across all age groups to field a single team, they opted to play at the midget level anyways, with four teens playing alongside a third grader for the season.³⁵⁸ In some Dakota county cities, girls found opportunities through travel or on boys' teams. Lakeville no longer had enough girls for a team, but several Lakeville players, including Zendi Krause, Mary Emond, Sue Magalis, and Gwen Gephart, took Highway 50 over

³⁵⁰ "Burnsville Girl Ice Teams National Runners-Up." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 17, 1975, p11B.

³⁵¹ In-person Interview with former 1970s Burnsville player Sandy Bredt Larson. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 19, 2024.

³⁵² Follow-up call with Sandy Bredt Larson 6/4/2025, who had followed up on her memories with teammates after the initial interview.

³⁵³ "Burnsville Girl Ice Teams National Runners-Up." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 17, 1975, p11B; "Massport Jets: national champs in girls' ice hockey." *The Daily Item*. Lynn, Massachusetts. April 15, 1975, p19; Westland Hockey Association. *1st National Invitational Girls' Hockey Tournament Program*. Romulus, Michigan. April 11, 1975.

³⁵⁴ "Burnsville Girl Ice Teams National Runners-Up." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 17, 1975, p11B.

³⁵⁵ "Farmington Hockey Sign-up This Saturday." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. September 25, 1975, p11B; "Farmington Youth Hockey Sign-up Soon." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 16, 1975, p13B; "BAC Names Area Hockey Directors" and "Girls Hockey Clinic Planned at Burnsville." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 2, 1975, p12B; "Burnsville Plans Girls Hockey Clinics." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 9, 1975, p9B.

³⁵⁶ "Hockey Girls Team Takes Tourney Trophy." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 1, 1976, p11B.

³⁵⁷ "Rosemount Hockey Signup This Saturday." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 9, 1975, p9B.

³⁵⁸ "Girls play at Midget tourney." Unsourced clipping in Lisa Halvorson Silkey's scrapbook, likely from the Northfield paper. The clipping references the 1976 Midget State Tournament in Fergus Falls specifically so can be confidently dated to this season.

to Farmington to keep playing.³⁵⁹ Apple Valley did not have enough girls for full teams, but actively invited girls' participation on boys teams.³⁶⁰ Goalie Sandy Mlachnik was the only girl to play at the mites level—unknown girls may have played at other levels—in Apple Valley, but brought her league-leading “Stingers” team to the VRHA Championship in a 4-3 victory over the “Roadrunners” on February 19. She and Roadrunners goalie Brendt Jasper were given accolades after the game by both teams' coaches for their excellent play.³⁶¹ AHAUS would report 32 women's teams formally registered in Minnesota for the season.³⁶²

In the metro league, Burnsville started their season at the midget level with a series of exhibition games against the University of Minnesota club team, repeatedly beating the college-aged women.³⁶³ In the regular season they continued to play well, with standout performances from Shelly Boeser, Natalie Broberg, Holly Burkard, Joyce Detlefson, De Ferrera, Maureen Finnegan, Julie Goldstein, Denise Grazzini, Kathy Hettrick, Finney Johnston, Amy McDermott, Patty Oaster, Wendy Pederson, Mary Shippy, and Cindy Storm.³⁶⁴ At the bantam level, Heidi Herold, Barb O'Neill, and Patsy Sauer led the headlines alongside a number of the peewee level girls who played up to help fill out the team.³⁶⁵ Ann Bougetz, Amy Doden, Julie Ferrera, Andi Grazzini, Lori Hjermstad, Marcie Martin, Kim McDermott, Wendy Russ, Gretchen Sauer, Dana Sondrall, Ginny Staudt, Kindra Stirtz, Julie Sturgeon, Sue Thompson, and Jenna Watts made press for the Burnsville peewee level team, who were chased by Farmington for first in league play all season. The first of two losses of the season for Burnsville came on January 24 to Farmington, a 3-2 heartbreaker where the Farmington peewees put the game winning goal in with exactly one second left on the clock.³⁶⁶ While Farmington did not report details on the peewee level games, Mary Emond, Gwen Gephart, Patti Jensen, Sue Korsman, Cindy Krubsack, Sue Magalis, Cheryl Magnuson, Shelly Schmitz, Julie Simonsen, and Pam Siple led the Farmington midget level team to the state tournament once again.³⁶⁷

³⁵⁹ “Farmington Peewee Girls Team Successful.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 19, 1976, p14B; “Farmington Team Takes 3rd in State Midget Tourney.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. April 1, 1976, p9C.

³⁶⁰ “Apple Valley Hockey Boosters To Meet.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 9, 1975, p12B.

³⁶¹ “Stingers Take Mite Title.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 26, 1976, p11B.

³⁶² Sheppard, Nathaniel Jr. “Women's Hockey growth phenomenal.” *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. March 23, 1978, p20.

³⁶³ In-person interview with Sue Ring-Jarvi. Roseville, Minnesota. May 6, 2025; Staff Writer. “Gophers women's hockey: First club teams showed plenty of passion, if not skill.” *The Pioneer Press*. Saint Paul, Minnesota. October 28, 2015.

<https://www.twincities.com/2014/10/24/gophers-womens-hockey-first-club-teams-showed-plenty-of-passion-if-not-skill/>. Accessed 2/14/2025; “Can they do it again?” *Burnsville Current*. Apple Valley, Minnesota. December 3, 1975; “Hockey Girls Team Takes Tourney Trophy.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 1, 1976, p11B.

³⁶⁴ “Burnsville, Phalen win hockey tourney.” *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. December 29, 1975, p14; “Hockey Girls Team Takes Tourney Trophy.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 1, 1976, p11B; “Burnsville Midget Girls Unbeaten.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 4, 1976, p11B.

³⁶⁵ “Bantam Girls.” *Burnsville Current*. Apple Valley, Minnesota. December 15, 1975.

³⁶⁶ “Burnsville PeeWees Are 5-1 in League.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 29, 1976, p9B; “Burnsville Peewees Retain Metro Top Spot.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 5, 1976, p10B; “Burnsville PeeWees Edge Elk River.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 12, 1976, p12B; “Burnsville Peewees Stomp Richfield 6-0.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 19, 1976, p14B; “Burnsville Girl Peewees Score 2 Wins.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 26, 1976, p11B; “Burnsville Girls Ice Team Splits Results.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 4, 1976, p11B; “Peewee Girl Pucksters Are League Champs.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 11, 1976, p12B; “Farmington Peewee Girls Team Successful.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 19, 1976, p14B.

³⁶⁷ “Farmington Girls Tie Elk River.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 16, 1975, p13B; “Farmington Girls Ice Team Wins 1, Loses 3.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 12, 1976, p11B; “Farmington Girls Win 2 Out of 3.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 4, 1976, p11B; “Farmington Ice Midgets Ready for State Tourney.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 4, 1976, p10B; “Farmington Girls' Ice Team Loses to Burnsville.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 11, 1976, p13B; “Farmington Girls in State Tourney Friday.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 18, 1976, p10B; “Farmington Ice Midgets Ready for State Tourney.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 4, 1976, p10B.

The Fergus Falls Jaycees put on a Holiday Invitational Tournament the weekend after Christmas, December 27-28, 1975, and invited 6 other bantam and midget level teams from Burnsville (midget and bantam), East Grand Forks (midget and bantam), St. Paul Phalen (bantam only), and New Hope (midget only) to join the Fergus Falls (O'Meara's Shamrocks midget and Kilowatts bantam) teams.³⁶⁸ In the bantam division, the Kilowatts first beat East Grand Forks 5-0, but fell to Burnsville 1-0 and to Phalen 2-1. While the results of the other games are unknown, Phalen beat Burnsville in the final 2-1, with the Kilowatts coming in third. For the older girls, Burnsville won all of their games, and took the invitational trophy, with New Hope coming in second and East Grand Forks third.³⁶⁹

Girls Hockey in Austin seems to have stagnated after Gail Wolfe's 1972-73 team, as the city invited the "second in the nation" Burnsville Bravettes and the "third in state" Farmington midgets to play an exhibition game on January 31, featuring "one of the recognized great female hockey players in the nation, center Cindy Storm." The stated goal was to promote girls hockey in Austin and show "the brand of hockey which can be played by the 'weaker sex.'"³⁷⁰ A second notice for the game, which appeared to be responding to reader questions, discussed how the girls teams had started out in figure skates and used magazines as shin guards in the early days. Now, four and five years into league play respectively, they were fully equipped with regulation hockey gear. They also explained that the girls game included checking and penalties just like the regulation men's game.³⁷¹ Burnsville maintained a 2-0 lead for most of the game, with Sue Korsman stopping the shut-out with a goal for Farmington in the third period.³⁷²

Beyond hockey, Patty Oaster, from the Burnsville midget level team, was selected to be her school's 1976 Athena Award winner for her straight A average and impressive efforts in hockey, basketball, tennis, track, softball, cheerleading, and gymnastics.³⁷³ Started in 1972 by the Sports and Attraction Committee, Women's Division, Greater Minneapolis Chamber of Commerce, the Athena Award was intended to recognize young women who excelled in sport despite the constraints of gym time—which was just as restrictive as ice time in the 1970s—and whose achievements had little to no formal recognition in the school systems of the time.³⁷⁴ Oaster would be the first of at least three girls from the nationally ranking Burnsville squads—Kathy Hetterick in 1977 and Sue Thompson in 1981—to win the Athena Award in their senior years.³⁷⁵

Farmington was selected to host the 1976 State Girls PeeWee Hockey Tournament in the soon-to-be-finished Farmington Ice Arena. At the time, enough girls were playing in the intracity Farmington league to have four levels of hockey, including mites (8 and under), and the city was excited for the possibility.³⁷⁶ At the State High School League's sanctioned girls basketball tournament, chatter about girls' hockey was prominent enough that John Gilbert, covering the tournament for the *Minneapolis Tribune*, asked league authorities for a comment on when girl's hockey would be sanctioned, but only got a wince and no comment. So instead he cited the MAHA tournaments that were already happening, and went to the girls themselves. The Hibbing team in particular was

³⁶⁸ "Fergus Jaycees host girls' ice tourney." *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. December 26, 1975, p14.

³⁶⁹ "Burnsville, Phalen win hockey tourney." *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. December 29, 1975, p14; "Hockey Girls Team Takes Tourney Trophy." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 1, 1976, p11B.

³⁷⁰ "All-girls hockey feature set for Riverside Arena." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. January 8, 1975, p2.

³⁷¹ "Girls hockey teams will meet in game at arena." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. January 29, 1976, p9.

³⁷² "Farmington Girls Ice Team Wins 1, Loses 3." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 12, 1976, p11B.

³⁷³ "Patty Oaster Named Top Girl Athlete at BHS." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 5, 1976, p13B.

³⁷⁴ Minneapolis Athena Awards. "Our History." <https://www.minneapolisathena.com/our-history> Accessed 2/15/2025.

³⁷⁵ Minneapolis Athena Awards. "Past Winners: Burnsville." <https://www.minneapolisathena.com/burnsville-winners> Accessed 2/15/2025; "Kathy Hetterick Wins Athena Award." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 30, 1976, p8B.

³⁷⁶ "State PeeWee Hockey Event Set for Arena." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 12, 1976, p1A.

all for it, as they were already playing and “[had] a good time,” despite their coaches concerns that skating was “bad for [their] legs.”³⁷⁷

The 1976 State Girls PeeWee Hockey Tournament took place March 13-14 at the new arena. PeeWee teams from Burnsville, Elk River, Farmington, Lake Region, and Richfield participated. The games began at 11am Saturday morning with Farmington taking on the Lake Region “Apache Barbers” for the tournament opener.³⁷⁸ In an 8-0 shutout Farmington emerged victorious, but then lost to a fresh Elk River team in overtime, 3-2, in their second game. Not all of the games were reported, but Farmington and Lake Region met for the third place game, while Elk River and Burnsville clashed for the Championship. Farmington emerged victorious over Lake Region again, 5-0 for third place.³⁷⁹ In the Championship game, excellent goaltending kept the first period scoreless. Five minutes into the second period Lori Hjermstad finally scored off an assist from Andy Grazzini. Elk River was unable to respond until halfway through the third. With minutes to go and the game tied, Sue Thompson found herself in the penalty box for two penalties in a row, and the game appeared to be lost. Instead, Dana Sondrall scooped up a loose puck near the Burnsville goal. She managed a rink length dash, firing hard shot from the left face-off circle to score a short-handed goal. Elk River pulled their goalie and attacked with six skaters, but Ginny Staudt stopped the puck with her skate as the buzzer sounded on a Burnsville win and State PeeWee Championship.³⁸⁰

With the exception of a small clipping in a North Dakota paper, no news coverage or surviving programs for the 1976 State Girls Bantams Hockey Tournament were found. The tournament was held in North St. Paul March 19-21, so presumably included the North St. Paul team, and East Grand Forks attended as well.³⁸¹ While the other teams and results are mostly unknown, the Burnsville bantams won; at least one former player still has the tournament patch with the matching “champs” segment patch on a team jacket.³⁸²

For the older girls, the 1976 State Girls Midget Hockey Tournament took place with more coverage in Fergus Falls, from March 19-21. It was the first state tournament hosting opportunity for a team outside of the metro area, and Fergus Falls was thrilled.³⁸³ By Saturday, the Fergus Falls Hockey Association estimated 1,230 visitors had come up to support the tournament, and pitched hockey for both boys and girls as an economic boon for the city. Anoka-Coon Rapids, Burnsville, Elk River, Farmington, Fergus Falls, New Hope, Northfield, and St. Paul-Lake Region midget teams made the tournament that year.³⁸⁴ Each team was scheduled for three games each over Friday and Saturday, with the winners and runners up in each division playing for the championship and third place on Sunday. Fergus Falls took on Anoka in the first matchup, though the result was not identified. The Burnsville Bravettes then beat Elk River 8-2. Lake Region defeated Farmington 7-3, though Patty Jensen, Gwen Gephart, and Shelly Schmitz managed goals. Finishing out Friday night, Northfield’s very young team, who were at the tournament by invitation, lost to New Hope 10-0, but reported the game as exciting.³⁸⁵

³⁷⁷ “Girls state cage tourney stirs ‘big-time’ pressures, emotions.” *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 19, 1976, p34.

³⁷⁸ “PeeWee Girls’ Hockey Tourney This Weekend.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 11, 1976, p12B.

³⁷⁹ “FHS PeeWees Take 3rd Spot in State Meet.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 18, 1976, p11B.

³⁸⁰ “Burnsville’s PeeWee Girls Win State Championship.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 18, 1976, p11B.

³⁸¹ “The East Grand Forks...” *Grand Forks Herald*. Grand Forks, North Dakota. March 18, 1976, p16.

³⁸² Sandy Bredt’s Westwood Skate & Bike sponsored Burnsville Girls Bantams team jacket has numerous patches, including this specific set.

³⁸³ “Girls Hockey Tourney.” *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. March 20, 1976, p10.

³⁸⁴ “Hockey draws 1230 persons to the city.” *The Daily Journal*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. March 20, 1976, p4.

³⁸⁵ “Girls play at Midget tourney.” Unsourced clipping in Lisa Halvorson Silkey’s scrapbook, likely from the Northfield paper. The clipping references the 1976 Midget State Tournament in Fergus Falls specifically so can be confidently dated to this season; “Burnsville Ice

Saturday morning began at 8am, when Burnsville delivered a brutal 19-0 shutout to their hosts, Fergus Falls. Anoka met Elk River next, in a game that likely went to Elk River based on the final results. Lake Region defeated the Northfield squad 13-0. Farmington defeated New Hope in a close 6-5 match with two goals each from Patty Jensen and Sue Korsman, and one each from Pam Siple and Gwen Gephart. That afternoon Fergus Falls met Elk River in a game that Elk River must have won to make the third place match. Burnsville defeated Anoka 10-2 for their final game, sealing their spot in the championship match. Lake Region met New Hope in a game that Lake Region also must have won, guaranteeing them the other spot in the championship game. Finally, Farmington beat Northfield 8-0, with Shelly Schmitz netting a hat trick and goals from Cindy Krubsack, Patty Jensen, Siple, Karen Maki, and Sue Magalis, though excellent goal tending from Northfield's Lori Plante and Kim Christensen kept a significant number of Farmington's shots out of the net. Farmington secured a spot in the third-place game, and despite a series of tough losses, the young Northfield girls were lauded for their "cheerfulness, good spirit, and competitive play." Keith Howard, of the MAHA, recognizing that the majority of the team were actually peewee aged, called them "the team to watch as strong competitors in the next few years."³⁸⁶

The consolation game began at 1pm on March 21, with Farmington leading 4-2 in the first two periods with goals from Julie Simonson, Cindy Krubsack, Sue Korsman, and Patty Jensen. Early in the third period, Elk River scored on a penalty, and then tied it up with four minutes left. Pam Siple managed to score the game winning goal for Farmington with two and a half minutes left in the game, and Farmington went home in third place.³⁸⁷ In the championship game, Lake Region exploded onto the ice with a goal in the first 8 seconds of play, but De Ferrera, with an assist from Cindy Storm, responded quickly to tie things up. Lake Region took the lead again, only for Julie Goldstein and Finny Johnston to set De Ferrera up for another goal to again tie the score. In the second period Lake Region moved ahead once again and held the Burnsville girls off for the rest of the period. At the top of the third Finny Johnston knotted the score off assists from De Ferrera and Storm, only to have Lake Region seize the lead again seventeen seconds later. They held the lead until the final seconds of the period, when coach Marlys Broberg pulled her daughter Natalie out of the net, and sent Patty Oaster in. Oaster managed to immediately steal the puck and send a pass to Storm, who tied the game with 31 seconds remaining. In overtime, Lake Region pulled out the win, taking the 1976 State Girls Midget Hockey Tournament Championship.³⁸⁸

Once again, both the Burnsville Bravettes and the Burnsville peewee girls were invited to the National Invitational Girls Hockey Tournament April 9-11 in Ecorse, Michigan, alongside teams from Minnesota, Michigan, Massachusetts and New York.³⁸⁹ While coverage was limited and no programs were found, the Burnsville Bravettes competed in the teen division against at least Assabet Valley (MA), Clarence (NY), Ecorse (MI), and Dearborn (MI), along with three other unknown teams, likely including Lake Region again. After an early struggle against Ecorse, the Burnsville girls managed to tie the game with goals from Finney Johnston, assisted by Wendy Pederson and Cindy Storm, and Robin Boeser, with assists from De Ferrera and Shelly Boeser. Their second

Midgets Second in State Meet." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 25, 1976, p13C; "Farmington Team Takes 3rd in State Midget Tourney." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. April 1, 1976, p9C; Fergus Falls Hockey Association. *MAHA State Girls Midget Hockey Tournament Team Schedule*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. March 19, 1976.

³⁸⁶ "Girls play at Midget tourney." Unsourced clipping in Lisa Halvorson Silkey's scrapbook, likely from the Northfield paper. The clipping references the 1976 Midget State Tournament in Fergus Falls specifically so can be confidently dated to this season; "Burnsville Ice Midgets Second in State Meet." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 25, 1976, p13C; "Farmington Team Takes 3rd in State Midget Tourney." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. April 1, 1976, p9C; Fergus Falls Hockey Association. *MAHA State Girls Midget Hockey Tournament Team Schedule*. Fergus Falls, Minnesota. March 19, 1976.

³⁸⁷ "Farmington Team Takes 3rd in State Midget Tourney." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. April 1, 1976, p9C.

³⁸⁸ "Burnsville Ice Midgets Second in State Meet." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 25, 1976, p13C

³⁸⁹ "Burnsville Ice Midgets Second in State Meet." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. March 25, 1976, p13C

game, a hard-fought battle against Dearborn, ended in a 2-1 victory with both goals scored by Storm on an assist from Johnston. Their final game, against Assabet Valley, began slowly, and they fell behind by two in the first period. Towards the end of the second, however, Johnston and Storm assisted Patty Oaster scoring on a power play, and then Johnston tied the game up with four seconds left in the period. In the third, Oaster added another goal, and Burnsville seemed to have the momentum. With two minutes left, unfortunately, Assabet Valley tied the game, and forty-seven seconds later sunk a game winning goal to send Burnsville home.³⁹⁰ The Assabet Valley teens eventually took the National Championship in a 4-3 win over Clarence.³⁹¹

In the junior division, 1976 Minnesota State Champion Burnsville peewees first took on the 1976 Michigan State Champion Melborn peewees. Heidi Herold scored twice and Jeanne Burgoyne once in a 3-1 win for Burnsville. Assists were recorded to Burgoyne, Stef Svensson, Barb O'Neill, Leigh Nordstrom, and Sue Thompson. Saturday morning they woke up early to deliver a shutout 11-0 win over Allen Park (MI), with Wendy Russ and Ginny Staudt sharing the goalkeeping. O'Neill recorded a hat trick and an assist, Thompson scored twice with an assist, and Herold managed a goal and three assists. Andy Grazzini and Burgoyne both recorded a goal and assist each, while Carol Broberg, Ann Bougetz, and Lori Hjermstad all scored once. Marcie Martin had two assists and Nordstrom, Kim McDermott, and Julie Ferrera all had one assist. Staudt was the sole goalkeeper for a 5-0 shutout over Garden City (MI) Saturday evening, with goals by Nordstrom, O'Neill, Herold, Kristi Larson, and Bougetz. Nordstrom, O'Neill, Thompson, and Betsy Zachman all recorded assists. Sunday morning they defeated Ecorse (MI) in the semifinal round 4-1, with a goal and assist each from Thompson and Dana Sondrall, one goal each from Herold and Burgoyne, and an assist from O'Neill. The championship round saw Hudson (MA) dominating for the first two periods, but in the third Thompson assisted Herold to Burnsville's first goal, and Bougetz brought the score to 3-2 at the two-minute mark. Unable to get the equalizer, the Burnsville peewee girls went home second in the nation for the second time.³⁹²

1976-1977

Local news in the fall of 1976 was dominated by plans for more ice to fill the needs of a booming hockey population among both boys and girls, with Dakota County in the thick of it. Apple Valley's new ice arena, owned jointly by the city and school district, opened with programming to encourage both boys and girls to learn to skate.³⁹³ The Rosemount Athletic Boosters Association built two new full size outdoor hockey rinks near the fire station, with whole hockey families, and even community members without a connection to the sport, pitching in on the work.³⁹⁴ The Dakota Area Vocational Technical Institute in Rosemount started a first in the nation ice arena manager training program, and their students were tapped to pour the ice for hockey rinks all over the state.³⁹⁵

Farmington, which continued to have both boys and girls programs, held an official grand opening ceremony for the civic arena in early December to celebrate a successful season of new ice.³⁹⁶ The Lakeville Hockey Booster

³⁹⁰ "Burnsville Midgets in Nationals." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. April 15, 1976, p14B.

³⁹¹ Kinsley, Bob. "The Sports Log." *The Boston Globe*. Boston, Massachusetts. April 14, 1976, p48.

³⁹² "Burnsville Girls Ice Team Takes Second In Nation." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. April 15, 1976, p13B.

³⁹³ "Skating Program to Start at Apple Valley Ice Arena." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. October 28, 1976, p13B.

³⁹⁴ Duff, Helen. "Rosemount Volunteers Build Hockey Rinks." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 2, 1976, p1B; Duff, Helyn. "Community Cooperation, Volunteers Provide Hockey Rinks at Rosemount." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 13, 1977, p15B.

³⁹⁵ Braun, Carol. "Vo-Tech Students Prepare AV Ice Arena for Opening." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. November 4, 1976, p10B.

³⁹⁶ "Farmington Ice Arena Open House is Dec. 4-5." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 2, 1976, p12B; "Farmington Sets Youth Hockey Registration." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. October 21, 1976, p12B.

Club held a hockey poster contest to encourage all kids to play, which included art work from players of all genders and had succeeded in drawing the highest level of hockey registration in Lakeville Athletic Association history.³⁹⁷ The program had tripled in size and registered boys and girls for mixed gender teams at all ages, having refurbished their five outdoor hockey rinks to handle the numbers.³⁹⁸ Some Lakeville area girls, like Connie Donnelly—whose seven brothers played for Lakeville teams to Louis Schmitz’ cheerful dismay—continued to play for the Farmington travelling girls teams.³⁹⁹

At the bantam level, Anoka-Coon Rapids, Burnsville, Elk River, Farmington, Lake Region, North St. Paul, Richfield, St. Paul-Phalen, Wayzata, and White Bear Lake were all part of the Minnesota Amateur Girls Hockey League in the metro area. Anoka-Coon Rapids, Burnsville, Elk River, Farmington, Lake Region, and Northfield all had teams who played at the midget level, and Burnsville, Lake Region, and Richfield played at the peewee level. Other known girls and women’s travelling teams for the 1976-77 season, based on records of either league or tournament play, included Albert Lea (bantam), the Edina Park Board league (at least one midget team), Fergus Falls (bantam), Roseville (women, played midget teams), South West High School in Minneapolis (midget), the University of Minnesota (women), and the University of Wisconsin (women, played midget teams).⁴⁰⁰

In a verifiable first for the state, Robin Boeser earned a spot on the boys high school varsity hockey team at Prior Lake High School for her junior year. She had played for Burnsville girls teams starting with the Neill juniors in 1972 through the 1976 nationals teen team, and credited Marlys Broberg for getting her ready for varsity play. After four years in the girls’ leagues, she wanted to play for her high school. The daughter of local boys’ coach Roy Boeser, with her brothers, cousins, and sister Shelley also playing in youth leagues, her only discouragement came from the Minnesota High School League. While Title IX meant they legally could not stop her from trying out, they advised against it. Instead, she made the team. Her coach, Mike Franck, told the *Dakota County Tribune* that he was skeptical at first, but quickly realized that she was a real asset. “Her skills are equal and sometimes even better than her teammates,” he explained, and by the time games began in December she had moved from the third line to the second. During their opening 6-4 win against the Le Sueur Giants, she won most of her face offs at center. Despite repeat intentional targeting—“I was skating along a few times and I heard someone shout ‘Hit the girl!’ and then Pow, right in the head,” she told the *Le Sueur News-Herald* immediately following the game, who also noted some impressive full body hits she took—she came off the ice smiling and determined to improve her own play.⁴⁰¹ When Gary Olson asked her why she was playing, her answer was simply “I like all the things girls like...plus playing hockey. I’m playing on the high school team because I want to improve my hockey skills and learn more about the game.”⁴⁰²

³⁹⁷ “Hockey Poster Contest Winners Announced.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. October 14, 1976, p14B.

³⁹⁸ “Late Hockey Registration Available.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. October 14, 1976, p13B; “Rystrom named Commissioner of Hockey Mites.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. October 14, 1976, p13B; “Lakeville to Begin Making Ice for Rinks.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 2, 1976, p12B; “Lakeville Mites Begin Program.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 13, 1977, p15B.

³⁹⁹ “8 Children in One Family All Play On A Hockey Team.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 30, 1976, p1A.

⁴⁰⁰ “Burnsville Bantam Girls Triumph 6-2.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 16, 1976, p14B; “Burnsville Bantam Girls Win Two.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 23, 1976, p12B; Northfield Ice Arena. *Minnesota State Midget Girls’ Hockey Tournament 1977 Team Rosters*. Northfield, Minnesota. February 26, 1977; Albert Lea. *Girls State Bantam Tournament 1977 Schedule and Rosters*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. March 4, 1977; “Pee Wee girls post 2-0 mark.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 12, 1977, p28; “Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Bantam girls get No. 13.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 9, 1977, p28; Classified Ad “SW hi School Sr. Girls Hockey team.” *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 16, 1977, p38; “Midget girls invited to U-M tourney.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 23, 1977, p26.

⁴⁰¹ Isaak, Sue. “Female Hockey Player is Asset to Prior Lake Team.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 30, 1976, p8B; “Giants Initiate Girl Hockey Player.” *Le Sueur News Herald*. Le Sueur, Minnesota. December 8, 1976, p9.

⁴⁰² Olson, Gary. “Hockey in her blood.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 26, 1976, p29.

Over in Lakeville, in the mixed gender mites program, forward Kathy Emond of the Maroon Marauders had a fantastic season. She recorded a goal in a 3-1 win over the White Flyers on February 5, and assisted Shawn Lake to his hat trick in a 3-1 win over the Orange Rangers February 12.⁴⁰³ While she was apparently the only girl named in the papers, the mites commissioner referenced the “girls” in the program, suggesting she was far from the only one.⁴⁰⁴

The Metro Area Girls Hockey League season began for bantams by mid-December, with the Burnsville bantam girls dominating right out of the gate. Ann Bougetz, Lynn Braud, Sandy Bredt, Jeanne Burgoyne, Heidi Herold, Marcie Martin, Kim McDermott, Leigh Nordstrom, Barb O’Neill, Patsy Sauer, Ginny Staudt, Stephanie Svenson, Sue Thompson, and Betsy Zachman led Burnsville to another dominant season, with their only loss to St. Paul-Phalen, who tied Burnsville for first place in the metro bantam league that year.⁴⁰⁵

At the midget level, the season began in January. Farmington was led by Mary Emond, Gwen Gephart, Patti Jensen, Sue Korsman, Dawn Lindberg, Sue Magalis, Julie Simonsen, Pam Siple, and Diana Weierke.⁴⁰⁶ Across the county in Burnsville, Shelly Boeser, Holly Burkard, Joyce Detlefsen, De Ferrera, Maureen Finnegan, Julie Goldstein, Denise Grazzini, Kathy Hetterick, Tracy Hommes, Finney Johnston, Amy McDermott, Jill Pederson, and Cindy Storm filled the game reports for the Burnsville teenagers.⁴⁰⁷ The teens from Farmington and Burnsville met each other on January 17. Scoreless until late in the first period, Denise Grazzini tipped in a slap shot from Finney Johnston for the first goal of the game. In the third, Burnsville’s Johnston managed to sink another goal on a close-range shot. With one second left in play, Farmington’s Dawn Lindberg managed to finally get a shot past Jill Pederson, but Burnsville walked away with the 2-1 win.⁴⁰⁸ The met for a second time on February 6, with Burnsville winning the day 5-2.⁴⁰⁹ At the end of the season, the Farmington girls announced that they would be attending the state tournament in Northfield at the end of February, while the Burnsville squad chose to pass on the State tournament to focus on the invitational University of Minnesota Women’s Ice Hockey Tournament in March.⁴¹⁰

⁴⁰³ “Lakeville Mites Report Scores.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 10, 1977, p13B; “Lakeville Mites Report Scores.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 17, 1977, p14A.

⁴⁰⁴ “Lakeville Mites Report Scores.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 10, 1977, p13B.

⁴⁰⁵ “Burnsville Bantam Girls Triumph 6-2.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 16, 1976, p14B; “Burnsville Bantam Girls Win Two.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 23, 1976, p12B; “Burnsville Girl Bantams Lead League.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 6, 1977, p11B; “Bantam Girls Stay Undefeated.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 12, 1977, p28; “Hockey Girls Tally 8th Victory.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 13, 1977, p13B; “Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Bantam Girls.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 19, 1977, p32; “Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Bantam Girls.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 26, 1977, p29; “Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Bantam Girls.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 2, 1977, p28; “Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Bantam girls get No. 13.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 9, 1977, p28; “Burnsville Bantam Girls Defeat Wayzata 4-2.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 17, 1977, p14A; “Burnsville Bantam Girls Tie for 1st.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 24, 1977, p13B.

⁴⁰⁶ “Farmington Midgets Win 1, Lose 2.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 13, 1977, p13B; “Farmington Girl Midgets Win 3 of 4.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 20, 1977, p13B; “Farmington Girls Midgets Win 1 of 3.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 3, 1977, p15B.

⁴⁰⁷ “Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Midget Girls.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 19, 1977, p32; “Burnsville Midget Girls Defeat Last Year’s State Champs.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 20, 1977, p13B; “Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Midget Girls.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 9, 1977, p28; “Burnsville Girls Win 7th Straight.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 10, 1977, p13B.

⁴⁰⁸ “Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Midget Girls.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 2, 1977, p28; “Farmington Girl Midgets Win 3 of 4.” *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 20, 1977, p13B.

⁴⁰⁹ “Farmington Girls’ Hockey to Play in Tourney.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 24, 1977, p14B.

⁴¹⁰ “Farmington Girls’ Hockey to Play in Tourney.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 24, 1977, p14B; “Midget girls invited to U-M tourney.” *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 23, 1977, p26.

The peewee girls started a short season in early January, with only three teams in the league. Burnsville's Joy Bambenek, Tammy Bakken, Lori Benson, Janet Corr, Amy Doeden, Sally Dougherty, Andy Grazzini, Debbie Hendrickson, Donna Hendrickson, Jeffy Noble, Kathy Ottum, Sue Pogatchnik, Dana Roberts, Julie Sturgeon, and Jenna Watts all made appearances in reports throughout the season.⁴¹¹ With so few teams at the peewee level, no formal tournament seems to have been held, though the peewee girls were all invited to a tournament with the boys in Farmington that went unreported March 26.⁴¹²

The 1977 Minnesota State Midget Girl's Hockey Tournament was held February 26-27, 1977 at the Northfield Ice Arena. Northfield, Elk River, Farmington, and Anoka participated, while Burnsville and Lake Region appear to have decided to prioritize the University of Minnesota invitational tournament the following weekend.⁴¹³ While only the results of the Farmington games were reported in the local papers, Farmington opened by beating Anoka 7-5, with five goals from Patty Jensen and two from Sue Korsman. Elk River must have beat Northfield, and Anoka beat Northfield in the consolation round. Elk River went on to beat Farmington 6-3 in the final. Sue Magalis scored twice and Pam Siple once for Farmington in their second place finish. Elk River took the official title of 1977 Minnesota State Midget Girl's Hockey Champions.⁴¹⁴

The 1977 Girls State Bantam Tournament took place in Albert Lea March 4-6, 1977. Albert Lea, Burnsville, the Elk River Elks, Farmington, the Fergus Falls Kilowatts, the St. Paul Phalen Firey Flyers, Lake Region, and North St. Paul participated in two divisions, with the winners of each division advancing to the final. The tournament was held under the MAHA boys' rules, though "unnecessary boarding" and "violent checking" were forbidden. Teams were awarded two points for a win and one for a tie, with overtime only in the final and third place rounds.⁴¹⁵ While only records of the Burnsville results were found, they went 1-0 against Fergus Falls, 3-1 against Farmington, and 6-4 against Lake Region in their run to the finals, with every game decided in the final minutes. In the championship match, St. Paul Phalen became the 1977 Girls State Bantam Hockey Champions, emerging 5-4 over Burnsville. Burnsville coach Fred Staudt was proud of his team and felt that girls hockey had finally come of age, with excellent play by every single girl in the tournament.⁴¹⁶

The University of Minnesota First Annual Women's Ice Hockey Tournament was an invitational, single elimination tournament held on March 6, 1977. Participating teams included the University of Minnesota and the University of Wisconsin women's club teams, the Roseville Roadrunners (women), a select team from the Edina Park Board league, and the midget level teams from Anoka, Burnsville, Farmington, and Lake Region.⁴¹⁷ The Burnsville teens first defeated the women from the University of Wisconsin in an 8-0 shutout with two goals each from De Ferrera, Joyce Detlefsen, and Denise Grazzini, and single scores from Holly Burkard and Tracy Hommes. Lake Region, the University of Minnesota, and Edina also won their first-round matches, though the pairings were not found. In round two, Edina managed to score once on Burnsville in an 8-1 stomping that involved hat tricks from Cindy Storm and Finney Johnston, with single goals by Detlefsen and Burkard. The other

⁴¹¹ "Pee Wee girls post 2-0 mark." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 12, 1977, p28; "Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: PeeWee Girls." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 19, 1977, p32; "Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Pee Wee Girls." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 9, 1977, p28; "Goalie Shines for Pee Wee Girls." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 23, 1977, p23.

⁴¹² "Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Pee Wee Girls." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 16, 1977, p28; "Tournament Play at Farmington Arena March 26, 27." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 24, 1977, p12B.

⁴¹³ *Minnesota State Midget Girl's Hockey Tournament Rosters*. Northfield, Minnesota. February 26, 1977.

⁴¹⁴ "Farmington Girl Midgets Place Second in State." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 3, 1977, p12B.

⁴¹⁵ *1977 Girls State Bantam Tournament Schedule*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. March 4, 1977; "Albert Lea Hosts State Girls Bantam Hockey." *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. March 4, 1977, p6.

⁴¹⁶ "Burnsville Girl Bantams Edged from Champion." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 10, 1977, p13B.

⁴¹⁷ "Midget girls invited to U-M tourney." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 23, 1977, p26.

round two match saw the University of Minnesota women upset the Lake Region teens 4-1. Finally, Burnsville shut out the University of Minnesota women's squad in a 6-0 victory for the tournament championship, with a Detlefsen hat trick and single tallies from Storm, De Ferrera, and Johnston. Burnsville coach Marlys Broberg was interviewed the following week and said "In time there will be girls' high school hockey. But I don't look for that for another five years," while acknowledging that the girls would be ready before then.⁴¹⁸

1977-1978

Farmington began their registration for the 1977-1978 season in early October, emphasizing that all players needed to register early so as to be covered for their Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) registration. Girls teams at the midget, bantam and peewee levels were planned for the year.⁴¹⁹ Louis Schmitz also helped organize a women's team from Farmington for the year, so that women over 20 could continue to play.⁴²⁰ Burnsville started their registration in early November, with Marlys Broberg continuing as the commissioner for girls, and had midget and bantam level teams.⁴²¹ Apple Valley verifiably continued their mixed gender programs, as Cherrie Moody was part of the winning Whalers team of the mite division, and Sandra Largen of the Blackhawks won the peewee division.⁴²²

Other known girls teams for the season, outside of Farmington and Burnsville, from game reports and tournaments included Albert Lea (midget), Anoka (bantam), Austin (a single all ages team that played bantam and midget teams), Coon Rapids (bantam), Elk River (midget), Fergus Falls (bantam), Lake Region (midget and bantam), Minnetonka (unknown), Northfield (a single all ages team that played bantam and midget teams), Richfield (bantam), Roseville (peewee), St. Paul-Phalen (bantam), and Wayzata (bantam). The University of Minnesota womens' team continued to play, as did the womens' club team in Roseville. Mens' Gopher coach Herb Brooks had formally begun welcoming girls to his hockey summer camps in Shattuck, where he found that they were "very similar to boys of the same age. They're very serious students out there." Farmington's Lucille Korsman, who had served on the MAHA board since 1974, was officially appointed vice president in charge of girls' hockey, and the board estimated that 60 teams, from approximately 26 cities, made up of roughly 1000 women and girls were playing in Minnesota for the season.⁴²³ One of the Roseville women players, Liz Anderson, explained to the *Minneapolis Tribune* that

Attitudes are changing little by little. At first women hockey players were frowned upon, but not now. I cook and sew and do all the typical mother things. I don't look like a hockey player, but I really want to win. I do the best I can. It just happens to be fun.⁴²⁴

The rapid expansion of womens' and girls' teams across the country led AHAUS to appoint a national coordinator for women's hockey to their board, Carl Gray, who ran a league for girls in Massachusetts. He made

⁴¹⁸ "Burnsville Midgets dominate first U-M women's tourney." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 9, 1977, p24; Gilbert, John. "Hockey Column." *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 13, 1977, p6C.

⁴¹⁹ "FYHA Sign-Up is Oct. 8." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 6, 1977, p12B.

⁴²⁰ "Women's Hockey Team Meeting at Farmington." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 1, 1977, p12B.

⁴²¹ "Final BAC Hockey Sign-Up is Nov. 5." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. November 3, 1977, p16B.

⁴²² "AVHA Champions" *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 30, 1978, p13B.

⁴²³ Schmitt, Mary. "Women's hockey gaining popularity in Minnesota." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 25, 1977, p39; Sargent, Pat. "Austin girls play hockey on Saturday." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. March 3, 1978, p3.

⁴²⁴ Schmitt, Mary. "Women's hockey gaining popularity in Minnesota." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 25, 1977, p39.

a point of noting that “unlike the boys, the girls aren’t pushed into [hockey] by their fathers. They are there because they really enjoy the sport.”⁴²⁵

Local coverage of girls’ hockey dropped off somewhat precipitously in late 1977, with reports of games often appearing in clusters and swaths of games sometimes missing entirely. While the peewee level girls from Farmington played internally in a non-checking, no slap shot league, the Farmington midget and bantam levels girls played in the Metro Area Girls Hockey League (MAGHL) for the season. Also in that league, Robin Boeser—who had returned to girls’ hockey for the season—made the press along with Lisa Borchardt, Holly Burkard, De Ferrera, Denise Grazzini, Tracy Hommes, Finney Johnston, Pam Oberg, Barb O’Neill, and Jill Pederson for the Burnsville midgets. Ann Bougetz, Sandy Bredt, Jeanne Burgoyne, Andy Grazzini Heidi Herold, Marcie Martin, Leigh Nordstrom Dana Roberts, Bonnie Schultz, Ginny Staudt, and Sue Thompson dominated coverage for the Burnsville bantams. While reports were few and far between, a rare set of bantam league standings published on February 25 indicated that 66 bantam level games had been played that season to that date, with St. Paul Phalen, Wayzata, and Burnsville in the top three places.⁴²⁶

A few accounts were found of teams outside of the metro league. Northfield’s girls’ team, which was made up of girls from the ages of 11-18, played both midget and bantam teams in a non-league basis. They opened their season in December with a 4-1 loss to Richfield, with the paper crediting the lone goal to Cheri Poquette, though a young Lisa Halverson made sure to correct the report to her own name, in pen, in her scrapbook at the time. Kim Christenson, Sue Cloud, Robyn Dahlgren, Stacy Lonergan, and Kris Nicholson also appeared regularly in game reports that year.⁴²⁷ The new Austin team was also an all-ages team, that had developed a few years after Gail Wolfe’s small city league folded. In a rarity for the time, coach Denny Sershen was not a parent of one of the girls playing; though his assistant coach, Jackie Synoground had two daughters on the team. Instead, Coach Sershen was a former youth hockey player and enthusiast who chose to volunteer for the girls team because he wanted his three year old daughter to grow up in a world where all options were available for her. The Austin team played Northfield and Albert Lea, as well as a team from Des Moines, Iowa, in friendly matches throughout the year.⁴²⁸

The 1978 Minnesota State Midget Girl’s Hockey Tournament was held March 4 and 5 at the Cook Arena in Coon Rapids, and included just four teams. Burnsville opened by defeating Anoka-Coon Rapids 4-2, while Elk River shutout Farmington 4-0 on March 4. In the championship round, Burnsville emerged as the 1978 Minnesota State Midget Girl’s Hockey Champions in a 5-3 win over Elk River. Anoka beat Farmington 3-2 to take the consolation match.⁴²⁹

The 1978 Bantam Girl’s State Hockey Tournament was held March 16-19 in Farmington, with the Farmington Youth Hockey organization credited as the “Tournament Hostess” in the program. Anoka, Burnsville,

⁴²⁵ Sheppard, Nathaniel Jr. “Women’s Hockey growth phenomenal.” *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. March 23, 1978, p20.

⁴²⁶ “Burnsville Girl Bantams Beat Richfield 5-0.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 2, 1978, p14B; “Burnsville Midget Girls Post Three Victories.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 29, 1977, p10B; “Burnsville Midget Results.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 29, 1977, p10B; “Burnsville Girls 3-0 in Met League.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 12, 1978, p14B; “Farmington Offers Hockey for Youths” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 1, 1977, p14B; “Bantam Girls Open Season with Win At Burnsville.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 15, 1977, p13B; “Burnsville Girl Bantams Beat Lake Region.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 26, 1978, p11B.

⁴²⁷ “Girls win at hockey.” Unsourced newspaper clipping in the scrap book of Lisa Halverson Silkey. A rough date can be determined as the article says the next game will be played on Thursday, January 12—January 12 fell on a Thursday only in 1978 in the years the Northfield team existed.

⁴²⁸ Sargent, Pat. “Austin girls play hockey on Saturday.” *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. March 3, 1978, p3.

⁴²⁹ “Burnsville Midget Girls Win State.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 9, 1978, p11B.

Farmington, Fergus Falls, Lake Region, St. Paul-Phalen, Richfield, and Wayzata all appeared in the tournament. First seed Phalen met eighth seed Anoka at 5:45pm on Thursday, March 16 for the tournament opener, with Phalen emerging victorious in a 7-0 shutout. Lake Region then defeated Richfield in a 3-0 shutout at 7pm. Mary Beth Bremer scored once and Karen Egertson scored twice for Lake Region, with an assist from Debra Pythian. For the final Thursday night game, Wayzata took on Farmington at 8:15pm. Farmington's Lisa Schmitz scored once to avoid a shutout, but Wayzata emerged victorious 4-1. Friday evening saw the last quarter-finals match, between Burnsville and Fergus Falls, at 5:45pm. Jeanne Burgoyne scored two goals for Burnsville, with a single goal by Amy Cranston for Fergus Falls in a 2-1 Burnsville victory.

Saturday kicked off at 8:45am with the first match of the consolation bracket, where Richfield shut out Anoka 4-0. Fergus Falls did the same to Farmington in a 2-0 shutout at 10am. Back on the championship bracket, Phalen beat Lake Region 4-2 at 11:45am. Wayzata also knocked Burnsville out at 3:15 pm, with a narrow 1-0 win off a goal by one of the Halldorson sisters—likely Laura, who played at wing, and would grow up to be the first women's varsity ice hockey coach at the University of Minnesota. Saturday ended with the consolation match between Richfield and Fergus Falls. Fergus Falls won 1-0.

Sunday began at 12:15pm with the match for third place between Lake Region and Burnsville. Goals by Burnsville's Heidi Herold and Sue Thompson were not enough to overcome Karen Egertson's hat trick, and Lake Region took third place. At 1:45pm, the championship match between St. Paul Phalen and Wayzata began. The game began with a dominant Phalen scoring three times in rapid succession, only to have Wayzata come back and tie it up. After goals from both teams and with the game tied at 4-4, the finals went into double overtime. Wayzata pulled off the win to become the 1978 Bantam Girl's State Hockey Champions. Wayzata's Laura Halldorson, Kris Peterson, and Jill Pohtilla scored for the win while Phalen's Jackie Anderson, Cindy Galloway, Karin Sherwood, and Diane Schray each netted a puck in a valiant effort for second.⁴³⁰

Based on later recollections, Wayzata's coach, Dr. Bob May, seems to have hatched a plan while watching many of the games in the tournament. May had coached boys and men's hockey for many years, including the national champion 1959 University of North Dakota team. With an invitation to the National Invitational Girls' Tournament secured, May began approaching other bantam players who had impressed him. The Wayzata team was good, but an all-Minnesota team had a strong chance to win the National title. Recruiting girls like Phalen's Jackie Anderson, Cindy Galloway, and Kim Scherek, and Burnsville's Ginny Staudt, Heidi Herold, and Sue Thompson, Dr. May formed the first iteration of the Minnesota Checkers. Kim Scherek would later recall thinking he was kidding when he asked her to come to nationals, and that the moment changed her life. May also recruited Burnsville's coach Jack Thompson to join his daughter Sue and become assistant coach. May took the newly formed team to Buffalo, New York, in Wayzata's nationals slot. Many of the non-Wayzata players were disqualified by the tournament before the final for reasons that were not documented, but suspected to be either strategic, or classicism regarding equipment quality in later interviews. Despite learning they were disqualified while still at the hotel, every single girl eliminated still came to the arena to cheer on their teammates. The Checkers finished the tournament at the teen level in second place.⁴³¹

⁴³⁰ *Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association Bantam Girls State Hockey Tournament Program*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 16, 1978. Program bracket was annotated by the Bredt family at the time to record the outcomes of each game; "Wayzata Wins State Girls' Hockey Tournament." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 23, 1978, p15B.

⁴³¹ Phone Interview with Kim Scherek, former St. Paul Phalen and Minnesota Checkers player in the late 1970s. December 21, 2024; In-person Interview with former 1970s Burnsville player Sandy Bredt Larson. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 19, 2024; Gilbert, John. "Hockey Column: National Tournaments." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 9, 1978, p55; Vintage Minnesota Hockey. "Minnesota Checkers Womens Hockey." <https://history.vintagemnhockey.com/page/show/1207586-minnesota-checkers-womens->

1978-1979

In September of 1978 the Mend-Eagan Athletic Association announced that they had 400 boys and girls signed up for their mixed gender intracity league, made up of kids from Mendota Heights, Eagan, Mendota, Lilydale, and Sunfish Lake.⁴³² The Rosemount Area Hockey Association also announced its league, open to both boys and girls, with no apparent distinction made for girls' teams.⁴³³ Farmington Youth Hockey Association announced signups for boys up to 14 and girls up to 17 for their in city and travelling teams.⁴³⁴ Burnsville Arena announced the hockey preview day on November 30, when girls and boys teams from Burnsville were expected to play exhibition games.⁴³⁵ From the testimony of former players and the appearance of Burnsville players on Farmington teams, the Burnsville bantam level squad of 1977-1978 dissolved after losing several players and coach Jack Thompson to the Checkers, though a peewee level team existed for girls in Burnsville during this season.⁴³⁶ West St. Paul had fully converted to the newly popular ringette for its girls' teams by 1978.⁴³⁷

The only records of league play found for 1978-79 came from the *Dakota County Tribune*, who published short summaries of FYHA games. From these, we know that Farmington fielded midget, bantam, and peewee level teams that year, though some women played at multiple levels. Some former Burnsville players from the dissolved bantam team, like Barb O'Neill, made the move to Farmington. Kris Bell, Pete Cordes, Jenny Drackert, Tomma Freunds Schuh, Sue Gilbertson, Shawn Gress, Beth Haglund, Lyn Jensen, Dawn Lindberg, Kim McGovern, O'Neill, Eileen Rother, Jody Schmitz, Lisa Schmitz, and Vickie Snowden all appear in games for Farmington at various levels. Other known teams playing at the midget level included Anoka, the Checkers (still sometimes referred to as Wayzata), and Richfield. Lake Region and Coon Rapids had bantam level teams that met Farmington during the season. Burnsville and Roseville each fielded peewee level teams. Other teams may have continued, but no contemporary records were found, and no state tournaments appear to have been held.⁴³⁸

The Minnesota Checkers, now made a permanent elite state squad, including girls from nine schools all together, opened their season by inviting the team they lost to at nationals in 1978 to a rematch. All still under 16, the Checkers faced Concord, Massachusetts Assabet Valley, whose players ranged in age from 17 to 22, at the St. Paul Auditorium. Assabet Valley opened with a short-handed goal by Joan O'Rourke and quickly scored a second from Lori Hutchinson, off an assist by Laura Brown. The Checkers' former Phalen line responded with a score by Cindy Galloway, assisted by Jackie Anderson and Kim Scherek. In the second, Assabet's O'Rourke and Mary Beth Griard both scored off assists from Ann Boatright, but the Checkers' Burnsville goalie Ginny Staudt still managed to stop numerous shots on goal. Four minutes into the third period former Burnsville forward Sue Thompson scored individually for the Checkers, and then assisted Anderson on another goal. Galloway scored

[hockey](#) Accessed 4/3/2025; Burrill, Jeff. "Hockey prowess affords Burnsville girls the luxury of travel, including trip to Russia." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 30, 1980, p41A; Phone Interview with researcher Leslie Bates, who interviewed Dr. May before his death and is currently producing a film about the Minnesota Checkers. Based on her notes, Ms. Bates believes the disqualifications in the 1978 Nationals tournament were justified by poor equipment quality among the non-Wayzata girls. December 29, 2024.

⁴³² "400 Youth expected in MEAA hockey." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. September 14, 1978, p14B.

⁴³³ "Final RAHA Sign-Up Is Wednesday." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. September 28, 1978, p14B.

⁴³⁴ "FYHA Sign-Up is October 21, 28." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 19, 1978, p15B.

⁴³⁵ "Burnsville Arena Gearing Up For Busy Winter Season." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. November 21, 1978, p7B.

⁴³⁶ "FYHA Game Scores." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 25, 1979, p12B; In-person Interview with former 1970s Burnsville player Sandy Bredt Larson. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 19, 2024.

⁴³⁷ Dillon, Bud. "WSP Youth Hockey." *West St. Paul Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. January 17, 1979, pB7.

⁴³⁸ "Farmington Youth Hockey Game Scores Reported." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 18, 1979, p14B; "FYHA Game Scores." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 25, 1979, p12B; "FYHA Game Scores." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 1, 1979, p13B; "FYHA Game Results." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 8, 1979, p11B

the equalizer with fourteen minutes left to play. Wayzata goalie Laura Couch finished the period for the Checkers stopping every shot that came at her, leaving the rematch a 4-4 tie.⁴³⁹

April of 1979 saw the Checkers headed to Boston, Massachusetts, for the 1979 National Women's Invitational Tournament. Ranking in the tournament was based on record as well as goals-for and goals-against-average numbers, and the Checkers were facing considerably older and bigger teams in the Class B category. The tournament played by the same AHAUS rules as the boys tournaments, and classes were determined by games played during the normal year, with Class A for teams with 60+ games. On Friday, April 6, they defeated a team from Hudson, MA 2-0 in the opening round, with Burnsville's Ginny Staudt recording the shutout. On Saturday, they defeated Shawsheen, Massachusetts 4-2 off goals from Burnsville's Heidi Herold and New Hope's Kris Peterson, and tied the Detroit Junior Wings 1-1, with Peterson again scoring. Staudt recorded her second shutout of the tournament on Sunday, in a brutal 16-0 defeat of Sloan, New York. As goals mattered to the rankings and shot at the finals, running up the score was understood, though Staudt would acknowledge that it felt uncomfortable in later interviews. The Checkers faced Cape Cod, Massachusetts in the finals. Tied 2-2 with less than two minutes left to play, Wayzata's Laura Halldorson pulled off a backhanded shot from behind the Cape Cod net and the Checkers emerged victorious. Sue Thompson clotheslined her after the goal, and the entire team piled on in a cheering heap. The Minnesota Checkers brought home the Open B class national championship for 1979.⁴⁴⁰

Closing out the decade, the Checkers represented the United States internationally at the Helsinki Holiday International Tournament in Finland, and for an expected exhibition game in Leningrad, USSR in December of 1979.⁴⁴¹ Minnesota Governor Al Quie and Lieutenant Governor Lou Wangberg appointed the Checkers as their official representatives for the State of Minnesota and proclaimed December 12-19 as "International Hockey Tournament Week" in their honor.⁴⁴² The Helsinki tournament included teams from Sweden, West Germany, and Finland, in a round robin event. The Checkers met four Finnish teams and won every match, claiming the tournament championship in a 3-1 victory over Tampere.⁴⁴³ The trip to Leningrad did not end up involving a game, and instead they spent two nights at the Hotel Olympia and one day in the city. The experience in Russia seems to have been distressing, as Heidi Herold, Sue Thompson, and Ginny Staudt told Burnsville Current reporter Jeff Burrill that everything outside of the hotel felt drab, and that they were repeatedly told they'd go

⁴³⁹ Gilbert, John. "Hockey Slap Shots: The increasing popularity..." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 24, 1978, p22; "Checkers tie ex-champs." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 27, 1978, p3; "Checkers Tie Assabet 4-4" *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 4, 1979, p13A.

⁴⁴⁰ "Checkers 6 wins in tourney" *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 7, 1979, p26; "Minnesotans gain semifinals of women's hockey tourney." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 8, 1979, p45; "State girls win hockey title." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 9, 1979, p28; McKenna, Charlie. "Girls' hockey lags, but state boasts U.S. champ." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 15, 1979, p33.

⁴⁴¹ "Minnesota Checkers to play in Finland, Soviet Union." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 10, 1979, p28.

⁴⁴² State of Minnesota, Office of the Governor. "Proclamation: December 12-19, 1979 as International Hockey Tournament Week." Sealed and Signed November 30, 1979; "Herold, Staudt, Thompson On Way to Helsinki Tourney." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 13, 1979, p11B.

⁴⁴³ "Women's Six off to Finland." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 14, 1979, p59; "Minnesota squad wins." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 24, 1979, p17.

to jail if they brought American cigarettes.⁴⁴⁴ Some of the women on the trip later recalled that the KGB officer assigned to escort them in the city was a young Vladimir Putin.⁴⁴⁵

Into the 1980s and Beyond

As evidenced by the intense drop off in teams between the 1977-1978 season and 1978-1979, girls' hockey on the whole seems to have suffered a more extreme slump than the one simultaneously experienced by boys' hockey in 1979, which former South St. Paul and Notre Dame coach Charlie "Lefty" Smith attributed to a number of factors, including steeply rising costs to play, rink closures—especially due to power costs—, an overemphasis on all-star travel teams, and a growing reputation for injury and violence.⁴⁴⁶ Checkers assistant coach Jack Thompson would lament the drop off of interest, attributing it in part to the lack of development for girls, and the need for many cities to field all ages teams, which he saw as discouraging to the younger girls, though all ages teams had existed and thrived across the metro throughout the previous decade.⁴⁴⁷ Checkers head coach Bob May would blame basketball, a story that persists to this day, though basketball had been popular and sanctioned as a girls' high school varsity sport throughout the 1970s youth league period, and many women played both sports during those years.⁴⁴⁸ While it is possible that the ongoing success of girls' varsity basketball had influenced younger girls choices more as the decade went on, the factors affecting boys hockey seem likely to have also affected the girls programs. Whatever the ultimate cause, a strong youth girls' era certainly ended with the close of the decade.

The all-star travel team Minnesota Checkers dominated the limited news coverage girls hockey did get in the first half of the decade, with captains like Jan May, Kim Scherek, and Sue Thompson putting in time to be ambassadors for their sport.⁴⁴⁹ The Checkers would go on to win National titles again in 1980 (Detroit), 1981 (Lake Placid—where they used the same locker room, number 5, as the men's US Olympic team), 1982 (Boston), and come in second place in 1983 (Detroit). Composed throughout those years of Bloomington's Cindy Bijold, Brooklyn Park's Kris and Jill Peterson, Burnsville's Thompson, Heidi Herold, Cindy Storm, and Ginny Staudt, Cottage Grove's Nina Koyama, Eden Prairie's Pat Denny, Hasting's Edie Boyer, Maplewood's Cindy Galloway, New Brighton's Cheryl DeBruzzi, North St. Paul's Scherek and Jackie Anderson, Minneapolis's Cindy Cowan, and Wayzata's May, Cathy Coniff, Wendy Pajor, Marielle Gatenby, Karen Howe, Laura Halldorson, and Jill Pohtilla, the Checkers were a true cross-section of metro area women. Scherek remembers the team as incredibly close and incredibly focused.⁴⁵⁰

⁴⁴⁴ Burrill, Jeff. "Hockey prowess affords Burnsville girls the luxury of travel, including trip to Russia." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 30, 1980, p41A.

⁴⁴⁵ Phone Interview with researcher Leslie Bates, who interviewed Dr. May before his death and is currently producing a film about the Minnesota Checkers. Based on her notes, Ms. Bates believes the disqualifications in the 1978 Nationals tournament were justified by poor equipment quality among the non-Wayzata girls. December 29, 2024.

⁴⁴⁶ Smith, Charlie. "'Where's hockey going? – Lefty Smith'" *West St. Paul Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. March 21, 1979, pB11.

⁴⁴⁷ McKenna, Charlie. "Girls' hockey lags, but state boasts U.S. champ." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 15, 1979, p33.

⁴⁴⁸ Parsons, Jim. "Pulling Ahead with Icy Determination." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 17, 1980, p2B and 6B; Grow, Doug. "The Checkers: Girls hockey team Makes its move." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 1980, p46 and 14B; "Girls state cage tourney stirs 'big-time' pressures, emotions." *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 19, 1976, p34; "Patty Oaster Named Top Girl Athlete at BHS." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 5, 1976, p13B.

⁴⁴⁹ Grow, Doug. "The Checkers: Girls hockey team Makes its move." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 1980, p46 and 14B.

⁴⁵⁰ "Minnesota Checkers rout Calumet 9-0 in tourney." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 12, 1980, p31; Gilbert, John. "Checkers lose to Livonia 5-2 in hockey tournament." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 13, 1980, p45; United Press International. "Minnesota team wins girls' midget hockey title." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 14, 1980, p37;

Other all-star teams were formed, with the 1987 Minnesota Thoroughbreds the longest lasting. Jim Woog, a member of the South St. Paul Woog family and cousin of Gopher's coach Doug Woog, would be involved in the formation of that team, which would continue into the 2000s.⁴⁵¹ Girls and women playing would persist in other ways through the 1980s and early 1990s as well. Richfield had an women's "All-Stars" team that ranged in age from 14-24, and that beat the Checkers in the first hockey game held at the Willmar Civic Center on January 12, 1980, led by college student Pam Oberg, who had previously played youth hockey for Burnsville and North St. Paul.⁴⁵² Willmar columnist Rand Middleton, who had previously considered women's hockey a "a sideshow, and not a very interesting one at that," was shocked by how good the game actually was to acknowledge his error.⁴⁵³ Chisholm's girls powder puff program transitioned in 1979 to more traditional hockey, taking on boys squads as well as any of the remaining women and girls teams willing to travel from the cities.⁴⁵⁴ Farmington's continued to field a team which played other teen and women's teams.⁴⁵⁵

Women's teams in general began to boom in the late 1970s—like Sue Ring's University club teams, Finney Johnston's Minneapolis Rink Rats, the Goaldiggers, River Falls, and the Roseville Strauss—with many formed from former youth and college players, as well as women new to the game. These teams would be among the first to form the Minnesota Women's Hockey League (MWHL in 1978, later MWA—association—by 1984). Many of these teams would hold regular hockey clinics and work hard to encourage girls and women playing throughout the 1980s and early 1990s. Older women played too: Judy Jungwirth, who was personally banned as a child in 1956, was playing for the Roseville Roadrunners by 1977, and Bonnie Shea, who had been personally banned in Duluth in 1959 would join the UMD Lady Bulldogs by 1984.⁴⁵⁶ Richfield's Mary Brown, who would play on the University of Minnesota club team in college and played in the first women's worlds tournament in 1987, attributes much of the perseverance of women's hockey in this era to the friendships forged in the youth leagues and club teams, where girls regularly stayed at opponents houses, and had to work together to make hockey happen, an attitude that persisted.⁴⁵⁷ In 1983, the league would hold their first ever All Stars game, with familiar 70s youth league names like Deb Ahrens, Cheryl DeBruzzi, Deanna Ferrera, Cindy Galloway, Wendy Jacobsen, Finny Johnston, Nina Koyama, Jan May, Kris Peterson, Shelly Schmitz, Diane Schray, Ginny Staudt, Cindy Storm, Sue Thompson, and coach Louis Schmitz all appearing, alongside Sue Ring-Jarvi and other women's team players.⁴⁵⁸ Lynn Olson pushed the women's league to become AHUSA affiliated in 1983, which was finalized in 1986. That league would eventually grow into the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota

United Press International. "Meet Minnesota Checkers: Girls Who Win in Hockey." *The News of Cumberland County*. Bridgeton, New Jersey. April 18, 1980, p14; Roberg, Bob. "Minnesota Checkers Girl's Hockey Team Again Conquers the Top of the Mountain." *Let's Play Hockey*. Sauk Center, Minnesota. April 14, 1981, p14; Thornton, Ralph. "What's Checkers' move? Shh, it's national tourney." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 1, 1981, p40 and 12B; Schutta, Tony. "MN Checkers win their fifth women's state title – now head for nationals." *Let's Play Hockey*. Sauk Center, Minnesota. March 30, 1982; "Hockey Results: Amateur Women." *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 11, 1983, p34; Phone Interview with Kim Scherek, former St. Paul Phalen and Minnesota Checkers player in the late 1970s. December 21, 2024.

⁴⁵¹ "The New Hampshire Selects..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 7, 1992, p22; "Woog, Dr. James N." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 9, 1992, p26.

⁴⁵² "Richfield women's hockey team wins in ice opener here." *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. January 14, 1980, p17.

⁴⁵³ Middleton, Rand. "Little Crow Trails: The goalie wore lipstick." *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. January 15, 1980, p14.

⁴⁵⁴ Parsons, Jim. "Pulling Ahead with Icy Determination." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 17, 1980, p2B and 6B.

⁴⁵⁵ "Hockey Results: Amateur Women." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 23, 1980, p49.

⁴⁵⁶ Cowardin, David. "I'll play til I can't." *UMD News*. March 15, 2023. <https://news.d.umn.edu/articles/bonnie-shae-2023>. Accessed 8/30/2025; University of Minnesota Women's Hockey Club. *U of M 1st Annual Women's Ice Hockey Invitational Program*. 1977.

⁴⁵⁷ LaRose, Jason. "One Giant Leap." *Hockey Canada*. June 29, 2017. <http://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/news/2017-tcaa-a-giant-leap-for-womens-hockey> Accessed 6/5/2025; Phone interview with Mary Brown, former Richfield player and later coach at several schools. June 5, 2025.

⁴⁵⁸ Minnesota Women's Hockey League. *All-Star Game Program*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 15, 1983.

(WHAM), an organization that exists to this day and still includes Ring-Jarvi's post university team, the Blue Js, who have played for more than 40 years. Women's teams in the 80s played each other as well as girls and college teams.⁴⁵⁹

Eagan Youth Hockey and Apple Valley Hockey Association continued to actively recruit girls for mixed gendered teams into the 1980s.⁴⁶⁰ Susan Farniok of Delano would become the second woman to play boys' varsity high school hockey in Minnesota when she appeared in goal as a sophomore in 1985, and like other girls at that time came out of both the surviving all girls' teams and boys' youth league teams. Her coaches cited her history with the boys' leagues as a big part of why the varsity boys immediately accepted her—they'd played with her their whole careers.⁴⁶¹ Jeanine Sobek, who would win silver for Team USA in the IIHF's World Tournament for Women in Ottawa in 1990, played boys' hockey in Coon Rapids from second to sixth grade before joining the MWWHA.⁴⁶² Jenny Hanley of Edina would play boys' varsity hockey with Edina High School in 1990, making it to the section finals but just missing the state tournament.⁴⁶³ Jim Klobuchar, true to form, would ask her if goalies cry, but gave her significant respect for her play at the behest of coach Willard Ikola.⁴⁶⁴ The following year, Hanley became the first woman in the US to play for a men's varsity college team, playing for the Division III Hamline University Pipers.⁴⁶⁵ Hanley would also join Sobek and Shawna Davidson of Duluth on Team USA's second women's silver medal squad at the 1992 IIHF Worlds.⁴⁶⁶

In 1988, Bloomington was the first Minnesota town chosen to host the Girls'/Women's National Ice Hockey Championships for AHAUS, and Minnesota teams competed at every level. Westwood and the Blue J's competed in the Senior Women's A Division, the UMD Lady Bulldogs and a team sponsored by Dave's Sporting Goods competed in Senior B, Anoka and the Thunderbirds competed at the midget level, and the Thoroughbreds—with Joy Woog, among other legacy names—and St. Croix Filies competed at the peewee level.⁴⁶⁷ Women's and girls' ice hockey teams, though fewer in number than in the height of the 1970s, existed every year in Minnesota after 1974. In 1994, as one example, there were enough girls' teams that the Burnsville B girl peewees won their division title with a 12-0 record, won the state regional finals, won tournaments at Augsburg and Anoka, and took the consolation prize in a tournament in Duluth.⁴⁶⁸

⁴⁵⁹ In person interview with Sue Ring-Jarvi. Roseville, Minnesota. May 6, 2025; "The Blue J's senior women's hockey team..." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 18, 1980, p103; "Women's hockey tournament slated." *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. December 31, 1981, p11; "Minneapolis team favored in women's hockey tourney." *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. January 8, 1981, p11; Brackin, Dennis. "Rink Rats are no rinky-dink operation." *The Minneapolis Star*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 11, 1982, p4 (Community); Middleton, Rand. "Goaldiggers enjoy prospecting in Willmar." *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. January 7, 1982, pB1; Thornton, Ralph. "Hockey becomes a habit for more and more women." *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 18, 1983, p68.

⁴⁶⁰ "Eagan Youth Hockey Sign-Up Continues." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. September 20, 1979, p13B; "AVHA Referee Clinic Set Oct. 8, 15." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 4, 1979, p8B.

⁴⁶¹ Grow, Doug. "Goalie's a girl, and Delano has dealt with it." *Minneapolis Star and Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 11, 1985, p49.

⁴⁶² Zavoral, Nolan. "Here's how local players have found check-mates." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 18, 1990, p54.

⁴⁶³ Augustoviz, Roman. "Do-it-all school: Hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 29, 1990, p7C; Augustin, Mike. "Girl goalie plans to play college hockey." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. June 2, 1991, p25

⁴⁶⁴ Klobuchar, Jim. "On and Off the Ice, a Queen." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 12, 1991, p1B.

⁴⁶⁵ Associated Press. "Hamline Goalie Scores a victory for women." *The Post Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. November 16, 1991, p41.

⁴⁶⁶ Weiner, Jay. "Women on ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 1993, p46.

⁴⁶⁷ Amateur Hockey Association of the United States. *1988 U.S. Girls'/Women's National Ice Hockey Championships Program*. March 25, 1988.

⁴⁶⁸ "Super Season." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 31, 1994, p4B.

Finally, while it was a shift, once again, to a “gentler” game, the proliferation of girls’ and women’s ringette in the 1980s would lead, circuitously, back to women’s hockey for the state of Minnesota.

Minnesota Girls Hockey Players, 1970-1983

A partial and updating list of women who played in this era can be found in the *Minnesota Girls Hockey Players 1970-1983.pdf* document.

Dakota County Spotlight: Farmington's Lucille and Sue Korsman

1970s Youth League Coordinator and Her Daughter, a 1970s Youth League and Current WHAM Player.

Like so many women in hockey, Lucille Marie Paulsen came from a hockey family.⁴⁶⁹ The little sister of both Harold "Babe" Paulsen—who was, with John Mariucci, the first University of Minnesota Hockey player named an All-American during his record setting and national title winning junior year in 1940—and Lester Paulsen—who played with his brother on men's club teams in the 1930s—, her love of the game came from a familiar place.⁴⁷⁰ After getting her degree in medical technology, marrying Martin Korsman, and moving next door to the Schmitz family in Farmington, Lucille would become a major advocate for girls hockey in the 1970s.⁴⁷¹

Growing up in Farmington, Lucille's daughter Sue can remember being at the rink all day long, skating and playing hockey games with both boys and girls. Highland Circle was the epicenter for the girls team in the earliest years. Sue, the four Schmitz sisters and their cousins Bev and Christine, as well Julie Simonsen, Cindy Krubsack, Diane Satriano, Cheryl Magnuson, and Toni Carey all lived in just that one neighborhood. At coach Louis Schmitz's rink, he didn't care who you were, he just wanted to get kids involved in sports. Naturally, when enough girls were willing to start a team, Sue was in, and her mother Lucille was right there to support her.⁴⁷² Willing to jump onto the rink for mother-daughter games, or serve for nearly a decade as the Farmington team manager, Lucille was also the first woman appointed to the Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association board. She helped to triple the size of the girls' league in that era, and was elevated to the MAHA vice-president in charge of girl's hockey in 1977.⁴⁷³

Sue played with the Farmington hockey team from the earliest iteration in 1970 through the end of high school in 1978. She was a regular name in game reports in the era, frequently scoring even in games where the Farmington team was otherwise outmatched.⁴⁷⁴ While she can remember being bumped from the ice for the boys—including once when a boys' practice was given preference over a girls' game—she mostly remembers the friendships, and the fun of coming together to truly enjoy a sport. Even rivalries in the era were fun, with both the joy of beating a player she admired, and liking them as a person off the ice. Sue was also a high school

⁴⁶⁹ Memories not otherwise sourced is from a phone interview with Sue Korsman. South St. Paul, Minnesota. September 26, 2024;

⁴⁷⁰ Pope, Kristian. "All-Americans share a bond." *The Minnesota Daily*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 31, 1995.

<http://www.mndaily.com/daily/1995/10/31/sports/col31.col/> Archived from the original at

<https://web.archive.org/web/20070930200847/http://www.mndaily.com/daily/1995/10/31/sports/col31.col/> Accessed 5/29/2025;

"Harold W Paulsen." Mankato Mortuary. May 11, 2010. <https://www.mankatomortuary.com/obituaries/6022929> Accessed 5/29/2025;

"Fast Attack Nearly Wins for Hibbing." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 23, 1937, p7.

⁴⁷¹ "Lucille Marie Korsman" Minnesota Death Index 1908-2017. Certificate Number 2015-Mn-009625; "Lucille Korsman." *The Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 22, 2015. <https://obituaries.startribune.com/obituary/lucille-korsman-1090641578> Accessed 5/29/2025.

⁴⁷² "Ready or Not!! Girl's Hockey Season Starts." Unsourced newspaper clipping hand-labeled 1970 and pasted in to the Korsman family scrap book prior to clippings verified as early 1971. The clipping uses multiple fonts as well as a typical *Dakota County Tribune* ad border, and may have been a supplemental ad that was not preserved in the transition to microfiche. In addition, the presence of Louis' daughter Shelly Schmitz, but not her sisters Lisa and Jody, who played in '71-'72, lends credence to placing the clipping before that year.

⁴⁷³ "Golden Girls Lose to All Stars 11-1" *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 2, 1972, p6D; Schmitt, Mary. "Women's hockey gaining popularity in Minnesota." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 25, 1977, p39; "Lucille Korsman WHAM Hall of Fame Nomination" 2006 Inductees Class, document provided to DCHS by Sue Korsman.

⁴⁷⁴ For a few examples: "Farmington Girls Wallop LHS in Hockey." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 11, 1973, p6B; "Farmington Girls Ice Team Wins 1, Loses 3." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 12, 1976, p11B; "FHS Girls Defeat the Undeclared." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 7, 1974, p8B; "Farmington Girl Midgets Place Second in State." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 3, 1977, p12B.

varsity doubles tennis star with her Farmington hockey teammate Patty Jensen.⁴⁷⁵ She went on to play tennis at the University of Minnesota-Duluth during college.⁴⁷⁶

Having played against Sue Ring-Jarvi during the early matches with the University of Minnesota women's club team, Sue Korsman returned to hockey with the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota (WHAM). In 2006 Lucille Korsman was inducted into the WHAM Hall of Fame, following Louis Schmitz as the second inductee from Farmington.⁴⁷⁷ In the later years of her life, Lucille loved watching her daughter and grandchildren play hockey, and remained a fan of the game until she passed away in 2015.

Sue is proud of all the years of women playing together, competing, and having a great time, and the ways in which the women's leagues have grown and diversified. She plays to this day on Re-Group, a WHAM B1 team with women from 28 to 64 years old playing together, where she regularly faces players like Lisa Halvorsen Silkey, who she originally encountered in the youth leagues of the 1970s.⁴⁷⁸ Between WHAM, the Amateur Hockey Association (AHA), JMS Hockey, For the Love of Pucks, and other recreational leagues, Sue loves that today women can find places to play any day of the week.

⁴⁷⁵ "Korsman, Jensen win Missota Tennis Doubles." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 14, 1976, p13B.

⁴⁷⁶ "Tennis" *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. September 29, 1978, p12; "Tennis" *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 29, 1979, p42.

⁴⁷⁷ Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota. "Hall of Fame Gallery." <https://www.whamhockey.org/page/show/595812-hall-of-fame-gallery> Accessed 5/29/2025.

⁴⁷⁸ WHAM Hockey Rosters. "Susan Korsman." https://www.whamhockey.org/roster_players/74623538 Accessed 5/29/2025.

Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Betsy Zachman

1970s Youth League Player and Current Off-Ice Official

When Betsy Zachman first moved to Burnsville, she had to walk by the Burnsville Ice Arena on her way to Nicolette Junior High. She was a North Stars fan from early childhood—her dad had once had season tickets when she was very young—and when she learned that they held morning practices on that ice, she made it her routine to walk early to watch the practices. She collected pucks, and after ending up with a Barry Gibbs stick, she began practicing shooting in the garage. Though she had learned to skate like a hockey player on the ice in Fairview Park in Minneapolis—albeit with figure skates filed down to remove the teeth—she didn't know at the time that the height difference on skates would affect her shot. Her love of hockey and desire to play were clear, however.⁴⁷⁹

In 1975 some of her classmates told her about the girl's hockey program in Burnsville. With a pair of old leather skates, her stick, and magazines taped to her shins, she came to tryouts. Unafraid of the puck and able to flip one of the older girls on an impressive check, she made the travelling bantam team. Hockey was an expensive sport for her widowed and remarried father, who was raising five children, but the community came together to loan her gear and help with ice time.

The Burnsville bantam girls won state that 1975-76 season, and Zachman was on the juniors team for Burnsville's second run at Nationals.⁴⁸⁰ Selling lightbulbs as part of the fundraiser for the trip, she was feeling frustrated by the low door to door sales, and took her box with her to watch the North Stars practice one morning. When Lou Nanne, then still a player, learned what the fundraiser was for, he bought her entire box. Her skeptical teammates made her show them the paperwork before they believed the story.⁴⁸¹ At Nationals, on their way to a second-place finish, Zachman had an assist in the 5-0 shutout over a team from Garden City, Michigan, and was praised by the coaches for her impressive defensive work.⁴⁸² Zachman was a regular feature, usually racking up assists and praise for her defense, during the bantams 1976-77 season. That year saw the Burnsville girls finish with a 15-1-2 record and a tie with St. Paul-Phalen for first in league play, and second in the state tournament.⁴⁸³

Years later, Zachman was living in Georgia when the East Coast Hockey League's Augusta Lynx began playing. Originally a season ticket holder who delighted in pestering the opposing team bench—multiple tricycle horns were involved—she eventually became an off-ice official, manning the home penalty box and throwing out pucks. She also coached youth hockey for her grandson's teams, pushing skill building and learning multiple positions on a group of talented 8- and 9-year-old boys and girls. When the Lynx started an adult no-checking league coached by the players, she spent a couple of seasons playing co-ed hockey. She stayed on as an official with the Augusta RiverHawks of the Southern Professional Hockey League, and remembers those years as the best time of her life.

⁴⁷⁹ Recollections in this section came from an email interview with Betsy Zachman. December 14, 2024.

⁴⁸⁰ Sandy Bredt's Westwood Skate & Bike sponsored Burnsville Girls Bantams team jacket has numerous patches, including the 1st place for state for the bantam team.

⁴⁸¹ Robson, Britt. "The Nanne State." *MinnPost*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 4, 2016.

<https://www.minnpost.com/sports/2016/03/nanne-state/> Accessed 5/30/2025.

⁴⁸² "Burnsville Girls Ice Team Takes Second In Nation." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. April 15, 1976, p13B.

⁴⁸³ "Burnsville Bantam Girls Win Two." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. December 23, 1976, p12B; "Burnsville Girl Bantams Lead League." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 6, 1977, p11B; "Keeping Up with Youth Hockey: Bantam Girls." *Burnsville Current*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 2, 1977, p28; "Burnsville Bantam Girls Tie for 1st." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 24, 1977, p13B.

Zachman now lives in Germany due to her job, but has kept her old skates, in the hopes that someday she'll be able to come back and at least skate often. After retirement—she's spent 40+ years working for the Department of Defense—she's already applied to be an off-ice official again at the soon to be rebuilt James Brown Arena in Augusta, Georgia.

Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Sandy Bredt Larson

1970s Youth League Player

In 1973 the Burnsville Athletic Club offices were in a strip mall, just off Nicollete and McAndrews, and Sandy Bredt Larson can remember the scene to this day. Her father, North Central airline pilot Jack Bredt, had intended to sign her brother up for hockey, but when they saw there was a table for the girl's program, she knew she wanted to play, having always preferred "Bobby Orr to Shirley Temple." When told the younger girls were still seeking coaches, her dad volunteered to assist the team, too. While her mother, anxious about injury, made her play with a defender's chest plate even though she was a wing, she mostly remembers the game as fun, and even more so once they started getting equipment better sized for girls.⁴⁸⁴

Bredt played at the peewee level for two years, and was complimented in the press for her "fine checking game"—though she and teammates remember her as the least likely to check on the team.⁴⁸⁵ She remembers carpooling with teammates to games and usually playing outside. During the 1974-75 season, she appears regularly in game reports and led the scoring with two goals in a 5-0 shutout against Lake Region that clinched the first in league spot for the dominant 12-0-2 Burnsville peewees.⁴⁸⁶ At their Nationals trip that year, Bredt remembers the joy of it being a huge family party, with everyone on the plane together, cheering together, and supporting each other. While her goal in the early win against Clarenceville stands out, losing her voice from all the cheering comes across as equally important.⁴⁸⁷ She also remembers how cool it was that year to get trophies that finally had girl hockey figures on the top. She continued playing as the team graduated into the bantam level for three more years, winning state and heading to Nationals again in 1976, and placing second in state in 1977, and the final year of the team in 1978.⁴⁸⁸ The summer of 1977, Bredt attended Herb Brooks' hockey summer camp, and remembers the fun of staying with 40 other young women in the dorms and playing all day.

After the Burnsville bantam team dissolved in 1978, Bredt went on to be the manager for the Burnsville High School boy's varsity hockey team, as well as the football team, and lettered in that capacity while in school. While she didn't get to play, she did shoot the puck with the C-team on occasion, and kept hockey in her life. Her love of the game was strong enough that it led to the one real time she defied her father. Jack Bredt was a great father and also very Catholic, and his one unbreakable rule, while he was away as a pilot, was that his children attend church. But after the 1980 Miracle on Ice happened, the US was poised to take on Finland for the gold medal Sunday morning at 10am Central time, right during Mass. Sandy and her brother instead snuck out to a Radio Shack store to watch the game. On their way home, they dropped by church to pick up a bulletin, but never forgot the game. When they told their dad years later, he laughed.

When Bredt Larson talks about the youth hockey years, a strong sense of community and lifelong friendships emerges. Coaches like Buzz Martin, Denny McDermott, Tom Oseicki, and Mark and Mike Dreier were profound influences on her life, and her friendships with the other girls in the program last to this day. She stays in touch

⁴⁸⁴ Memories in this section are from an in-person interview with Sandy Bredt Larson. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 19, 2024, and from a follow-up emails and phone calls after.

⁴⁸⁵ "Burnsville Icewomen Win 2, Lose 1." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. January 30, 1975, p11C.

⁴⁸⁶ "Burnsville Wins PeeWee Championship." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 20, 1975, p14B.

⁴⁸⁷ "Burnsville Girl Ice Teams National Runners-Up." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 17, 1975, p11B.

⁴⁸⁸ Sandy Bredt's Westwood Skate & Bike sponsored Burnsville Girls Bantams team jacket has numerous patches, including the 1976 first place set; "Burnsville Girls Ice Team Takes Second In Nation." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. April 15, 1976, p13B; "Burnsville Girl Bantams Lead League." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. January 6, 1977, p11B; "Wayzata Wins State Girls' Hockey Tournament." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 23, 1978, p15B.

with many of her former teammates. Memories like staying with the whole community in Fergus Falls for their games and tournaments, and the support of the Burnsville team fathers and the community at large to make sure all of the girls could play, stand out in particular. When her own girls were in school, it was that sense of camaraderie, more than anything, that she wanted for them, and was happy when they found it in dance line and Youth in Government. Letting kids be kids, and pursue their dreams, whatever they are, was a lifelong lesson the Burnsville team took to heart.

Second Intermission: A Winter Team Sport, On Skates, For Girls

In the grand tradition of hockey alternates for girls, from Dr. Norris' "ice cricket" to Loretta Galvin's "snow hockey," ringette manages to distinguish itself first and foremost in intent. Rather than trying to keep girls off the ice, by all accounts Sam Jacks was hoping to get more girls out on the ice when he came up with Ringette in 1963. While the assumption that what girls needed was their own hockey-like game to encourage participation may have been flawed, the desired outcome was certainly positive.

Hockey-like games utilizing a ring and a straight stick existed at least as far back as 1903, when Dr. J. M. Voorhees, the physical director of the Pratt Institute, began giving instruction in his new "Ring Hockey" between periods during college basketball games.⁴⁸⁹ Teams of six lined up with five players and a goalie each, on a smooth gymnasium floor divided into four zones, with the goal of sending the ring between the goal posts at each end. A 5-inch rubber ring was placed in the middle of the center line and on a whistle blow could be touched by the players' sticks. Straight sticks were used to slide the puck across the floor, and the walls of the room could be used for banking shots. Cross-checking was not allowed unless clear intent was made to play the ring, and sticks were not permitted to be raised above the elbow. If two or more players from opposing teams managed to each get their stick inside the ring and hold it in place, "hold" would be called, and the ring would be faced off again. Though played indoors and not on skates, in some ways Voorhees' ring hockey more closely resembles modern hockey—in terms of zones, banking shots, and positions and number of players—than the seven-player game of hockey played in the early 1900s. Hilariously, though quickly taken up by girls' teams—girls in Duluth had embraced the game by 1904—early reports argued that men played it better and it was a game better suited to a "male style" of play.⁴⁹⁰ Ring hockey spread quickly in the 1910s through the YMCA system as a game "popular with businessmen," and persisted in both the United States and Canada, especially in Toronto, into the 1940s.⁴⁹¹

Sam Jacks began teaching physical education at the West End YMCA in Toronto in 1935, and later in life he was credited with codifying the first set of rules for floor hockey in 1936. Jacks' rules unusually used a ring instead of a ball, disk, or puck, and given both the YMCA and Toronto connections, it seems likely that he was inspired by the Voorhees version of the game. In 1948 he became the director of parks and recreation for North Bay, Ontario, and it was in this capacity that he came up with the idea for ringette. Working with Mirl "Red" McCarthy, the recreation director in Espanola, Ontario, the rules were codified by 1965.⁴⁹² The first rulebook included an explanation of the rationale for creating a "winter team sport, on skates, for girls." The game was play tested in the winter of 1964-65, and a codified set of rules were approved by a committee made up of

⁴⁸⁹ "Pratt vs. Princeton." *Times Union*. Brooklyn, New York. February 5, 1903, p9.

⁴⁹⁰ "Ring Hockey Latest Game." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 28, 1904, p30; "Ring Hockey, Girls' Game, is Basketball's Rival." *Duluth Evening Herald*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 23, 1904, p16.

⁴⁹¹ Many articles can be found between 1904 and 1940, but some representative examples include: "Ring Hockey will be played here." *The Spokane Chronicle*. Spokane, Washington. November 29, 1910, p21; "Y.M. Boys in Contest." *The Salina Evening Journal*. Salina, Kansas. October 27, 1915, p8; "University Coeds Introduce Popular Game." *Deseret News*. Salt Lake City, Utah. November 13, 1920, p18; "Ring Hockey Results" *The Toronto Star*. Toronto, Ontario, Canada. March 5, 1932, p12; "The gym classes have been playing ring hockey..." *The Sun and Erie County Independent*. Hamburg, New York. April 18, 1940, p4.

⁴⁹² "Sam Jacks." Ringette Hall of Fame. <https://www.ringette.ca/inductees/sam-jacks/>. Accessed May 6, 2025; Clark, Wes and Tabitha Marshall. "Ringette in Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia*. <https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/ringette>. Accessed May 6, 2025; "Samuel Perry 'Sam' Jacks." North Bay Sports Hall of Fame. www.northbaysportshalloffame.ca/Inductee.aspx?ID=142. Accessed May 6, 2025; "History of Ringette." Ringette Canada. <https://www.ringette.ca/our-sport/history-of-ringette/>. Accessed May 6, 2025; "Sam Jacks." Canada Sports Hall of Fame. <https://www.sportshall.ca/hall-of-famers/hall-of-famers-search.html?proID=491&lang=EN>. Accessed May 6, 2025; "Mirl 'Red' McCarthy." Ringette Hall of Fame. <https://www.ringette.ca/inductees/miri-red-mccarthy/>. Accessed May 6, 2025.

recreation directors from the Northern region on May 31, 1965 at the Chalet, Trout Creek, Ontario. Of the seventeen people involved in the codification of the sport, only one, Diane Mulcahey of Sudbury, was a woman. The ringette association she established is now the longest running in Canada.⁴⁹³ That first version of ringette had many of the visual features of ring hockey; though it was played on skates and ice, the ring was 1" bigger, player positions were restricted to specific zones—as designated by stick colors—, and the stick was allowed to be raised to shoulder height, but not above. Defense, designated by red sticks, could play in their own defensive zone and the center. Forwards played in the center and their offensive zone, and were designated by yellow sticks (later blue). White-sticked centers could travel anywhere on the ice, and pink sticked goalies served between the posts.⁴⁹⁴

By 1979, ringette had begun to take hold in Minnesota. In West St. Paul, girls who had played hockey in the mid-1970s recalled their teams transitioning directly into ringette some time near the end of the decade, and by January of 1979 more than 100 girls were playing on eleven teams in three age divisions: petites (10 and under); tweens (11-13); and belles (14-17). Ringette box scores were a regular feature of Bud Dillon's hockey reports in the West St. Paul/Mendota Heights Sun that year.⁴⁹⁵ By 1985, Ringette tournaments were being held as part of the Winter Carnival in St. Paul, with hosts from West St. Paul and North St. Paul.⁴⁹⁶

In 1986 the East side of the metro had established an exchange tournament with teams in Winnipeg, Manitoba, and the game was thriving in Maplewood, West St. Paul, South St. Paul, Cottage Grove, Inver Grove Heights, and Rosemount. While the limited contact and low risk of injury were appealing, parent coaches like Maplewood's Ron and Karen Jechort also praised the game because the restricted positioning of the players meant that all the girls on the ice had opportunities to touch the ring. Rather than one dominant player hogging the puck, ringette required strong passing and team play.⁴⁹⁷ Running for state district 39B that year, Bob Milbert of South St. Paul listed his board membership for Ringette U.S.A. in his background for the campaign, and would go on to win the election and serve until 2003.⁴⁹⁸

After Governor Perpich created the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission in 1987, Ringette was one of twenty sports at the inaugural Star of the North Games in St. Cloud June 24-July 3, 1988. Held at the St. Cloud Municipal Ice Arena, two teams from West St. Paul and one team from South St. Paul competed with a Northeast team for

⁴⁹³ Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario. *Rules Ringette: A Game on Skates for Girls*. Ontario, Canada. May 31, 1965; Hartman, Grace. "Letter to Mrs. Diane Mulcahey." Office of the Mayor of the City of Sudbury Ontario. February 8, 1967. Scanned copy accessible at <https://demo.accessmemory.org/letter-to-mrs-diane-mulcahey-from-mayor-grace-hartman> Accessed 6/20/2025; Leeson, Ben. "'We do it because of the love of the sport' – Sudbury Ringette returns to the ice." *The Sudbury Star*. Sudbury, Ontario. October 9, 2020. <https://www.thesudburystar.com/sports/local-sports/we-do-it-because-of-the-love-of-the-sport-sudbury-ringette-returns-to-the-ice> Accessed 6/20/2025.

⁴⁹⁴ Society of Directors of Municipal Recreation of Ontario. *Rules Ringette: A Game on Skates for Girls*. Ontario, Canada. May 31, 1965; Killeen, Mike. "Star of the North Games: Ice Ringette." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. June 24, 1988, p16.

⁴⁹⁵ Phone Interview with Jane Osiecki Cashin of Minnesota Special Hockey, and a West St. Paul player in the late 1970s. December 11, 2024; Dillon, Bud. "WSP youth hockey." *West St. Paul - Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. January 17, 1979, pB7. Ringette Box Scores also appear in the January 24, January 31, February 14 and February 28 editions of 1979.

⁴⁹⁶ "Ringette Tournament." *The Minneapolis Star and Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 27, 1985, p93.

⁴⁹⁷ Thornton, Ralph. "Playing without pain: Ringette is a safe alternative to hockey." *The Minneapolis Star and Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 2, 1986, p45.

⁴⁹⁸ "Voters' Guide, Dakota/Scott: Robert P. Milbert, DFL." *The Minneapolis Star and Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 30, 1986, p23.

the ice ringette title.⁴⁹⁹ West St. Paul II beat South St. Paul 6-5 for the gold, with West. St. Paul I in third place.⁵⁰⁰ The following year, the games were held in Burnsville, and Vicky Milbert—Rep. Bob Milbert’s wife—led her South St. Paul Ringette team in the opening parade with 13,400 other athletes for the 1989 Star of the North Games.⁵⁰¹ Northeast, South St. Paul, West St. Paul, Rosemount, and South Metro teams all made appearances in the games that year.⁵⁰² The Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission received a \$20,000 state appropriation to grow the game of ringette shortly after the 1989 games, though the appropriation had originally been intended for girls’ hockey.⁵⁰³ Senator Duane Benson caught flack in the press for declaring the sport of “dubious value” and awarding the appropriation his “Tarnished Carp” award, while apparently having not bothered to learn what the sport was, as he declared incorrectly that the game wasn’t “even played on that surface we hold so dear in Minnesota [ice].”⁵⁰⁴ The 1990 Star of the North Games were split into summer and winter games, with the winter games held in January in several cities in the Iron Range. Ice ringette was featured alongside alpine skiing, biathlon, broomball, cross country skiing, freestyle skiing, ice hockey, luge, ski jumping, snowboarding, and speed skating.⁵⁰⁵ That same year, the Goodview-Winona Youth Hockey Association held a ringette clinic to try to bring the sport to Winona.⁵⁰⁶

While no one knew it at the time, 1991 brought the first step in a series of events, driven by the ringette community, that would instead result in Minnesota becoming the first state with varsity high school girls’ ice hockey. In April, the Minnesota Department of Education announced a plan to eliminate the position of “civil rights compliance officer” in Minnesota. Sue Sattel, the compliance officer at the time, pushed back on the grounds that she was the only person putting pressure on school districts to comply with Title IX, and that, on the eve of the twentieth anniversary of that law, two-thirds of Minnesota school districts were still not in compliance. Representatives Phyllis Kahn, DFL-Minneapolis, and Alice Johnson, DFL-Spring Lake, came on board to put language in the education bill mandating compliance, with Rep. Kahn reminding the state that “You know how important the community thinks athletics is to boys. This is just as important to girls.” Ringette parents, like Greg Norsten of Oakdale, began publicly supporting Sattel and pushing for state recognition for ringette.⁵⁰⁷

Norsten and a group of parents from five districts—South St. Paul (SSD 6), North St. Paul-Maplewood-Oakdale (ISD 622), Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan (ISD 196), West St. Paul-Mendota Heights-Eagan (ISD 197), and South Washington County (ISD 833)—filed a sex discrimination complaint with the State Department of Education, and brought a petition with signatures from 2000 girls interested in ringette to the first resolution meeting held. ISD 196 offered to study the issue, while most of the other districts raised the issue of expense. South St. Paul Superintendent Dave Metzen, to his credit, dismissed the issue of expense, saying that “We want to do what’s right and fair for kids. If this is what our students want and we have the kids to play, let’s get on with it.”⁵⁰⁸ Despite a good initial meeting, negotiations over the sport dragged on, with only Metzen and SSD 6 voting mid-

⁴⁹⁹ Killeen, Mike. “Star of the North Games: Ice Ringette.” *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. June 24, 1988, p16; Weiner, Jay. “Perpich Backs Amateur Sports Effort.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 28, 1987, p1D; “Ad: Let the Games Begin!” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 15, 1988, p51.

⁵⁰⁰ “Sunday’s Star of the North Results.” *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. June 27, 1988, p26.

⁵⁰¹ Harvey, Gary. “Star of the North Games get started.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. Jun 17, 1989, p2.

⁵⁰² “Star of the North Game Results: Ice Ringette.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 28, 1989, p28.

⁵⁰³ “Environmental trust fund could pay for city sewers.” *Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. May 7, 1989, p7.

⁵⁰⁴ “Putting his foot in the ringette.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 3, 1989, p13.

⁵⁰⁵ “Star of the North Games Begin.” *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. January 26, 1990, p8.

⁵⁰⁶ “G-W Hockey.” *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. March 23, 1990, p13.

⁵⁰⁷ “Lawmakers upset about plan to eliminate job.” *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. April 28, 1991, p6.

⁵⁰⁸ Walsh, James. “Schools pushed to add hockey-like sport for girls.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 3, 1991, p21.

June to start the program if three other districts would get on board. The parent group threatened further legal action, and State Education Commissioner Gene Mammenga agreed that the districts were not in Title IX compliance.⁵⁰⁹ ISD 622 voted on June 27, 1991 to also add ringette.⁵¹⁰

With no other district budging and competitors necessary for games, the parents escalated their complaint to the US Office for Civil Rights in Chicago and the Minnesota Department of Human Rights on July 1.⁵¹¹ In response, ISD 197 voted that same night to authorize varsity ringette, with no caveats for number of teams needed. In discussing the news, parent Maggie Schmidt highlighted the urgency the families were feeling, as her daughter was set to be a senior at Henry Sibley High School that coming fall, and it would be her only chance to play for her school.⁵¹²

With the attention drawn by the lawsuit, a new question began to emerge. In his regular sports column for the *Minnesota Star Tribune* on July 2, Patrick Reusse put it clearly:

A new battle is waged in the effort to provide equal athletic opportunity for girls. Groups of parents in Twin Cities suburbs lobby successfully to install an activity called *ringette* as a varsity sport, to offset boys' hockey. You are left confused: Ringette is the equivalent of having girls play croquet rather than golf as a varsity sport. How does this advance the cause? Let's pump up the aspirations here. Why not girls' hockey as a varsity sport?⁵¹³

Across the river, Sue Ring-Jarvi, Lynn Olson, and other leaders in the women's leagues wanted the same question answered. Wanting ice hockey to have a real shot to become a varsity sport, they began a petition drive and printed fliers encouraging girls to consider hockey. Mitzi Witchger and Emily Sherman put together a "How to" sheet for parents to petition their districts for girls' ice hockey.⁵¹⁴

In November, the Minnesota State High School League vowed to be more proactive about girls' sports, "now that the problem [had] come to light."⁵¹⁵ ISD 833 finally voted to allow ringette the first week of November, leaving South St. Paul, who had dropped the sport after the four team threshold was not met, scrambling to adjust.⁵¹⁶ In just ten days, Dave Metzen got SSD 6 back on board, and the South St. Paul ringette association stepped up to donate equipment for the year.⁵¹⁷

The first-ever varsity high school girls' ice ringette game was held on Tuesday, December 3, 1991 at the West St. Paul Ice Arena. Park of Cottage Grove played Henry Sibley High School in front of a crowd of 200 fans and television cameras. Tara Jung, a junior from Sibley, scored the first goal in a 10-2 victory for the Mendota

⁵⁰⁹ Walsh, Jim. "Schools accused of 'back door' ploy in girls' sport furor." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 12, 1991, p5; "District named in lawsuit to offer ringette." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. June 25, 1991, p8; "South St. Paul plans ringette for girls, seeks competitors." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 25, 1991, p17.

⁵¹⁰ "North St. Paul school district will offer ice ringette to give equality to female athletes." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 29, 1991, p4.

⁵¹¹ "Lawsuit alleges sex discrimination." *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. July 2, 1991, p7.

⁵¹² "Ringette scores goal with third school district." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 3, 1991, p3.

⁵¹³ Reusse, Patrick. "Hits you can't miss." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 2, 1991, p3C.

⁵¹⁴ In person interview with Sue Ring-Jarvi. Roseville, Minnesota. May 6, 2025. Copies of the fliers and the "How To" sheet have survived and pictures can be found in Sue Ring-Jarvi's book *Can You Keep Up?*

⁵¹⁵ Augustoviz, Roman. "Next topic for MSHSL: girls' sports equality." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 7, 1991, p37.

⁵¹⁶ "Another school district to start ice ringette team for girls." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 9, 1991, p21.

⁵¹⁷ Walsh, James. "South St. Paul High School will begin ice ringette program." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 20, 1991, p5.

Heights girls. Lauding the game and the “David and Goliath battle” of the parents against the districts that summer, *Star Tribune* columnist Doug Grow wrote that “the fact is, Goliaths are everywhere as women seek sports equality...Last night, at least, wasn’t about limits. It was about possibilities.”⁵¹⁸

Over the winter and spring of 1992, the state Department of Education made several moves to clarify Title IX compliance, directed explicitly at the still reluctant ISD 196, but also applying to other districts throughout the state. First informing schools that they could not simultaneously choose to support expensive sports for boys, like hockey and football, and decline to support sports for girls on the grounds of expense, the Department of Education eventually decided to explicitly require that schools develop a plan to spend equal funding on boys and girls. They also made it clear that schools would be audited for compliance for the first time that spring. Rosemount superintendent RJ “Red” Rehwaldt complained that football alone would make the requirement impossible, but did pledge to survey district girls to determine a sport to add.⁵¹⁹ The district finally agreed to add ringette to Apple Valley and Rosemount High Schools—with Eagan High School instead adding girls’ downhill skiing—in June of 1992.⁵²⁰

In the meantime, the women who played ringette kept playing. The 1992 Star of the North Winter Games, held in Mora, proudly advertised their ice ringette tournament as the new varsity high-school sport.⁵²¹ Twelve of the fourteen players on the US National Ice Ringette team were selected from Minnesota, specifically Dakota county, including Mendota Heights’ Amy Sievers, South St. Paul’s Torie Gaston, Lori Gustafson, Molly Milbert, and Kari Nelson, and West St. Paul’s Maureen Gramling, Monica Hoban, Lisa McEllistrem, Chris Plan, Shelly Skarda, Vicki Skarda, and Jill Stiff. They travelled to the Ringette World Cup in Helsinki, Finland. Defeating France, Russia, and Sweden, they fell to Canada East and Finland, who took silver and bronze in the tournament respectively. Canada West won the gold.⁵²² St. Cloud’s youth league, which had grown originally out of interest from families who had moved up from Burnsville, Apple Valley, and Mendota Heights, thrived. Parents and girls both emphasized the teamwork and passing advantages of ringette, though some of the St. Cloud girls mentioned their desire to get to play hockey in college.⁵²³ St. Cloud State began a women’s club hockey program in 1990 that was thriving—and drawing in former ringette players like South St. Paul’s Jenny Rohrer—by 1992.⁵²⁴

Rosemount played their first ringette home game at Apple Valley’s ice arena in early December of 1992. In a shift away from the extended reluctance of the school board, high school staff stopped the game after Rikka Viik scored the first goal 55 seconds in, and took the ring to put it on display in the Rosemount trophy case. Rosemount went on to beat Park 6-3 in front of a crowd of 100, including the Rosemount boys’ varsity hockey team, who praised them in the press. Despite 4:30am practice times, the girls were hooked, and Coach Ginger

⁵¹⁸ “Ice ringette makes prep debut today.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 3, 1991, p26; Grow, Doug. “Score one for the girls in the long battle for a fair shot in sports.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 4, 1991, p4.

⁵¹⁹ Walsh, James. “School district could lose state aid unless it adds another sport for girls.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 25, 1991, p36; “Equity Law places big burden on schools.” *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. March 4, 1992, p9; Spiller, Daniel, and James Walsh. “State plan will measure, then take measures for girls’ equality in sport.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 5, 1992, p1A and 18A.

⁵²⁰ “Rosemount-Apple Valley-Eagan district adds 2 girls’ sports.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 25, 1992, p27.

⁵²¹ “Minnesota Gold Rush.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 5, 1992, p175.

⁵²² “The US National Ice Ringette team...” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 7, 1992, p22; Ringette Hall of Fame. “The 1992 World Ringette Championship Team.” <https://www.ringette.ca/inductees/the-1992-world-ringette-championship-team/> Accessed 5/15/2025; *USA National Team 1992 Ice Ringette Roster*. USA Ringette. South St. Paul, Minnesota. 1992.

⁵²³ Hotakainen, Jerry. “St. Cloud girls have a hockey substitute.” *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. December 20, 1992, p10D.

⁵²⁴ Killeen, Mike. “SCSU club team takes a step up.” *Saint Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. November 5, 1992, p11.

O'Neill was thrilled with their excellent showing. "They're real enthusiastic and courageous. They think they are making history, and they love it. And I think we are going to win some games," she told the *Star Tribune*.⁵²⁵

Meanwhile, in Burnsville, a group of high school parents took note of the successful result of the lawsuit on Rosemount, and approached the school board with the same energy. Led by John Moy, eight parents joined 26 girls in pledging their support, and potential litigation, for a ringette team. The district, ISD 191, assured them they were already working on a plan.⁵²⁶ On February 4, the district made the decision to pursue booking ice time at the Burnsville Arena, but left the question of which sports to pursue open.⁵²⁷ At a school board meeting on March 4, mother Susan Carpenter, who played in the women's leagues, stood up to ask why female athletes were not being given a shot at ice hockey. She pointed out that the Minnesota Women's Hockey Association had seventeen women's teams and that women's hockey was slated to become an Olympic sport, giving a path of progression for girls in hockey. The board concurred, and decided to put it to the girls themselves in an interest survey.⁵²⁸

Two weeks later, the results were in. In a 225 hockey-101 ringette-61 other-56 speed skating vote, the young women of Burnsville picked hockey as their preferred ice sport. The board voted unanimously on March 18, 1993 to affirm their decision, and Burnsville High School became the first high school in the state with a sanctioned girls' ice hockey program.⁵²⁹

Ringette wasn't done—the two sports would continue to vie for a varsity role for another full year, and Ringette games at the Star of the North Games and in the high school league continued to occur.⁵³⁰ High school players from South St. Paul and Henry Sibley High Schools travelled to Winnipeg for the St. James Ringette Tournament in January of 1994. Sibley took first place in the tournament, while South St. Paul came in a very close third. Sibley coach Greg Schmidt and coach J.R. Buckley of South St. Paul were thrilled with the results, lauding their teams' ability to really compete on an international stage.⁵³¹ Those two teams would also vie for first place in both the Twin City Ringette Conference and for the State title, with South St. Paul eventually emerging victorious in both. Jennifer Bartl, Melanie Bergstrom, Anne DeMars, Kate Dieberger, Shelly Fischer, Marisa Gallahue, Michelle Garafola, Anne Joswiak, Kay Kueppers, Megan Milbert, Melissa Milbert, Kati Norsten, Heather Polsfuss, Jen Retka, Jennie Seldon, Annie Simmons, and Jill Zukaitis made up the Packers, while Liz Becker, Jennifer Buck, Nadine Corty, Lisa Haugland, Shannon Haugland, Lisa Hessler, Sheri Jung, Colleen Melville, Nichole Novak, Mary Jean Schmidt, Michelle Sieger, Carrie Stefaniak, Leslie Taylor, and Tanya Taylor played for Sibley.⁵³²

⁵²⁵ Augustoviz, Roman. "Schools warm to ringette as girls' ice sport of future." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 17, 1992, p42.

⁵²⁶ Gessner, John. "BHS parents seek ice ringette team for their daughters." *Burnsville This Week*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 10, 1993, p1.

⁵²⁷ Gessner, John. "Ringette moves step closer at BHS." *Burnsville This Week*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 7, 1993, p1.

⁵²⁸ Gessner, John. "Girls' hockey? Sure, says parent. Hockey, ringette to face off in survey." *Burnsville This Week*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 7, 1993, p1.

⁵²⁹ Weiner, Jay. "Burnsville girls set to lace up skates." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 20, 1993, p36; Gessner, John. "Let's play hockey." *Burnsville This Week*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 21, 1993, p1.

⁵³⁰ Wicker, Brian. "Ringette of hockey? The battle is on." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 13, 1994, p36; "Star of North winter games start Jan. 8." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 27, 1993, p18.

⁵³¹ Brettingen, Pat. "Sibley, So. St. Paul show stuff in Canada." *West St. Paul-Mendota Heights Sun Current*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. January, 12, 1994, p10B.

⁵³² "Going into this week..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 10, 1994, p42; South St. Paul High School. *Kaposia Vol. 74*. "Rings go Under Way." South St. Paul, Minnesota. 1994, p96-97; Henry Sibley High School. *Keewaydin Vol. 41*. "Ringette." Mendota Heights, Minnesota. 1994, p104-105.

On March 19-27, 1994 the Ringette World Championship was held in South St. Paul and Rosemount, with many women from the area high school teams on Team USA. The team included Apple Valley's Sarah Burrock, Mendota Heights' Amy Sievers, Rosemount's Shannon Kusnier, South St. Paul's Melissa Milbert, Anne Joswiak, and Jennifer Retka, West St. Paul's Chris Plan, Monica Hoban, Vicki Skarda, and Lisa McEllistrem, as well as Tammy Schroeder, Debbie Buhr, Tawna Presley, Sue Friesen, Kathy Wood, and Jodilee Larson. Other teams included Canada East, Canada West, Finland, Russia, and Sweden. It was the first time the tournament was held in the United States, and in addition to the main competition the week included tournaments for younger girls and clinics on a number of ice sports, including ringette, hockey, bandy, speed skating, figure skating, and precision line skating. While Finland won the tournament, Team USA still had "a lot of fun." Later that summer, assistant coach Kevin Gallahue, of South St. Paul, was promoted to head coach to lead Team USA through the 1996 Ringette World Championships.⁵³³

While the eventual choice by the Minnesota State High School League to endorse hockey over ringette would see a major shift away, especially in Minnesota, ringette is still played—and loved—by women today.⁵³⁴ Even at the highest levels of women's hockey, stars like Susanna Tapani—originally a forward for PWHL Minnesota traded to PWHL Boston—grew up playing ringette and still plays it to this day.⁵³⁵ Hockey may be dominant, but ringette will always have its fans.

⁵³³ "South St Paul and Rosemount..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 26, 1993, p36; *USA National Team 1994 Ice Ringette Roster*. USA Ringette. South St. Paul, Minnesota. 1994; "Ice ringette meet slated for March." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 19, 1994, p30; "Rosemount to host world ringette meet opening ceremonies." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 17, 1994, p3B; Temple, Pete. "Kusnier, Burrock skate to ringette's highest level." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 31, 1994, p1B; "Gallahue to coach US ringette." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 24, 1994, p24.

⁵³⁴ USA Ringette. "The History of USA Ringette & Team USA." <https://teamusaringette.com/our-history.php> Accessed 5/21/2025.

⁵³⁵ Rutherford, Kristina. "Why dual-sport star Susanna Tapani committed to hockey and the PWHL." Sportsnet.ca. February 2, 2024. <https://www.sportsnet.ca/pwhl/article/why-dual-sport-star-susanna-tapani-committed-to-hockey-and-the-pwhl/> Accessed 5/21/2025.

Third Period: The Start of Some New Legends

1993-1994: Testing the Ice

Though nearly ninety years had passed since the earliest games of women's ice hockey in Minnesota, the summer of 1993 was a turning point. Lynn Olson of the Minnesota Women's Hockey Association was the only woman serving on the board of USA Hockey, but more than 1000 girls and women were again registered playing ice hockey in the state on youth, club, and recreational teams. Women's ice hockey was scheduled to make an appearance at the US Olympic Festival in San Antonio, Texas that summer, and was announced on the program for the 1998 Winter Olympics in Nagano, Japan.⁵³⁶ The world was primed for another surge in women's hockey, and a handful of schools took to the ice.

March 18, 1993 became the technical start for varsity girls' hockey in the state, with the vote by the Burnsville School District to authorize the sport for the 1993-1994 school year. Five more competing teams were needed before the Minnesota State High School League (MSHSL) would officially sanction the sport, but Burnsville vowed to hold a skill building year no matter what other districts decided.⁵³⁷ When the decision met with some pushback from the community, the young women responded themselves.⁵³⁸ Jenny Blake put it beautifully

Maybe 'sports isn't life,' but why shouldn't we have the chance to play hockey and have fun because we're girls?...there are a lot of girls excited about playing hockey. Everything has to start somewhere, and this is just a start!⁵³⁹

Superintendent James Rickabaugh of Burnsville-Eagan-Savage schools also stepped up to defend the decision. In a detailed analysis, he explained that the choice was simple. Because the district was in clear and unequivocal violation of Title IX by all metrics, they had only two options: reduce opportunities for boys' sports or increase them for girls. The district was choosing to add more opportunity for the girls instead of taking it away from the boys, and while he didn't directly say it, he effectively dared the community to protest. No further letters of complaint were found.⁵⁴⁰

On May 10, 1993, the Blake School in Hopkins signed on to have girls' varsity hockey, becoming the second school in the state, while Wayzata indicated an interest in considering the sport.⁵⁴¹ June 9, Elk River voted 6-1 in favor and became the third school in the state.⁵⁴² By July, Anoka-Hennepin school district approved a developmental program, with a process in place to fully authorize the sport for their four high schools—Anoka, Blaine, Champlin Park, and Spring Lake Park High Schools—in 1994-1995.⁵⁴³ Eight teams were formed, either at

⁵³⁶ Weiner, Jay. "Women on ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 1993, p46.

⁵³⁷ Weiner, Jay. "Burnsville girls set to lace up skates." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 20, 1993, p36; Gessner, John. "Let's play hockey." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 21, 1993, p1.

⁵³⁸ Smith, Leroy D. "Why add girls' hockey." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. April 4, 1993, p4A.

⁵³⁹ Blake, Jenny. "Letters: Burnsville High sophomore responds to girls' hockey critic." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. April 11, 1993, p4A.

⁵⁴⁰ Rickabaugh, James. "Superintendent gives facts behind girls' hockey decision." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. April 25, 1993, p4A.

⁵⁴¹ "Big Ten honors Naumoff." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 11, 1993, p20.

⁵⁴² Augustoviz, Roman. "Blake, Elk River approve girls' ice hockey teams." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 11, 1993, p36.

⁵⁴³ "Board gives approval to girls' hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 14, 1993, p26.

schools or in cooperatives among schools, by November 1993, and included Anoka/Champlin Park, Benilde-St. Margaret's, Blaine/Coon-Rapids, Blake, Burnsville, Elk River, St. Paul United, and Wayzata.⁵⁴⁴

In Burnsville, Bonnie Reimann was tapped as head coach for the girls' varsity squad.⁵⁴⁵ Patty Oaster Mraz, who had played on Burnsville's midget team during their two Nationals appearances in the 1970s, and had gone on to coach tennis and work as a youth director for the Star of the North Games, came on as an assistant coach. That first season, they established a firm no-cut policy, valuing growing the sport over everything else. While that led to a large number of junior varsity players who had to "earn their minute," Mraz is proud to this day that they made participation the top priority.⁵⁴⁶ Mary Brown—former US Women's hockey team member and youth player in Richfield in the 1970s—took on coaching at Wayzata.⁵⁴⁷

The MSHSL did not officially sanction the sport or hold a tournament for the season, but a series of tournaments were held amongst the programs. While their record that season was mixed, Burnsville did manage to win the First Girls' High School Hockey Tournament, a single-elimination, all team tournament held February 11-12 at Mariucci Arena. Defeating Elk River 4-1 and Benilde-St. Margaret 5-0 on their way to the finals, Burnsville came back from a 3-1 deficit against St. Paul United in the third period to win the the championship 5-3. Christina Waters, Jenny Heald, Lara Thomas, Jenny Pearson, and Heidi Bock all scored over the course of the tournament, with Kathy Kramer, Nancy Carlberg, Angela Borek, and Jody Johnson recording assists. Kristi Dundore recorded the shut-out against Benilde-St. Margaret in the nets.⁵⁴⁸ The Blake Invitational tournament was held February 23-26 at the Blake Arena in Hopkins. Blaine/Coon Rapids' Laura Tryba had a hat trick in their 3-0 win over Anoka/Champlin Park for the championship of that tournament.⁵⁴⁹

The only officially sanctioned Minnesota State High School Hockey Tournament in 1994 was, technically, still for boys' hockey, but for the first time in its 50-year history it wasn't just boys on the ice. Amber Hegland—a multi-sport athlete who also played cornerback for the Farmington High School football team and was a fifteen-time letterman between softball, hockey, volleyball, academics, golf, and football—skated in the third line for Farmington. Popping right back up after being checked hard into the boards by an opposing player at the 2.5 minute mark, the *Star Tribune* acknowledged she'd earned her spot, even as Farmington fell 5-3 to Mahtomedi. "She's a heck of a hockey player," her teammates were quoted.⁵⁵⁰

On March 23, 1994, the same day Wayne Gretzky became the NHL's all-time goal-scoring leader, the MSHSL put the second piece into place when they formally voted to sanction girls' ice hockey on an "overwhelming" voice vote. More than 8,000 Minnesotan girls had expressed an interest in ice hockey in the MSHSL survey conducted over the 1993-1994 school year.⁵⁵¹ The state league required twenty-four teams in order to hold a state tournament, but affirmed that one could happen as soon as February of 1995 if the conditions were met.

⁵⁴⁴ Zavoral, Nolan. "Taking ice hockey into a new arena." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 12, 1993, p32; "Girls' hockey." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 23, 1994, p28A; "Sports Events." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 30, 1994, p24A; "Sports Events." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 13, 1994, p23A.

⁵⁴⁵ "Girls' hockey." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 23, 1994, p28A.

⁵⁴⁶ Email interview with Patty Oaster Mraz. January 7, 2025.

⁵⁴⁷ Augustoviz, Roman. "Brown to coach Minneapolis girls' hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 25, 1995, p23; Phone interview with Mary Brown, former Richfield player and later coach at several schools. June 5, 2025.

⁵⁴⁸ "Blaze wins girls' hockey tournament." *Burnsville ThisWeek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 20, 1994, p25A.

⁵⁴⁹ "First Girls Tournament Set." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 22, 1994, p33; "Bonus Shots." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 3, 1994, p22.

⁵⁵⁰ Brown, Curt. "Hegland checks into record book." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 10, 1994, p39.

⁵⁵¹ Weiner, Jay. "Ice Hockey for girls is passed by state." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 24, 1994, p9C; "Girls' Hockey: A power play for gender equality." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 28, 1994, p10.

Minnesota became the first state in the country to sanction girls' varsity high school hockey, though ten other states, including Minnesota, had previously allowed girls to play boys' varsity hockey. Ringette, also up for a vote, was not sanctioned, to the dismay of many supporters. Many vowed to continue pushing for both sports to be recognized.⁵⁵² The *Star Tribune* Editorial Board marked the decision with a prediction

A decade from now, Minnesota should be a national leader in girls' ice hockey, contributing good player-athletes to colleges and universities and, yes, even the Olympics. Girls should get an equal chance to emulate Gretzky's greatness.⁵⁵³

1994-1995: On the Breakaway

Mounds View had elected to offer girls' hockey for the 1994-1995 school year the night before the MSHSL voted to sanction the sport, bringing the number of teams expected for the season to nine.⁵⁵⁴ By April, the girls at South St. Paul had decided that they wanted hockey instead of ringette. The district put it in the hands of the girls, and announced an open community forum to discuss replacing ringette with hockey on May 5. In later years, Melissa Milbert Wendland and Megan Milbert Tripicchio would remember the forum as contentious—and perhaps a little brutal for the children pleading their case—but ultimately productive.⁵⁵⁵ The district initially decided to move forward with both hockey and ringette, dependent on turnout.⁵⁵⁶

Sixteen high school teams were registered by June 1, 1994, the MSHSL's original deadline for a state tournament, but the league opted to give the districts more time to get on board.⁵⁵⁷ By September 1994, twenty-one teams had been formed and the MSHSL split them into two divisions. The North Division consisted of Anoka/Champlin Park, Benilde-St. Margaret's, Blaine/Coon Rapids, Breck, Elk River, Forest Lake, Irondale/Mounds View, Osseo, Park Center, Stillwater, and Wayzata. The South Division included Blake, Burnsville, Holy Angels, Minnehaha Academy, North St. Paul/Tartan, Richfield, St. Paul Academy/Visitation, St. Paul Area—a cooperative of the city schools—, Sibley, and South St. Paul. Osseo and Park Center had originally intended to form a single collective team, but when 80 girls came to tryouts they wound up with two varsity and two junior varsity teams and still had to make cuts.⁵⁵⁸ Practices were scheduled to start October 31, and the league indicated that they were willing to consider a smaller tournament.⁵⁵⁹ The league also officially affirmed that the girls' game would not allow checking, but would use the boys' rules in all other aspects.⁵⁶⁰

On October 10 Apple Valley and Rosemount voted to replace ringette with hockey, bringing the total teams to 23. Apple Valley's ringette coaching staff, including head coach Chuck Scanlon and assistant coach Chris Lee,

⁵⁵² "MSHSL votes to add girls' hockey." *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. March 24, 1994, p11; "Girls hockey made official sport in state." *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. March 24, 1994, p12; "State Skates to the front." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. March 25, 1994, p4.

⁵⁵³ "Girls' Hockey: A power play for gender equality." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 28, 1994, p10.

⁵⁵⁴ Smith, Maureen M. "Mounds View joins others in adding girls' hockey team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 23, 1994, p2.

⁵⁵⁵ Augustoviz, Roman. "South St. Paul, which has had a ringette..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 28, 1994, p52; In Person Interview with Bob Milbert, Melissa Milbert Wendland, and Megan Milbert Tripicchio. Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. December 23, 2024.

⁵⁵⁶ Augustoviz, Roman. "South St. Paul adds girls' hockey" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 28, 1994, p34.

⁵⁵⁷ Augustoviz, Roman. "MSHSL should put athletes first." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 2, 1994, p29-33;

Augustoviz, Roman. "Sweet Sixteen remains in limbo." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 14, 1994, p26.

⁵⁵⁸ Pederson, Dave. "Girls Hockey Interest is growing in Minnesota." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. December 7, 1994, p2D.

⁵⁵⁹ Augustoviz, Roman. "It's full speed ahead for girls' ice hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 24, 1994, p27.

⁵⁶⁰ Augustoviz, Roman. "He's the master of interceptions." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 6, 1994, p38.

were set to make the transition to hockey, while Rosemount sought a new head coach but eventually rehired ringette coach Sharon Davenport.⁵⁶¹ Scanlon, a beloved soccer coach at Apple Valley high school, would later recall being asked to coach first ringette and then girls' hockey in order to mitigate some of the criticisms around girls' "taking" ice time. The district knew any coach would take a certain amount of flack, but hoped Scanlon's excellent reputation would protect the girls from some of it.⁵⁶² In South St. Paul, the district chose to put the decision to the girls. A panel of players and staff ultimately chose Dave Palmquist, a former boys' coach at Minnehaha Academy who had originally applied for the boys' coaching job, to lead the fledgling program. At the time, Palmquist expressed his thrill at starting a new program with the advantage of already skilled skaters from their ringette years. He even suggested shortly after practices began that the Packers girls might beat the Packers boys to a state championship.⁵⁶³ Players remember him reading girls' magazines in an effort to figure out how best to connect with his players, and always helping them feel supported.⁵⁶⁴ In later years, Coach Palmquist would say that taking the job was the "best decision I could have made."⁵⁶⁵

Stillwater hired coach Ken Bjorlin, their boys' junior varsity coach, internally to run their girls' varsity program, with Minnesota Women's Hockey League (MWHL) player Molly Kaliher as assistant coach.⁵⁶⁶ Henry Sibley High School hired Team USA Ringette player Lori Gustafson and Dan Wilson to coach their girls.⁵⁶⁷ Park of Cottage Grove came on board by November to make 24 teams in the league, with Apple Valley, Rosemount, and Park-Woodbury functioning as independent teams within the two-division structure for the year. Barb Halbrehder, another MWHL player, was tapped to coach North St. Paul/Tartan, while Bonnie Reimann and Patty Mraz continued at Burnsville, and Marci Bydlon remained at Blaine/Coon Rapids.⁵⁶⁸ Anoka/Champlin Park hired former Minnesota Checker Jill Pohtilla.⁵⁶⁹ Keith Burcar took the head coaching job at Park-Woodbury.⁵⁷⁰ Lynn Olson, the masterful director of girls' and women's hockey for the Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association, was picked to coach Holy Angels.⁵⁷¹ Mary Brown moved from Wayzata to the junior varsity coaching position for St. Paul Area.⁵⁷² Women's hockey legend Sue Ring-Jarvi took on the coaching position at Irondale/Mounds View, and she brought women's players Robin Marvin, Jean Aura-Hall, and Mary Vandegrift with her to the staff.⁵⁷³ Jackie Wincek took the coaching position at Osseo.⁵⁷⁴

⁵⁶¹ Temple, Pete. "Girls' hockey will replace ringette at Rosemount, Valley." *Burnsville Thisweek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. October 16, 1994, p28A; Temple, Pete. "Questions abound as girls' hockey season begins." *Burnsville Thisweek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p34A.

⁵⁶² In Person Interview with Chris Lee and Chuck Scanlon. Apple Valley, Minnesota. July 12, 2024.

⁵⁶³ Burge, Brian. "Coach looks to start tradition." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. November 9, 1994, p16A-17A; In Person Interview with Bob Milbert, Melissa Milbert Wendland, and Megan Milbert Tripicchio. Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. December 23, 2024.

⁵⁶⁴ Phone interview with Jennifer Retka Jacobson, May 30, 2024.

⁵⁶⁵ Phone interview with Dave Palmquist, July 10, 2024.

⁵⁶⁶ Augustoviz, Roman. "Stillwater picks coaches." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 27, 1994, p4C.

⁵⁶⁷ Hegarty, Sue. "Girls prepare to skate into hockey history." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. November 9, 1994, p1A.

⁵⁶⁸ Gilbert, John. "Girls hockey teams ready for the puck to drop." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 10, 1994, p50.

⁵⁶⁹ "Jill Pohtilla" Elite Prospects. <https://www.eliteprospects.com/staff/28535/jill-pohtilla>. Accessed 7/26/2025.

⁵⁷⁰ Aselstine, Sam. "Sibley girls hockey starts with a bang." *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. December 4, 1994, p6.

⁵⁷¹ Johnson, Randy. "They broke the ice for girls in '94." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 15, 2020, pC2.

⁵⁷² Augustoviz, Roman. "Brown to coach Minneapolis girls' hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 25, 1995, p23; Phone interview with Mary Brown, former Richfield player and later coach at several schools. June 5, 2025.

⁵⁷³ Augustoviz, Roman. "Swenson's goals help Irondale/MV advance." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 16, 1995, p38; Ring-Jarvi, Sue. *Can You Keep Up*. Beaver's Pond Press. St. Paul, Minnesota. April 2025.

⁵⁷⁴ Augustoviz, Roman. "Osseo Hockey Star is ruled ineligible." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 9, 1995, p32.

After practices began in October, South St. Paul's coach Palmquist was excited but reserved. His girls had great skating skills and were working on the hockey fundamentals that differed from ringette—including puck handling—but in a new league, so little was known, it was hard to know what the season might look like. "I'm really happy to be working with this group of girls. There is the same excitement I've had working in the boys' programs. It's fun to have a team to see what we can do with it," he told the *Southwest Review*.⁵⁷⁵ Sibley's co-coach Wilson echoed the sentiment, telling the *Sun Current* that "the uncertainty of playing unfamiliar opponents [was] more than made up for by being involved in the debut of high school girls hockey."⁵⁷⁶

In the very first game of MSHSL sanctioned girls' high school varsity ice hockey, held November 14, 1994, South St. Paul High School took on Holy Angels Academy. Richfield Ice Arena filled with fans and TV crews to mark the moment. In an 8-0 shutout, recorded to goalie Jen Retka, the South St. Paul Packers dominated. Opening with the first ever goal in Minnesota girls' varsity hockey, 8th grader Kelley Kegley would finish the game with a hat trick and two assists. Melissa Milbert also scored twice and Anne Joswiak, Annie Simons, and Shelly Fischer each scored once. Kegley, Simons, and Fischer, all second line forwards, contributed five of South St. Paul's eight goals and gave an early indication of the Packers' strong depth. After the game, coach Dave Palmquist told them "Take it in. A first of something, they can never take that away from you. You are a part of history, girls. Enjoy it." Although they lost, Holy Angels coach Lynn Olson was still thrilled. Not only did her young team improve each period as the game progressed, but after years of organizing and fighting for sanctioned girls hockey, it arrived just in time for her daughter, Lisa Olson, to play in her senior year. Her younger daughter Becky Olson got her chance as well.⁵⁷⁷

All over Dakota County, girls' hockey was a hot topic all season. Apple Valley's key players included Kim Anderson, Kaisa Brehmer, Tori Citrowske, Beth Clausen, Jaime DeGriselles, Jenny Jannett, Betsey Kukowski, Aubrey Mull, Tina Olstad, Amanda Owen, Heather Priester, Emily Reichert, and Michelle Sikich. Coach Chuck Scanlon saw goaltending and defense as their key strengths early in the season. Scanlon was delighted with how hard his team was willing to work and how far they had come by late December. "We're a much better team in hockey than ringette," he told the *Burnsville Thisweek News*. In the Osseo Holiday Tournament, the Eagles swept the field, including a 3-2 victory over St. Paul Academy in the finals. By January 20, 1995, Apple Valley remained the only undefeated team in the state after a 4-2 win over the previously undefeated Stillwater.⁵⁷⁸ In later years,

⁵⁷⁵ Wakefield, Wally. "Packers overcoming unknowns with enthusiasm and optimism." *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. November 13, 1994, p6.

⁵⁷⁶ Burge, Brian. "Wilson prepared for coaching challenge." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. November 16, 1994, p17A.

⁵⁷⁷ Burge, Brian. "Third-period goals lift Packers past Warriors." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. November 23, 1994, p21A; Aselstine, Sam. "Sibley, SSP usher girls hockey in with a barn burner." *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p10; Burge, Brian. "Packers have made girls hockey history." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. December 7, 1994, p7D; Johnson, Randy. "They broke the ice for girls in '94." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 15, 2020, pC2; Kleven, Greg. "Pioneer guides Holy Angels girls." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. December 7, 1994, p5D.

⁵⁷⁸ Temple, Pete. "Questions abound as girls' hockey season begins." *Burnsville Thisweek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p34A; "Apple Valley girls win in hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 20, 1994, p28; "Ice Chase." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 22, 1994, p1B; Temple, Pete. "Experienced Eagles overwhelm Irish." *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 25, 1994, p28A; "Wins in tournament, over St. Paul, keep Eagles undefeated." *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 8, 1995, p26A; "AV Girls Remain Unbeaten on Ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 20, 1995, p32; Box Scores, "Girl's Hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995.

Michelle Sikich Gustafson would remember how seriously the coaches took the game, making all of the young women on the team feel like real hockey players.⁵⁷⁹

Burnsville brought 12 girls back from the 1993-1994 season, and co-coach Patty Mraz was thrilled with the conditioning work her team had done over the summer. While they knew they had some impressive teams to face, they were hopeful they could close the gap and have a decent season. Jenny Blake, Angela Borek, Erica Buck, Jenny Heald, Kathy Kramer, Emily Opheim, Jamie Roelke, Lara Thomas, Christina Waters, Emily Westberg, and goalies Kristi Dundore, Tamara Freistedt, and Laura Kelley stood out in reports over the season. The Burnsville Blaze managed a second place finish in the South St. Paul Girls Christmas Invitational Tournament, losing only to hosts South St. Paul, who were undefeated in the season. Co-coach Bonnie Reimann explained that “We’re winning the games we should, and losing the games we knew would be tough. We should end up with a winning record.”⁵⁸⁰

At Henry Sibley, Liz Becker, Jenny Buck, Beth Corliss, Nadine Corty, Megan Cullen, Dawn Danneker, Andrea Guerra, Shannon Haugland, Lisa Hessler, Dana Heutmaker, Angie Neska, Mary Jean Schmidt, Heather Schwartz, Michelle Seiger, Heidi Smith, Carrie Stefaniak, Leslie Taylor, and Leah Weber dominated the game reports. In their season opener, all four of their lines scored in an 11-0 shutout over Minnehaha Academy. Despite some early season losses, co-coach Lori Gustafson was pleased with the team’s growth and drive. “The kids are competitors and it’s really rewarding coaching them because they want to win and they want to improve,” she told the *West St. Paul-Mendota Heights Sun*. When a significant number of the team went down with the flu in late November, their ability to still hold other teams to ties felt like a great sign for the season.⁵⁸¹

Rosemount had excellent turnout, with more than 50 girls trying for the sport and 18 of the 20 varsity players chosen coming from strong skating in ringette. Alicia Anderson, Jenna Boutain, Sara George, Becky Grissom, Amy Hiivala, Jenny Swanson, Candace Tonkin, Carrie Tonkin, and Lisa Tschakert stood out in early reports. Grissom told the *West St. Paul-Mendota Heights Sun* that she was thrilled they had switched to hockey: “We’re having a great time. Everybody loves it.” After a second rough loss to the Apple Valley Eagles, coach Sharon Davenport noted her girls’ lack of prior hockey experience, but was very pleased that they had made the undefeated Apple Valley work much harder the second time around.⁵⁸²

⁵⁷⁹ Phone interview with Michelle Sikich Gustafson. December 12, 2024.

⁵⁸⁰ Temple, Pete. “Questions abound as girls’ hockey season begins.” *Burnsville Thisweek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p34A; “Blaze Splits two games.” *Burnsville Thisweek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p34A; Potts, Cameron. “Blaze girls hockey team takes second in Christmas Invite.” *Savage Pacer*. Savage, Minnesota. December 31, 1994, p14; “Wins in tournament, over St. Paul, keep Eagles undefeated.” *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 8, 1995, p26A; Temple, Pete. “Blaze recovers from losses with Senior Night win.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 5, 1995, p2B.

⁵⁸¹ Burge, Brian. “Third-period goals lift Packers past Warriors.” *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. November 23, 1994, p21A; Aselstine, Sam. “Sibley, SSP usher girls hockey in with a barn burner.” *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p10; Burge, Brian. “Warriors even record at 2-2 with 8-0 victory.” *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. November 30, 1994, p13A; Aselstine, Sam. “Sibley girls hockey starts with a bang.” *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. December 4, 1994, p6; Burge, Brian. “Experience a plus for Sibley.” *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. December 7, 1994, p6D; Box Scores, “Girl’s Hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995.

⁵⁸² Temple, Pete. “Questions abound as girls’ hockey season begins.” *Burnsville Thisweek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p34A; Pederson, Dave. “Girls Hockey Interest is growing in Minnesota.” *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. December 7, 1994, p2D; “Ice Chase.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 22, 1994, p1B; Temple, Pete. “Experienced Eagles overwhelm Irish.” *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. December 25, 1994, p28A; Box Scores, “Girl’s Hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995; Temple, Pete. “Irish win in playoffs.” *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 12, 1995, p25A.

Both the first line—Melissa Milbert, Heather Polsfuss, and Anne Joswiak—and the second—Kelly Kegley, Annie Simons, and Shelly Fischer—stood out for South St. Paul. Dave Palmquist particularly praised Kegley and his captains—Joswiak, Melissa Milbert, and Polsfuss—with setting the tone and the momentum for the team. Kegley's young age and beautiful shooting made her a particular darling of the press. After five wins and three shut-outs in five games at the start of the season, junior goalie Jen Retka also became a particular player to watch. Anne DeMars, Megan Milbert, and Molly Root were considered the top defensemen. Heather Wells, Kay Kueppers, and Jill Zukaitis also stood out during the season.⁵⁸³

Girls were taking the development seriously across the metro. Steve Brenner of Full Deck Goalie School in Burnsville reported a large increase in girls enrolling, and was thrilled for his daughters, Brittany and Kelly, who both played youth hockey.⁵⁸⁴ By the end of December, the *Star Tribune's* Patrick Reusse was joking that girls' parents were already queuing up to try to get their coaches fired, in the grand tradition of hockey everywhere.⁵⁸⁵ Local businesses seized the moment, with places like Pierce Skate and Ski in Minneapolis declaring themselves the "Girl's Hockey Headquarters" in ads.⁵⁸⁶

Elsewhere in the metro, teams had standout players. Anoka/Champlin Park praised Amy Bennefeld, Erin Kennedy, Charissa Larson, Cheri Runke, Aimee Roesner, Laura Roots, Sara Ganser, Alex Hauhia, Alison Luoma, Sara Dalos, and Shannon Villeneuve in game reports. Alex Hauhia, an exchange student from Finland, only played during November and December, but made a clear mark on the team. Blaine/Coon Rapids had a clear star in Laura Granroth, but also excellent players in Lindsay Bertie, Bethany Howard, Lindsay Jerke, Erica Johnson, Emily Miller, Jaime Pajak, Kelly Pajak, Jessica Speller, and Laura Tryba. Blake had standouts in Trone Bjorkedal, Allison Kienke, and Ginny Kohl. Breck's goalie Patricia Sinaiko worked hard over the season, at one point stopping 42 of 48 shots in a game against Anoka/Champlin Park, and Jenny Furst appeared in the box scores regularly. Elk River's Jenny Dickey stood out in goal that season, with Allison Brummer, Tina Guimont, Holly Hofstede, Joleen Lauzen, Amanda Nathe, Trinity Nathe, Kirstin Whalen, and Jamie Wood leading the stats for the team. Jenny Czech, Lacy Franzmeir, Jessica Fedderly, Jodi Peltier, and Ann Sanford were the breakout players for Forest Lake. Michelle Estrin made game reports for Minnehaha Academy.⁵⁸⁷

Jill Rosstedt was a stand-out goalie for Benilde-St. Margaret's, holding her own in the crease even in defeat. In one loss against the dominant Apple Valley, she managed to make 52 saves. Katie Swedlund and Katie Culp recorded goals and appeared in reports over the season. Coach Bill Howlett was excited for the coming growth. As he saw it, the more women and girls saw other women and girls be successful in hockey, the more the game would expand.⁵⁸⁸

Holy Angels had a young, developing team with an incredible coach in Lynn Olson, whose years with the women's leagues and advocating at policy levels through the Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association had given

⁵⁸³ Burge, Brian. "Third-period goals lift Packers past Warriors." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. November 23, 1994, p21A; Aselstine, Sam. "Sibley, SSP usher girls hockey in with a barn burner." *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p10; Box Scores, "Girl's Hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995; Burge, Brian. "Packers have made girls hockey history." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. December 7, 1994, p7D.

⁵⁸⁴ Potts, Cameron. "Have hockey pads, will goaltend." *Savage Pacer*. Savage, Minnesota. December 24, 1994, p9-10.

⁵⁸⁵ Reusse, Patrick. "Puck Dreams." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 22, 1994, p37.

⁵⁸⁶ "Where the Skaters Go!" Ad. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 17, 1994, p45.

⁵⁸⁷ Box Scores, "Girl's Hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995.

⁵⁸⁸ Pederson, Dave. "Girls Hockey Interest is growing in Minnesota." *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. December 7, 1994, p2D; Box Scores, "Girl's Hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995.

her patience. Focused on skill building and developing the program, they took losses in stride. “This first season will be a learning experience for the girls. Winning isn’t everything. I just hope they learn how to enjoy the sport and improve as players,” Olson told the *West St. Paul-Mendota Heights Sun*. Lisa Olson, Becky Olson, and Kelly O’Neill stood out in early reports with their experience, while goaltender Margaret Palo, a soccer goalie completely new to the ice, was remarkable for her efforts, and later in the season other coaches would speak of her sudden, flashing movements to stop a puck as stunning. Coach Olson was proud of them all.⁵⁸⁹

North St. Paul/Tartan had a standout freshman defender in Latisha Hackman and wings in Tracy Falteisek, Briana Munyon, and Debbie Ziemet, and a notable goalie in Erin Lowry. Park Center had hardworking goalies in Tara LeMay and Jessica Fuder, and standout skaters in Monica Deringer and Jennifer Packer. Goalie Colleen Hinz served in the nets for Richfield. In Stillwater Jamie Anderson, Jenny Ginkle, Amy Juran, Candy Kostelecky, Jackie Koury, Jenny Maleitzke, Laura Lang, Lea Moore, Jenny Polansky, Kris Scholz, Tai Thorsheim, and Jill Wilbur made regular appearances in the box scores. St. Paul Area saw standouts in Jessica Biever, Bonnie Brings, Katie Corliss, Nicole Gutterman, Nickie Kelly, and Beth Meza. St. Paul Academy/Visitation had a strong team, providing the Apple Valley Eagles with some of their bigger challenges in the first half of the season. Erin Dwyer, Heather Murphy, and Colleen Tierney led the stats for the team.⁵⁹⁰

Anne Owen, Jessica Peterson, Brittany Sullivan, Heidi Swenson, and Tracy Wendland recorded goals for Irondale/Mounds View over the season, with Norwegian exchange student Siri Rodsjo standing out in goal. While many of the girls were skaters, only Swenson had previous hockey experience from the Thoroughbreds, and coach Sue Ring-Jarvi knew that the season would be a learning curve. In the end, the girls measured success by how hard they made the best teams fight for their victories and showed constant improvement over the year. Nine-year-old Ross Ring-Jarvi would serve as the team’s mascot for the year, wearing a penguin costume made by his mother on the ice.⁵⁹¹

Osseo had Nicole Butler, Michelle Coughlin, Tracy Donaghue, Amy Kroys and Toby Scheelk feature in box scores, while Carrie Berbaum regularly stopped 30 or more shots on goal per game in the early part of the season. Jenny Burg, who also played with the Minnesota Thoroughbreds, missed a third of Osseo’s games but was still their top scorer with 36 goals and 11 assists over the season. In a controversial move, the MSHSL ruled her ineligible for postseason play because her time with the Thoroughbreds had led to her signing on to the team too late in the season. Kresa came in as goaltender later on.⁵⁹²

Goalie Katie Hirke received praise for Park-Woodbury, a team that struggled to overcome ringette style handling. Coach Keith Burcar explained that, in ringette, “You don’t have to go around people. You can just hold

⁵⁸⁹ Kleven, Greg. “Pioneer guides Holy Angels girls.” *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. December 7, 1994, p5D; Box Scores, “Girl’s Hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995; Temple, Pete. “Irish win in playoffs.” *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 12, 1995, p25A.

⁵⁹⁰ “Wins in tournament, over St. Paul, keep Eagles undefeated.” *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. January 8, 1995, p26A; Box Scores, “Girl’s Hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995.

⁵⁹¹ Box Scores, “Girl’s Hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995; Augustoviz, Roman. “Swenson’s goals help Irondale/MV advance.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 16, 1995, p38; Ring-Jarvi, Sue. *Can You Keep Up*. Beaver’s Pond Press. St. Paul, Minnesota. April 2025.

⁵⁹² Box Scores, “Girl’s Hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995; Augustoviz, Roman. “Osseo Hockey Star is ruled ineligible.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 9, 1995, p32.

on to the ring tightly,” and so while his team were great skaters, it was puck handling and control they needed to grow the most.⁵⁹³

Alongside Stillwater, three of the Dakota County teams had emerged as powerhouses throughout the season. Apple Valley, Henry Sibley, and South St. Paul had all become dominant rivals in the league. The Sibley-South St. Paul rivalry began early in the season, with both teams acknowledging each other’s talents. After South St. Paul overcame a 1-3 deficit to beat Henry Sibley 4-3 on November 19, Sibley coach Dan Wilson was still thrilled. “It was an exciting and fun game. That’s to be expected when Sibley and the Packers get together. All games should be that way,” he told the *Southwest Review*.⁵⁹⁴ By the end of the regular season, South St. Paul and Apple Valley were clear contenders for first in the state. Meeting in the final game of the regular season, with Apple Valley undefeated 20-0-0 and South St. Paul with a single loss at 20-1-0, the powerhouses battled to a tie. Packer Megan Milbert traded goals early in the first period with Eagle Betsy Kukowski, only for Aubrey Mull to pull Apple Valley ahead in the first period. Kelly Kegley tied the game up early in the second period, at which point Jen Retka and Jenny Jannette, each in their respective creases, stopped the scoring entirely. Retka made 28 saves, and Jannette 25 to finish the third period and single overtime without a goal.⁵⁹⁵

On November 17, 1994 the MSHSL had announced that there would be an officially sanctioned state tournament held on February 24-25, 1995, at Aldrich Arena, making hockey the thirteenth girls’ sport to have a sanctioned state tournament.⁵⁹⁶ While they had originally planned four sections with a single state tournament qualifier emerging from each, disparities in the league made it clear that the sections would not correctly advance teams. Two larger sections were instead arranged, with the top two teams from each portion advancing to state.⁵⁹⁷ Despite this rearrangement, 4 sections finals were still held, with Apple Valley, Stillwater, South St. Paul, and Henry Sibley High School all advancing to the state tournament.⁵⁹⁸

In defeating the Burnsville Blaze during their section final, the Apple Valley Eagles discovered new depth—both Amanda Owen and Tina Olstead scored their first goal of the season in the penultimate game. But the Blaze were proud too: despite Apple Valley playing on a “whole ‘nother level of hockey,” they managed to take away the shutout with a goal from Kathy Kramer in the third period. Apple Valley coach Chuck Scanlon was thrilled with how better a hockey team his women had become, and Burnsville co-coaches Bonnie Reimann and Patty Mraz said their “girls are holding their heads high.” Both coaching staff agreed that Burnsville had made Apple Valley work for their win, and that the result was something special. Scanlon told the *Dakota County Tribune* that “This is every bit as exciting” as qualifying for state in boys’ soccer had been. Reimann and Mraz mutually announced their retirement from coaching, pleased to have “instilled some passion for the game” in the program they had kicked off for the state.⁵⁹⁹

⁵⁹³ Aselstine, Sam. “Sibley girls hockey starts with a bang.” *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. December 4, 1994, p6; Box Scores, “Girl’s Hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 1994-February 24, 1995.

⁵⁹⁴ Aselstine, Sam. “Sibley, SSP usher girls hockey in with a barn burner.” *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p10; Burge, Brian. “Third-period goals lift Packers past Warriors.” *West St. Paul – Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. November 23, 1994, p21A.

⁵⁹⁵ “Top girls’ hockey teams play to a tie.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 8, 1995, p32.

⁵⁹⁶ Augustoviz, Roman. “League approves girls’ hockey state tournament.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 18, 1994, p9C; Augustoviz, Roman. “Their day has come.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 2, 1995, p27.

⁵⁹⁷ Augustoviz, Roman. “Hierarchy in girls’ hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 1995, p6C.

⁵⁹⁸ Gilbert, John. “Apple Valley rolls in Section 2 Final.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 19, 1995, p48.

⁵⁹⁹ Temple, Pete. “Eagles surge past Blaze into first state tourney.” *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 23, 1995, p2B.

In the lead up to the State Tournament, the first *Star Tribune* All-Metro girls' hockey team was selected. In consultation with coaches at 20 of the 24 schools in the league, the paper named Apple Valley senior Jaime DeGriselles Player of the Year. As a defender, she had finished the regular season with 45 goals and 30 assists. A veteran of first boys' pond and youth hockey, and then the Minnesota Thoroughbreds, she was known for her incredible passing and puck handling skills, and had transferred from Lakeville for her junior year. Coach Scanlon called her "the best player in the state," and her parents noted that she was already coaching skating at hockey camps.⁶⁰⁰

DeGriselles joined defenders Colleen Tierney of St. Paul Academy/Visitation and LaTisha Hackman of North St. Paul/Tartan, forwards Kris Scholz of Stillwater, Heidi Swenson of Irondale/Mounds View, and Laura Tryba of Blaine/Coon Rapids, and goalie Jill Rosstedt of Benilde-St. Margaret's on the All-Metro team. Honorable mentions went to Shannon Villeneuve of Anoka/Champlin Park, Betsey Kukowski, Aubrey Mull, and Michelle Sikich of Apple Valley, Lindsay Bertie, Erica Johnson, and Emily Miller of Blaine/Coon Rapids, Jenny Furst of Breck, Erica Buck and Lara Thomas of Burnsville, Amanda Nathe of Elk River, Jess Fedderly of Forest Lake, Michelle Sieger, Carrie Stefaniak, and Mary Jean Schmidt of Henry Sibley, Siri Rodsjo of Irondale/Mounds View, Briana Munyon, Carlee Tyler, and Erin Lowry of North St. Paul/Tartan, Jenny Burg and Michelle Comphlin of Osseo, Katie Hirte of Park/Woodbury, Nicole Gutterman, Beth Meza, and Nickie Kelly of St. Paul, Heather Murphy and Erin Dwyer of St. Paul Academy/Visitation, Kelly Kegley, Melissa Milbert, Anne Joswiak, Heather Polsfuss, and Jen Retka of South St. Paul, and Tai Thorsheim, Erin Yoho, and Jamie Anderson of Stillwater.⁶⁰¹

Prepping for the tournament, the Apple Valley girls took a cue from the Eagles' boys, who shaved their heads for luck around State Tournament time. Opting instead for braids dyed multiple colors, the Eagles ladies had a team sleepover and expressed their team unity in wild colors. Though their team photo was taken in advance of the tournament, and so missed their dedicated hair, Jaime DeGriselles' red and black braids were visible for her Player of the Year photo.⁶⁰² In the pre-tournament scouting report, *Star Tribune* writers Jim Paulsen and Roman Augustoviz predicted that the Stillwater Ponies' Kris Scholz, the state's leading scorer among both girls and boys, would be a major factor in the semifinals matchup against Apple Valley's impressive scoring depth. The South St. Paul Packers were praised for their overall team balance, and Jen Retka's league leading GAA of 0.77, and expected to provide a challenge to the great ice sense of Sibley's Michelle Sieger and Carrie Stefaniak.⁶⁰³ John Gilbert declared 4'10" eight-grader Kelly Kegley of South St. Paul the "tournament darling," noting that news cameras couldn't resist the "feisty" powerhouse at center. CBS-TV, providing coverage for the first girls' state prep tournament in the nation, opted to profile the South St. Paul team during the tournament.⁶⁰⁴ South St. Paul Mayor Kathleen Gaylord toasted the Packers at a team brunch at T & T Galley Restaurant on Southview the morning of the semifinals.⁶⁰⁵ Everyone recognized the moment. As Eagan's Mike Cook put it in a piece he wrote for the program of the tournament:

In the storied history of Minnesota high school hockey, fans have been thrilled by the efforts of players such as Neal Broten of Roseau, John Mayasich of Eveleth, Jon Casey of Grand Rapids, Doug Zmolek of Rochester, John Marshall and Phil Housley of South St. Paul—familiar names of high school tournament stars who went on to successful college and pro careers playing the game they love...the names of

⁶⁰⁰ Gilbert, John. "Hockey Heroine." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1995, p27.

⁶⁰¹ "Star Tribune All-Metro girls' hockey team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1995, p30.

⁶⁰² Gilbert, John. "Hockey Heroine." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1995, p27.

⁶⁰³ Augustoviz, Roman and Jim Paulsen. "State Girls' Hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995, p31.

⁶⁰⁴ Gilbert, John. "Small Stature, Big Talent." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995, p27.

⁶⁰⁵ Melnick, Jed D. "Hockey History." *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p11.

players from this year's and future years' Minnesota State *Girls'* Hockey Tournament may be the start of some new legends for the state's hockey fans.⁶⁰⁶

On Friday, February 24, 1995 4,085 people packed into the 3,400 seat Aldrich Arena to watch 76 young women compete in the first sanctioned varsity state tournament of the high school league. Apple Valley and Stillwater took the ice for the first game at 12:30pm, to a raucous crowd. Decades later, coaches Chuck Scanlon and Chris Lee can still remember the fans, packed standing room only up to the rafters. The *Star Tribune's* Jay Weiner made note of the "roar, the clamor, the real-live state tournament atmosphere." Lineswoman Evonne Young, the first woman to work a championship hockey game, dropped the first puck for the state and the nation's first ever state high school girls' hockey tournament. Stillwater's Jenny Ginkel opened the scoring at 1:32 in the first period. Tai Thorsheim sunk a second goal for Stillwater halfway through the second, but Alyssa Vegter put Apple Valley's first goal in 24 seconds later of an assist from Michelle Sikich. Kris Scholz put a third in for Stillwater a little over a minute later. Jaime DeGriselles, assisted by Emily Reicher and Heather Priester, sunk a second for Apple Valley at the 12:03 mark, but Scholz responded nine seconds later, and the second period ended with Stillwater up 4-2. Their lead was not to last, however. At 22 seconds into the third period, Apple Valley's Sikich turned the game around, scoring twice, 25 seconds apart, off assists from DeGriselles, to get the equalizer. Betsey Kukowski scored the game winning goal off an assist from Sikich on the power play, and Sikich completed her hat trick off another assist from DeGriselles to close the period and a 6-4 win for Apple Valley, sending them into the finals.⁶⁰⁷

Two hours later, South St. Paul and Henry Sibley took to the ice. For the Packers girls, whose school had sent their boys hockey team to state 26 times, making it in their first ever year was already a thrill. The stands were filled with clanging cowbells. In their 4-0 defeat of the Warriors, with two goals from Kelly Kegley, the second assisted by Shelly Fischer, and one goal each from Melissa Milbert and Heather Wells, the girls credited their ringette skating with their spectacular defensive work. Jen Retka officially stopped only 4 shots on goal on their way to the shut-out, thanks to the depth of the team, though both South St. Paul Coach Dave Palmquist and the press box felt that Sibley had actually had several more shots on goal than wound up counted. Wearing a USA Ringette t-shirt to speak to the press after the game, Milbert noted that hockey was taking over, but she was "fighting for a championship," and excited for where hockey could take her. Closing his own comments, South St. Paul coach Dave Palmquist was thrilled to be taking on Apple Valley, who South St. Paul had fought to the only tie in the Eagles undefeated season. "To be continued," he told the *Star Tribune*.⁶⁰⁸ Kevin Hartzell, of *Let's Play Hockey*, came away from the match converted to the women's game. He opined

[Kelly Kegley] competed like crazy and came to the bench tired. How could anyone who loves hockey not love watching this young girl play and enjoy the game?...I asked her what was the highlight of her

⁶⁰⁶ Cook, Mike. "Legends in the Making." *1995 Girls Hockey Tournament*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995

⁶⁰⁷ Minnesota State High School League. *1995 Girls Hockey Tournament*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995; Weiner, Jay. "Apple Valley, South St. Paul advance to championship." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p33; In Person Interview with Chris Lee and Chuck Scanlon. Apple Valley, Minnesota. July 12, 2024; Quinn, Bill. "If you build it, they will come." *Let's Play Hockey*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 2, 1995, p5; DeFiebre, Conrad. "Girls Skate into history and score big with fans at first state tourney." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p1; Temple, Pete. "Eagles Soar into History." *Burnsville Thisweek News*. March 5, 1995, p26A.

⁶⁰⁸ Minnesota State High School League. *1995 Girls Hockey Tournament*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995; Weiner, Jay. "Apple Valley, South St. Paul advance to championship." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p33; Weiner, Jay. "South St. Paul, Apple Valley reach first girls' hockey state title game." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p27; Wakefield, Wally. "Packer pucksters wallop Warriors..." *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. March 5, 1995, p8.

weekend...she said, "My highlight was being able to play." I just love that answer...Kelly's love for the game has made an impact on me.⁶⁰⁹

On Saturday, Aldrich Arena had given priority to a previously scheduled boys' sectional final, so the consolation game was scheduled for 7pm, with the championship game following at 9pm. Despite the exceedingly late hour, 3,255 fans still came to watch the women play. John Bartz, the thrilled tournament organizer, who also handled boys' hockey, football, and baseball, and was plotting a bigger arena for 1996 told the *Star Tribune* that "In the 10 years I've been doing this, this has been the most fun." Parents drove their young daughters from as far as Bemidji to get a chance to see the first final. Governor Arne Carlson and his wife, publisher Bob Utecht of *Let's Play Hockey*, and Dr. Bob May, the Checkers founder, were also noted in the stands.⁶¹⁰

In the consolation game, Henry Sibley High School emerged the 3rd place victor in a 4-2 win over Stillwater, with a hat trick from Carrie Stefaniak emerging as the deciding factor. Bill Quinn, writing for *Let's Play Hockey*, was impressed with both teams and thrilled that the crowd was enthusiastic for the game, noting that other high school sports often struggled to convince fans to come out for consolation matches.⁶¹¹ Sibley coach Dan Wilson told the *Associated Press* "I am amazed how far they've come. They went from hardly being able to shoot the puck off the floor to being able to almost take my head off at times."⁶¹²

At 9pm, Osseo hockey player Shawna Schuster took the ice and sang the national anthem to kick off the championship match. Mrs. Susan Carlson, the governor's wife, dropped the ceremonial first puck. And then, in a "highly physical, evenly matched, standing-room-only, nail-biting," game, South St. Paul outshot Apple Valley 18-17, but lost 2-0 in the end. Michelle Sikich, assisted by Heather Priestler, scored in the first period for Apple Valley, and Betsey Kukowski put in an extra point on a power play in the third, but it was Apple Valley freshman goalie Jenny Jannett whose brilliant goal tending made the game. Stopping spectacular shots from Kelly Kegley and winning an up-close scramble with Melissa Milbert, she earned every inch of her shutout. Jen Retka was also brilliant in the crease for South St. Paul, and the reporters in attendance left thrilled with the quality of hockey on display and the potential for growth. Apple Valley finished the season undefeated. After the game, Coach Scanlon expressed that "South St. Paul could have easily won it too. They're a great team." Instead, Apple Valley got the moment in history. "Their daughters and granddaughters might be playing, and these girls can say they were the first team to win a state title," Coach Scanlon reflected, "We feel really lucky to do that."⁶¹³

After the tournament, the state coaches' association named the very first All-State girls' hockey team. Apple Valley's Jaime DeGriselles, Betsey Kukowski, and Michelle Sikich, were selected, alongside South St. Paul's Kelly Kegley, Jen Retka, and Heather Polsfuss, Stillwater's Erin Yoho and Kris Scholz, Irondale/Mounds View's Heidi Swenson and Siri Rodsjo, Blaine/Coon Rapids' Laura Tryba, and St. Paul Academy/Visitation's Colleen Tierney.

⁶⁰⁹ Hartzell, Kevin. "Packer's Kegley an inspiration at girls' tourney." *Let's Play Hockey*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 2, 1995, p7.

⁶¹⁰ Minnesota State High School League. *1995 Girls Hockey Tournament*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995; Weiner, Jay. "Apple Valley, South St. Paul advance to championship." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p33; Quinn, Bill. "If you build it, they will come." *Let's Play Hockey*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 2, 1995, p5; DeFiebre, Conrad. "Girls Skate into history and score big with fans at first state tourney." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p1; "Apple Valley Girls Make Hockey History." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 1995, p33.

⁶¹¹ Minnesota State High School League. *1995 Girls Hockey Tournament*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995; Quinn, Bill. "If you build it, they will come." *Let's Play Hockey*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 2, 1995, p5.

⁶¹² Associated Press. "Girls attain place in hockey history." *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. February 26, 1995, p14.

⁶¹³ Minnesota State High School League. *1995 Girls Hockey Tournament*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995; Quinn, Bill. "If you build it, they will come." *Let's Play Hockey*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 2, 1995, p5; Weiner, Jay. "Apple Valley claims historic title in new sport." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 1995, p40; Temple, Pete. "Eagles Soar into History." *Burnsville Thisweek News*. March 5, 1995, p26A.

Honorable mentions went to Anoka/Champlin Park's Amy Bennefeld, Apple Valley's Jenny Jannett, Blaine/Coon Rapids' Emily Miller, Burnsville's Lara Thomas, Henry Sibley's Mary Jean Schmidt, Michelle Seiger, and Carrie Stefaniak, North St. Paul/Tartan's LaTisha Hackman, Osseo's Jenny Burg, St. Paul Academy/Visitation's Heather Murphy, South St. Paul's Melissa Milbert, and Stillwater's Tai Thorsheim.⁶¹⁴ Jay Weiner concluded "They proved that girls' high school hockey is fun to watch, tense, physical without being rough and filled with slid-skating, increasingly adept stars."⁶¹⁵

The Last First Faceoff: Mighty Ducks and a Slice of Ice Pie

Reflecting on the growth of hockey and other girls' sports, Burnsville High School activities director Jim Rohlik called the gender discrimination complaints that kicked off the process a blessing in disguise. "It pushed us into offering something we really should have been offering, and forced us to hurry up in the girls' hockey area—which we hope, in two to five years, will make us stronger than if we had just snuck into it on a slow-go basis," he told the *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Superintendent James Rickabaugh talked about the importance of listening to the girls themselves, and how asking them what they wanted had led to hockey. He was also proud of Burnsville's practice of rotating ice time, with both boys and girls trading the 5:30am practice spots so that no one group was stuck with "that ungodly hour." John Moy, the father who had led the complaint efforts in Burnsville, saw improvement with more work to be done, especially to grow booster clubs and community support for the girls.⁶¹⁶ Let's Play Hockey's Bob Utech saw enormous financial potential in the girls game after everything he'd seen at the state tournament, but pointed out that one of the issues not yet solved was a big one: ice time.⁶¹⁷

Between ringette and the initial eight teams, the desperate need for ice time for high school girls had become clear as early as the spring of 1994. Following that first high school hockey season, Senator William Luther, DFL-Brooklyn Park, introduced legislation to create two new ice centers dedicated to women's ice sports from the proceeds of the sale of the Metropolitan Sports Center in Bloomington, with support from Representative Bob Milbert, DFL-South St. Paul.⁶¹⁸

Women from all levels of hockey and ringette testified before the legislature about the backlash to girls' and women's teams trying to get ice time. Elk River coach Amy Woodcock talked about arriving for scheduled practices and games only to learn in the moment that the promised ice had been sold out from under the girls to boys' teams. South St. Paul's Vicki Skarda had been forced to book 4:30am-6:30am slots for Team USA for Ringette, and player Kati Norsten's father had his car vandalized after trying to book ice time for the girls in South St. Paul.⁶¹⁹ Girls like Chelsey Brodt and Ronda Curtain came to the Capitol with pies, to ask for a "slice" of hockey time and money.⁶²⁰ Representative Phyllis Kahn, DFL-Minneapolis, who had supported girls ice sports from the beginning, expressed shock at the things the women had gone through, and indicated that there was

⁶¹⁴ "All-State girls' hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p35.

⁶¹⁵ Weiner, Jay. "Tourney only the start of girls' influence in hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 1995, p17.

⁶¹⁶ Gessner, John. "Dist 191 sports program cleared in gender-equity complaint." *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. February 5, 1995, p1A.

⁶¹⁷ Utech, Bob. "Minnesota opens doors wide for girls' hockey." *Let's Play Hockey*. March 2, 1995, p11.

⁶¹⁸ Whereatt, Robert. "Bill providing \$14 million for two women's ice centers to be introduced in Legislature." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 16, 1994, p26.

⁶¹⁹ Whereatt, Robert. "Proposed ice centers would be primarily used for women's sports." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 17, 1994, p23.

⁶²⁰ "On behalf of girls' hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 1, 1994, p5.

growing support for the cause.⁶²¹ Rep. Kahn was able to pass a law requiring venues to book a percentage of prime ice time for women by the end of the session in 1994, mitigating the worst scheduling abuses.⁶²²

Some cities attempted to resolve the problem of ice time on their own. Apple Valley City Council voted unanimously in March of 1994 to add a second arena to the existing ice at Apple Valley High School. Funds for the new ice were to be raised through revenue bonds, and Apple Valley Hockey Association kicked off the fund with a \$100,000 check raised from garage sales, pizza parties, car washes, and individual contributions.⁶²³ Despite enthusiasm, significant increases in cost hampered Apple Valley's plans by October.⁶²⁴ Rep. Milbert indicated that at least 25 communities around the state were pursuing similar construction, and that state help was needed.⁶²⁵

After the MSHSL sanctioned girls hockey, the Minnesota Senate advanced Sen. Luther's Met Center sale bill the very next day, but the plan ultimately failed when the Sports Facilities Commission nixed the sale.⁶²⁶ By May of 1994, another plan for more ice had been hatched. A group of representatives, including South St. Paul's Rep. Bob Milbert and Falcon Heights Rep. Mary Jo McGuire, joined MN Amateur Sports Commission Chair Tom Duffy and Executive Director Paul Erickson in a group dubbed "the Mighty Ducks," after the Disney film and their pursuit of opportunities for youth hockey. They attached an amendment to the Target Center acquisition creating a \$0.50 surcharge on tickets to fund more ice arenas.⁶²⁷ Milbert had toured Canadian ice hockey facilities to try to understand how to make them viable—a minimum of two sheets seemed to be the key—and had commissioned a study that showed that 71% of ice time in Minnesota was exclusively used by men and boys, while 24% went to mixed gender groups, and only 5% went to women's and girls' teams. He vowed to find a way to create more ice time for everyone.⁶²⁸

In later years, Patty Mraz would recall one unnamed coach who instructed his players to pee on the girls' equipment bags at an arena in protest of the girls' time.⁶²⁹ Apple Valley assistant coach Chris Lee would remember the discomfort of driving in a bus with the mirrors all covered, so that the girls' junior varsity ringette and later hockey team could change on their way to the extremely limited ice time they were able to schedule at rinks around the county.⁶³⁰ In coverage at the time, Dave Palmquist and his staff discussed the animosity from "hard-core, male ice hockey enthusiasts," they experienced reserving ice time in South St. Paul.⁶³¹ He often received pushback for taking a job coaching girls after he had been a boys' coach.⁶³² Sue Ring-Jarvi recalls having

⁶²¹ "Women propose rinks of their own." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. March 18, 1994, p1.

⁶²² "1975 - Equal Opportunity in Athletics" *Minnesota Women's Legislative Timeline*. Minnesota Legislature. <https://www.lrl.mn.gov/womenstimeline/details?recid=23> Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁶²³ Hoover, Evelyn. "Ice time!" *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 24, 1994, p7A.

⁶²⁴ Olson, Jill. "AV starts over with plans to build second ice arena." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. October 2, 1994, p1A.

⁶²⁵ Whereatt, Robert. "How ice arenas got tangled into the Target Center bill." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 6, 1994, p28.

⁶²⁶ Whereatt, Robert. "Women's athletics." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 25, 1994, p26; Whereatt, Robert. "How ice arenas got tangled into the Target Center bill." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 6, 1994, p28.

⁶²⁷ McGrath, Dennis J. "Target Center buyout squeaks by in Senate." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 5, 1994, p1.

⁶²⁸ Whereatt, Robert. "How ice arenas got tangled into the Target Center bill." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 6, 1994, p28; In Person Interview with Bob Milbert, Melissa Milbert Wendland, and Megan Milbert Tripicchio. Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. December 23, 2024.

⁶²⁹ Email interview with Patty Oaster Mraz. January 7, 2025.

⁶³⁰ In Person Interview with Chris Lee and Chuck Scanlon. Apple Valley, Minnesota. July 12, 2024.

⁶³¹ Wakefield, Wally. "Packers overcoming unknowns with enthusiasm and optimism." *Southwest Review*. North St. Paul, Minnesota. November 13, 1994, p6.

⁶³² Johnson, Randy. "They broke the ice for girls in '94." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 15, 2020, pC2.

to always have a physical copy of her contract on her person or risk rink attendants pushing them off their time in favor of men, and even with a contract in hand they were often cancelled last minute.⁶³³ In one of the more telling moments of the first varsity season, the final game of the first state high school tournament couldn't start until 9pm because a boys' sectional game scheduled for that day took priority at Aldrich Arena—though in this particular instance, the boys had booked the ice first.⁶³⁴

The tournament had made its mark. Rep. Bob Milbert, bolstered by the 7,340 fans who had shown their interest in women's hockey, introduced a new version of the Mighty Ducks legislation on in late February and early March, appropriating \$2.9 million to provide grants to communities for upgrading old or building new rinks. With the possibility of an expanding girls' hockey high school league—Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission executive director called it “a rocket ready to take off”—and more than 400 new developmental girls' teams appearing across the state, the need was dire.⁶³⁵ In later years, Rep. Milbert would explain that he thought it was extremely important to make the issue one of “more ice for everyone,” rather than pushing for legally required equity, which would only continue to make men's teams feel like they were losing out on something that had been theirs.⁶³⁶

Burnsville City Council entertained plans for a new outdoor rink, bolstered by the civic pride in their new girls' program. The first in state high school team had inspired a surge in girls' youth teams, and Burnsville didn't want “users fighting over who's going to get the pie.” They planned to fund the rink through bonding and fundraising. They also put themselves on the list for a Mighty Ducks grant, hoping but not expecting the money to come through.⁶³⁷

In late May 1995, the legislature passed the bill as part of the state appropriations bill. In reviewing the end of the legislative session, the *Star Tribune*, mostly concerned about rising property taxes, still declared that “There were some successes everyone could enjoy...the Mighty Ducks won.”⁶³⁸ In the first round, for 18 spots, 82 communities submitted grants.⁶³⁹

And the Goal: The State of Girls Hockey

After the 1995 tournament, women's hockey almost instantly doubled in size. Hastings School District, ISD 200, voted to add girls' hockey for the 1995-1996 season in late December of 1994.⁶⁴⁰ Tom Osiecki, whose niece Jane had played in the youth leagues in the 1970s, was brought in to coach the Burnsville teams after the retirements of Bonnie Reimann and Patty Mraz.⁶⁴¹ Lakeville, ISD 194, started exploring the possibility in March.⁶⁴² Hibbing,

⁶³³ Ring-Jarvi, Sue. *Can You Keep Up*. Beaver's Pond Press. St. Paul, Minnesota. April 2025.

⁶³⁴ Weiner, Jay. “Apple Valley, South St. Paul advance to championship.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p33.

⁶³⁵ Weiner, Jay. “Tourney only the start of girls' influence in hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 1995, p17; Welsh, John. “Task force's goal: Have state assist hockey.” *The Saint Cloud Times*. Saint Cloud, Minnesota. March 11, 1995, p1.

⁶³⁶ In Person Interview with Bob Milbert, Melissa Milbert Wendland, and Megan Milbert Tripicchio. Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. December 23, 2024.

⁶³⁷ Gessner, John. “Hockey club wants \$600,000 ice rink.” *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. May 28, 1995, p1A.

⁶³⁸ “State approves \$2.9 million for construction of ice arenas.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 23, 1995, p21; McGrath, Dennis J. “Tax increase ends an unremarkable special session.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 26, 1995, p1.

⁶³⁹ Augustoviz, Roman. “82 communities seek ice rink funds.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 31, 1995, p22.

⁶⁴⁰ Lemke, Jay. “School Board moves to start girls hockey team next year.” *Hastings Gazette*. Hastings, Minnesota. December 31, 1994, p1.

⁶⁴¹ “Osiecki to coach girls hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 18, 1995, p36.

⁶⁴² Peterson, Sara. “Puck is dropped in Dist. 194's pursuit of girls' hockey team.” *Burnsville Thisweek News*. Burnsville, Minnesota. March 19, 1995, p1.

Hill-Murray, Totino-Grace, and a Bloomington unified team were in by April.⁶⁴³ Louis Schmitz and Amber Hegland's father Mark both personally attended a school board meeting in April to advocate for girls high school hockey in Farmington, and Eagan indicated interest in adding the sport as well.⁶⁴⁴ Mary Brown was brought in to coach a unified Minneapolis team.⁶⁴⁵ Fairmont and Minnetonka both expressed interest in May.⁶⁴⁶ Shakopee became the 45th school in the state to add girls' varsity hockey in June.⁶⁴⁷ 49 teams existed across the state by the time practices started in October of 1995. The Minnesota State High School League was blown away. "To my knowledge, we've never had a sport take off as dramatically as girls' hockey," executive director Dave Stead told the *Star Tribune*.⁶⁴⁸

The growth never stopped. In the last 30 years, the Minnesota State High School League has expanded to 123 teams all over the state. The girls' tournament is now a full bracket eight team state tournament, with both A and AA levels—meaning twice as many teams win their way into the state tournament each year as played at all in the 1993-1994 season.⁶⁴⁹ Dave Palmquist's prediction would come true: the South St. Paul girls did beat the boys to a State Championship, bringing home the trophy in 2002(AA), 2003(AA), 2005(AA), and 2006(A). To date, the young women of South St. Paul have the most State Tournament appearances of all time, at 17, and the most consecutive wins of any team, at 67 from 2001-2003. Standout South St. Paul players like Ashley Albrecht, Ashley Young, and Maggie Fisher would be listed among the top 25 Minnesota high school players of all time. Palmquist fondly remembers getting to watch Kelly Kegley, then a senior, get take on the Natalie Darwitz led Eagan squad in 1999, and as the last coach from 1994-1995 still active, he is intensely proud of the last 30 years of girls' hockey.⁶⁵⁰

Other teams that began in that first year have set records and produced stars. For the two-game era of tournaments, Holy Angels still holds the record for most tournament goals and player Lauren Smith is in a three-way tie for most points in one period with Apple Valley's Michelle Sikich and Roseville's Renee Curtin. Also in the two-game era, Apple Valley shares the record for most goals in a game with Benilde-St. Margaret's and others. Blake has the most Championships of any school at 7, and legendary players in Carly Bullock, who holds the record for all-time tournament goals, and Dani Cameranesi. Burnsville is in a three-way tie for most Consolation wins, and Burnsville goalie Laura Kelly is one of only seven goalies to have a shutout at the state tournament, alongside Benilde-St. Margaret's Katie Jetland and others. Breck School produced Milica McMillan and holds the best win/loss percentage in their appearances as well as being tied with Edina, home of Lolita Fiddler, for most consecutive wins at 3. Forest Lake had 2016 AA Herb Brooks Award winner Kaitlyn VanTassel on their team. Irondale gave Minnesota 2011 All-Metro player of the year Meghan Lorence, and 2009 AA Herb Brooks winner Gina McDonald, while Mounds View taught 2014 AA Herb Brooks winner Bella Sutton. North St. Paul is the home of 2006 Ms Hockey winner Allie Thurnstrom. Park Center produced Krissy Wendell-Pohl, who has held the

⁶⁴³ Augustoviz, Roman. "Girls' hockey teams likely to double." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 11, 1995, p23.

⁶⁴⁴ Peterson, Sara. "Farmington to look into possibility of girls' hockey." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 20, 1995, p7.

⁶⁴⁵ Augustoviz, Roman. "Brown to coach Minneapolis girls' hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 25, 1995, p23; Phone interview with Mary Brown, former Richfield player and later coach at several schools. June 5, 2025.

⁶⁴⁶ "Fairmont to add girls, boys hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 2, 1995, p23.

⁶⁴⁷ Augustoviz, Roman. "High School League has its appeals day" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 13, 1995, p27.

⁶⁴⁸ "Gender Equity." *The Saint Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. October 5, 1995, p19; Gilbert, John. "Girls' hockey: Explosion on Ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 14, 1995, p19.

⁶⁴⁹ Minnesota State High School League. "Girls' Hockey." <https://www.mshsl.org/sports-and-activities/hockey-girls>. Accessed 8/1/2025.

⁶⁵⁰ Phone interview with Dave Palmquist, July 10, 2024; Minnesota State High School League. "Hockey, Girls." <https://www.mshsl.org/tournaments/state-tournament-archives/state-tournament-archive-girls-hockey-2025> Accessed 8/6/2025; LaVaque, David. "Top 25 played best in spotlight." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 2019, pC1.

record for most points and most goals in a single tournament in the three-game era for 25 years. The game has exploded in the outstate, with girls from all over Minnesota getting a true chance to shine. More than half a million people have paid to see generations of young women play hockey at a state tournament over the years.⁶⁵¹ The women who first fought to play the game they loved for their high schools are in their forties now, and generations have and will continue to follow after them. The step into varsity hockey secured, the game could only get bigger from there.

Minnesota Girls High School Hockey Players, 1993-1995, and State Records, 1994-2025

A partial record of teams and achievements from the ongoing high school era can be found in the *Minnesota Girls High School Hockey Players 1993-1995 and State Records 1994-2025.pdf* document

⁶⁵¹ Minnesota State High School League. "Hockey, Girls." <https://www.mshsl.org/tournaments/state-tournament-archives/state-tournament-archive-girls-hockey-2025> Accessed 8/6/2025; LaVaque, David. "Top 25 played best in spotlight." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 2019, pC1.

Dakota County Spotlight: South St. Paul's Jen Retka Jacobson

1990s Varsity High School Player and Bemidji Beavers Hockey Player

Unlike many of the women who would play hockey here in Minnesota, Jen Retka Jacobson did not come from a hockey playing family. Instead, her introduction to the game happened when she was assigned to the class of Hedy Sue Woog for kindergarten. Ms. Woog took her students on a field-trip to meet her brother, South St. Paul hockey legend and Gopher men's coach Doug Woog, and Jen was instantly hooked. Her supportive dad built her a rink in the backyard, and got her equipment through yard sales, and she played with the neighborhood boys as soon as she could skate.⁶⁵²

In fifth grade, she joined the local ringette program, but never stopped playing pick-up hockey—with both boys and girls—on the weekends. By the time ringette was named a varsity sport at South St. Paul, she was a stand-out goalie, virtually tying Mary Jean Schmidt of Sibley for the best GAA in the league at 2.70 in the 1994 season.⁶⁵³ But Jen was a hockey goalie at heart, and when the transition from ringette came in her junior year, she was thrilled. In the first sanctioned 1994-1995 season, she recorded 14 shutouts and a best in league GAA of 0.77.⁶⁵⁴ The large difference in skill levels across the league may have contributed to some of her record, but she also earned a great deal of it. At one point, in a 3-0 victory over St. Paul Area, she made 31 saves to earn her shutout.⁶⁵⁵ She was given an honorable mention on the *Star Tribune's* All-Metro squad for 1995, and was placed on the coach selected 1995 All-State team.⁶⁵⁶

The noise of walking into the packed Aldrich Arena for the first state championship was deafening, but she can remember it disappearing into the background as soon as they were on the ice. When they lost to Apple Valley in the championship game, she was heartbroken, but in later years remembered the support from the community, too. The crowd was electric, and the South St. Paul police came out to give them a heroes' escort home. Ten months later, she'd get another chance at glory, making two spectacular saves against Michelle Sikich in the final minute of the first Apple Valley-South St. Paul meet up of the 1995-1996 season. The Packers won in a 2-0 shutout.⁶⁵⁷ That year, though South St. Paul's tournament dreams were dashed in a sectionals' loss to ultimate champions Roseville, Jen was named to the All-Metro team, and again made the All-State squad.⁶⁵⁸ She was one of five finalists for the first ever Ms. Hockey Award.⁶⁵⁹

She went on to play for Bemidji State as a defender in their first season in 1998-1999, and recorded goals against St. Cloud State, St. Mary's University, and St. Benedicts'.⁶⁶⁰ A multi-sport athlete, she also played tennis and softball. These days, her hockey experience is mostly as a fan of the kids in her life, but she'd love to get a women's team started up in Bemidji, where she has made her home. She loves what women's sports can do for

⁶⁵² Otherwise unsourced information in this section comes from a phone interview with Jennifer Retka Jacobson, May 30, 2024.

⁶⁵³ Augustoviz, Roman. "Going into this week..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 10, 1994, p42.

⁶⁵⁴ Box Scores. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 24, 1995, p31; South St. Paul High School. "Out with the Old and in with the New." *Kaposia*. South St. Paul, Minnesota. 1995, p142-143

⁶⁵⁵ Box Scores. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 18, 1994, p52.

⁶⁵⁶ "Star Tribune All-Metro girls' hockey team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1995, p30; "All-State girls' hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p35.

⁶⁵⁷ Gilbert, John. "South St. Paul hands Apple Valley first loss." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 22, 1995, pC3.

⁶⁵⁸ "1996 Star Tribune All-Metro Girls' Hockey Team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 22, 1996, pC10; "All-State." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1996, pC9.

⁶⁵⁹ "More honors for Brodt." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 6, 1996, p31.

⁶⁶⁰ "Blazers win, 3-1." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. November 12, 1998, p26; "SMU women skate to first sweep." *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. November 22, 1998, p10; "Area Colleges." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. January 30, 1999, p26.

children, and is excited for the future. The more that young women see what's possible for them, the bigger and better things will grow.

Dakota County Spotlight: Apple Valley's Michelle Gustafson, née Sikich

1990s Varsity High School and Wisconsin Badgers Player and Current Youth Coach

Michelle Gustafson's earliest memories all take place on a skating rink. She grew up playing both boys' hockey at the youth levels as well as ringette with the girls, and in 4th and 5th grade had the opportunity to play with the Rosemount Youth girls.⁶⁶¹ In 8th grade she joined the Apple Valley High School girls' varsity ringette team, but could read the writing on the wall—she remembers Coach Chuck Scanlon sneaking in hockey practices and skirmishes by the end of the year.

As a freshman, her boys' hockey experience gave her an edge, but she remembers how much the older girls, many of whom had come over from soccer, knew about establishing a team and playing as a unit. She looked up to them all as role models. While the community seemed intrigued but unserious about the possibilities of girls' hockey, the Apple Valley coaching staff took it very seriously, treating them all like real hockey players. In that wildly successful first season, Michelle was a standout player in Apple Valley's semi-finals win over Stillwater, coming from behind with a hat trick and an assist on the game winning goal to achieve the 6-4 win. Her grandmothers, Ruth Twito and Betty Sikich, were in the stands with ten of her family members and cowbells to cheer her on. In the press, the Sikich family let John Gilbert know that Michelle's place in the State Tournament had earned the kids a dog, though Michelle remembers that they were supposed to *win* the tournament. In the final, she scored the second goal of the 2-0 victory, helping the Eagles to clinch the first championship of Minnesota girls' state high school hockey.⁶⁶² She was given an All-Metro honorable mention by the Star Tribune and picked for the All-State team by the ballot of coaches.⁶⁶³ They did get two puppies: a black lab named Toby and a German Shepherd Akita mix named Champ.

Despite two tough but well-played years for the Apple Valley Eagles as a whole, Michelle would make the All-State team again as a sophomore in 1996, and get an honorable mention for All-State and make the All-Metro squad as a junior in 1997.⁶⁶⁴ She attended both state tournaments as a spectator after qualifying losses to Burnsville in 1996 and Egan in 1997, and was fired up wanting to be back in the arena.⁶⁶⁵ Her senior year, facing the Natalie Darwitz-led Egan team in early January, she was reluctantly praised by both coaches for managing to shut Darwitz down, though Egan ultimately won the game.⁶⁶⁶ By mid February, Michelle was named to the All-Metro team and the All-State second team.⁶⁶⁷ In Apple Valley and Michelle's second state tournament appearance, she was praised for her momentum-turning defensive play as she took a hard dive into the boards to block an equalizer in the quarterfinals against Anoka. After the game, Coach Scanlon called her the "best two-

⁶⁶¹ Otherwise unsourced memories in this section are from a phone interview with Michelle (Sikich) Gustafson. December 12, 2024.

⁶⁶² Gilbert, John. "Apple Valley rolls in Section 2 Final." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 19, 1995, p48; Weiner, Jay. "Apple Valley, South St. Paul advance to championship." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p33; DeFiebre, Conrad. "Girls Skate into history and score big with fans at first state tourney." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p1; Weiner, Jay. "Apple Valley claims historic title in new sport." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 1995, p40.

⁶⁶³ "Star Tribune All-Metro girls' hockey team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1995, p30; Weiner, Jay. "Tourney only the start of girls' influence in hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 1995, p17.

⁶⁶⁴ "All State" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1996, p35; "1996-97 Star Tribune All Metro Girls Hockey Team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 18 1997, p36; Lesko, Ron. "Roseville's Curtain is top girls player." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 19, 1997, p35.

⁶⁶⁵ Gilbert, John. "Eagles look to recapture magic." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 18, 1998, p32.

⁶⁶⁶ "Egana girls win in overtime." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 16, 1998, pC8.

⁶⁶⁷ "Star Tribune 1998 All-Metro girls' hockey team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 17, 1998, p28; "Girls all-state team." *Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. February 19, 1998, p14.

way player in the state.”⁶⁶⁸ In the semifinals, her second-period hat trick combined with Jenna Boutain’s for the win and a place in the finals once again.⁶⁶⁹

The 1998 final was televised for the first time ever, and Gustafson remembers it as an absolute dream for a Minnesota kid to get to play televised hockey. A Ms. Hockey finalist, she was a player to watch going into the game, which ended up a battle of the goalies through three scoreless periods. Michelle had some of the best opportunities and assists in the 28 shots the Eagles put on Hibbing goalie Natalie Lamme, but the game came down to an overtime goal at 1:25 of the first OT by Apple Valley’s Leslie Stone, a sophomore on the team’s third line.⁶⁷⁰ To this day, Gustafson remembers the depth of her senior year team with pride. After the game, she told the *Associated Press*, “There’s nothing better than this.”⁶⁷¹ She was chosen as her school’s Athena Award winner at the end of the year.⁶⁷²

With college varsity hockey proliferating, her career was able to continue. She spent a year in Mankato, and then moved on to the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she played for the Badgers alongside former state tournament rival Kelly Kegley. While their high school years were intensely competitive, Kegley wound up a bridesmaid at her wedding and a lifelong friend. Gustafson was a team co-captain in 2001, and after college returned to Apple Valley where she became a counsellor at the high school that she won championships for.

Gustafson has gone on to coach boys’ hockey for all three of her sons. While some men still struggle to process her as a coach—she was once asked for her “resumé” to prove she could coach 4 and 5-year-old mites by a dad who had not asked the same of the men coaching—she’s thrilled that her boys and their peers have grown up seeing girls’ hockey as normal. While her own coaches knew that it was history-making at the time, she remembers those years as “just kids doing what they loved,” and seeing the impact it had for kids today is incredible.

In 2019 the *Star Tribune* ranked Michelle Gustafson, née Sikich, 11th in a list of the state’s 25 best girls’ high school hockey players in honor of the upcoming 25th anniversary of girls’ high school varsity hockey, for both of her appearances in 1995 and 1998.⁶⁷³

⁶⁶⁸ “Roseville upsets top-ranked Eagan.” *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. February 20, 1998, p14; “Roseville snaps Eagan’s 25 game winning streak.” *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. February 29, 1998, p13; Gilbert, John. “Eagles’ Sikich does it all in victory.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 1998, p39.

⁶⁶⁹ “Sikich hat trick puts AV in final.” *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. February 21, 1998, p10.

⁶⁷⁰ Gustafson, Craig. “Hibbing denied repeat.” *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 22, 1998, p33.

⁶⁷¹ “Apple Valley stops Hibbing’s bid to repeat.” *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. February 23, 1998, p26.

⁶⁷² “Minneapolis area-winners.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 15, 1998, p38.

⁶⁷³ LaVaque, David. “Top 25 played best in spotlight.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 2019, pC1.

Dakota County Spotlight: The Milbert Family of South St. Paul

Players, Advocates, and Builders from the Ringette Era to Today

If there is a first family of Dakota County womens' hockey, it is very probably the Milberts. Minnesota Representative Bob Milbert, his wife Vicky, son Bryan, their daughters Melissa Wendland and Megan Tripicchio, and Bob's sister Molly Milbert-Hinz have been involved with women's ringette and hockey on so many levels over the years—as players, coaches, supporters, and advocates—that their stories easily fill pages of notes.⁶⁷⁴

The family's hockey history goes back to at least the mid-1960s, when a young Bob Milbert played in front of sold-out crowds for the South St. Paul Packers and then continued at Dartmouth College. His daughters caught the hockey-bug from him, and spent their childhoods at neighborhood rinks, playing pickup hockey with the boys as well as formal ringette in the youth leagues. While coverage of youth ringette was spotty at best at the time, Melissa remembers playing in travel tournaments in the mid-1980s. By 1986 Bob was on the board of USA Ringette.⁶⁷⁵ He, Vicky, and Melissa also played pickup hockey in a mixed-gender, bipartisan pickup team with Reps. Phyllis Kahn, Mary Jo McGuire, Tim Pawlenty, Howard Orenstein, and a collective of guest legislators, lobbyists, and local kids, starting around 1990. Those "Golden Sea Horses" teammates would provide much of the momentum for the Mighty Ducks Legislation in later years.⁶⁷⁶ Both Vicky and Molly played in the ringette women's leagues, with Molly serving on the USA National team in 1992 and traveling to Helsinki for the world championships.⁶⁷⁷ Melissa also made the USA Nationals team and played in the world championships in 1994, and both she and Megan played internationally, traveling to the St. James Ringette Tournament in Winnepeg with the South St. Paul Packers.⁶⁷⁸

Both Milbert sisters remember enjoying ringette, but hockey was better. Almost as importantly, hockey had a future, with the Olympics pending and colleges starting to offer scholarships. As a junior in high school, Melissa had already reached the pinnacle of ringette on Team USA, and she had her sights set on what might be available after she graduated. Melissa remembers pestering superintendent Dave Metzen, a family friend, to let South St. Paul try girls' hockey, and to his credit he facilitated them making their case to the community. Melissa spoke at two large community forums, and while many parents of ringette players were deeply upset, the girls ultimately prevailed in swaying the district. By the first tournament in February 1995, the community was largely on board. The girls received congratulatory cards, and can remember the roar of the crowd being audible in the

⁶⁷⁴ Otherwise unsourced memories in this section come from an in-person interview with Bob Milbert, Melissa Milbert Wendland, and Megan Milbert Tripicchio. Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. December 23, 2024.

⁶⁷⁵ "Voters' Guide, Dakota/Scott: Robert P. Milbert, DFL." *The Minneapolis Star and Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 30, 1986, p23

⁶⁷⁶ Anderson, Kendall. "Bipartisan spirit invades legislative hockey team." *Session Weekly*, St. Paul: Minnesota House of Representatives Information Office, March 29, 1996, p24.

⁶⁷⁷ Harvey, Gary. "Star of the North Games get started." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. Jun 17, 1989, p2; "The US National Ice Ringette team..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 7, 1992, p22; Ringette Hall of Fame. "The 1992 World Ringette Championship Team." <https://www.ringette.ca/inductees/the-1992-world-ringette-championship-team/> Accessed 5/15/2025; *USA National Team 1992 Ice Ringette Roster*. USA Ringette. South St. Paul, Minnesota. 1992.

⁶⁷⁸ "South St Paul and Rosemount..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 26, 1993, p36; *USA National Team 1994 Ice Ringette Roster*. USA Ringette. South St. Paul, Minnesota. 1994; "Ice ringette meet slated for March." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 19, 1994, p30; "Rosemount to host world ringette meet opening ceremonies." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 17, 1994, p3B; Temple, Pete. "Kusnier, Burrock skate to ringette's highest level." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 31, 1994, p1B; Brettingen, Pat. "Sibley, So. St. Paul show stuff in Canada." *West St. Paul-Mendota Heights Sun Current*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. January, 12, 1994, p10B.

locker rooms. After a contentious year over ice time, the entire South St. Paul boys' varsity hockey team came out to cheer them on. "It's the biggest thrill of my life," Melissa told the *Star Tribune* at the time.⁶⁷⁹

Throughout the year and that tough loss to Apple Valley, the family never stopped working for the women's game. Acutely aware over the years of the issue of ice for everyone—Doug Woog Arena alone was used by eight boys varsity and junior varsity teams between South St. Paul, St. Thomas Academy, Simley, and Henry Sibley alone—Bob and Melissa toured Canadian rinks during a break in college to study what made them functionally and financially viable, ultimately serving as inspiration for the eight-ice-sheet Super Rink in Blaine. The ultimate version of the Mighty Ducks legislation was finally passed in the spring of 1995. Rep. Milbert made ice time for everyone—men and women, B and C teams, casual and serious players—the focus, and the whole family champions development and access to this day.

In her college hunt, with no real system in place in 1995, Melissa mailed VHS tapes of her play to colleges back East and hustled to get noticed. Harvard snapped her up. A little over two years later, the University of Minnesota had begun their women's program, and Megan was recruited alongside many - other local women who had served as captains of their teams. On November 6, 1997, the sisters met on the ice as collegiate opponents for the first time, in the Gophers second ever game. The Gophers took an early lead, but Melissa made an assist on a momentum shifting goal and Harvard won 3-2.⁶⁸⁰ Harvard won again on the same date in 1998, but both teams wound up in the American Women's College Hockey Alliance (AWCHA) national championship tournament that season.⁶⁸¹ Played in Minnesota at Mariucci Arena, Melissa's Harvard team won the 1999 national championship, and Megan's University of Minnesota squad took third place.⁶⁸² Megan was on the team for the Gophers 2000 AWCHA national championship.⁶⁸³ As incredible as the national title was, Melissa remembers the 1995 girls' state hockey tournament as the bigger, more electric crowd.

When Bob Milbert retired from the legislature in 2003, 61 ice arenas had been built with more than \$122.8 million across the state through the legislation he and his family had championed.⁶⁸⁴ In January of that year, he and his daughters were recruited by Governor Tim Pawlenty to play in his inauguration week hockey game against a team led by former Governor Wendell Anderson. Pawlenty's Team Minnesota, with bipartisan legislators and girls' hockey ringers, beat Anderson's Old Timers 6-2, with the young women scoring 4 of the goals for the win. Girls' hockey wasn't just normalized, it was part of the fabric of Minnesota life.⁶⁸⁵

These days, the Milberts are coaches and hockey parents, giving back to the sport they all love. They speak passionately about both development and access for kids, championing issues like legal gambling that support teams across the state. They see the positives in everything, from elite leagues that give kids more chances to play, to super rinks that help make ice more available for everyone. In Minnesota hockey, the Milberts are part of the crowd that makes it happen.

⁶⁷⁹ Weiner, Jay. "Packers defeat Sibley; Historic state title is their next goal." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1995, p7C.

⁶⁸⁰ Zolecki, Todd. "Harvard skates past 'U' women." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 7, 1997, p38.

⁶⁸¹ Eldred, Sheila Mulrooney. "Harvard skates past 'U'." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 6, 1998, p48;

Blount, Rachel. "Power shift hits women's college hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 26, 1999, p39.

⁶⁸² "Box Scores." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 28, 1999, p56.

⁶⁸³ Schmid, Pam. "Gophers bring home the title." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 26, 2000, p43.

⁶⁸⁴ McKenzie, Sarah. "Hockey Heritage: After Eight Terms Working to Aid the State's Youth, Milbert Laces Up with a Different Team - His Family." *Session Weekly*, St. Paul: Minnesota House of Representatives Information Office, April 12, 2002, p. 17.

⁶⁸⁵ Helms, Marisa. "Pawlenty on Ice." *Minnesota Public Radio*. January 10, 2003.

https://news.minnesota.publicradio.org/features/2003/01/10_helmsm_govhockey/ Accessed 8/8/2025.

Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Patty Oaster Mraz

1990s High School Coach and 1970s Youth League Player

When Patty Oaster Mraz was a freshman in high school, her father's job moved her family to Burnsville. A multi-sport athlete from a young age, she became a stand-out star in tennis, and also competed in basketball, softball, gymnastics, swimming, soccer, cheerleading, and track and field at the high school level.⁶⁸⁶ A talented skater from a young age as well—her father had played hockey and her mother was a figure skater—she was invited in 1974 to try out for the Burnsville Girls midget level travelling team. Within the first two games of the season, she was scoring goals and becoming a recognizable name in game reports.⁶⁸⁷ She loved the games, but enjoyed going to practice as well, where she developed strong stick handling and shooting skills. A second-line center and power play point, she had a strong wrist shot and slapshot.

Burnsville took the 1975 State Girls Midget Hockey Championship title that year, with Patty registering an assist and two goals, one of them a wrist shot from eight feet in the slot against Farmington, in the tournament.⁶⁸⁸ That win faded in memory, however, compared to the memory of getting a hat trick at the first ever National Invitational Girls' Hockey Tournament in Ecorse, Michigan.⁶⁸⁹ She'd return the second year the team made nationals, and remembers the friendships, with girls and families of all walks of life, on the team fondly. She was named her school's Athena Award winner in 1976.⁶⁹⁰

In University, at the College of St. Benedict, Patty was a standout tennis star, regularly appearing in match reports and tournament photos into the 1980s.⁶⁹¹ After college and marriage, she settled back in Burnsville where she was a science teacher and an established women's varsity tennis coach, coaching at Burnsville for seven years.⁶⁹² She was involved in volunteering in her church and community and played both tennis and women's hockey in adult leagues. In 1989 she became a sport director for the Minnesota Star of the North Games, and served in the same role for the 1990 US Olympic Festival in Minneapolis.

When the opportunity came to be a part of the fledgling girls' hockey program at Burnsville High School, she jumped at the chance. To this day, she is proudest of the choice she and Bonnie Reimann made to have a no-cut policy for those first two years, prioritizing participation for the girls at Burnsville. While it meant juggling a large number of junior varsity players—"Earn your minute!" was a constant refrain—opening doors felt worth it in the end. Some of her players went on to take second in State in 1996, and to play for the fledgling college programs at the University of Minnesota and Augsburg. The very early morning ice times, especially for girls' teams, made it hard to continue coaching and managing childcare, and both Mraz and Reimann left hockey after the 1994-1995 season, but never stopped helping their communities and cheering for women in sports.

In those early varsity high school seasons, Mraz stands out in the press for always having something positive to say about the work her team was putting in and the quality of other players in the league, rooting not just for

⁶⁸⁶ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section come from an email interview with Patty Oaster Mraz. January 7, 2025.

⁶⁸⁷ "BAC Girls Midget Team Scores Win." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. December 12, 1974, p15B.

⁶⁸⁸ "Burnsville Girls Win State Title." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. March 27, 1975, p11B.

⁶⁸⁹ "Burnsville Girl Ice Teams National Runners-Up." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. April 17, 1975, p11B.

⁶⁹⁰ "Patty Oaster Named Top Girl Athlete at BHS." *Dakota County Tribune*, Farmington, Minnesota. February 5, 1976, p13B.

⁶⁹¹ For some examples: "Photo of Patty Oaster and Kathy Lenz Photo." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. July 1, 1980, p11; "Sue Petit, Riply Inkslinger titlists." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. June 30, 1980, p12; "Tennis." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. May 7, 1980, p32.

⁶⁹² "Comings and Goings." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 29, 1995, p24.

the Burnsville girls, but for women's hockey as a whole.⁶⁹³ She's kept this mentality ever since. When the Gopher women's hockey team won the championship in 2000, Mraz took the time to remind the press that this was a big deal for women and girls, and to congratulate both the U of MN team and the Augsburg women on their seasons.⁶⁹⁴ In 2002 she won the US Tennis Association's Eve Kraft Community Tennis Service Award, for her work developing community-based tennis programs.⁶⁹⁵ She still coaches tennis, which she considers an excellent aide for stick handling skills.

⁶⁹³ Temple, Pete. "Questions abound as girls' hockey season begins." *Burnsville Thisweek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p34A; "Blaze Splits two games." *Burnsville Thisweek*. Burnsville, Minnesota. November 27, 1994, p34A; Temple, Pete. "Blaze recovers from losses with Senior Night win." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 5, 1995, p2B; Temple, Pete. "Eagles surge past Blaze into first state tourney." *Dakota County Tribune*. Farmington, Minnesota. February 23, 1995, p2B; Gilbert, John. "Hockey Heroine." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1995, p27.

⁶⁹⁴ Mraz, Patty. "Letter to the Editor: Golden Gophers." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 3, 2000, p10.

⁶⁹⁵ "Patty Mraz of Apple Valley..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 22, 2002, pC2; US Tennis Association. "Eve Kraft Outstanding Service Award." <https://www.usta.com/en/home/about-usta/usta-awards/national/eve-kraft-community-service-award.html> Accessed 8/7/2025.

Game 2: The Twenty-First Century Goes Pro

First Period: But First...Hockey is Still for Everyone

A popular piece of pub trivia crops up at the universities where the women of the 1915-1933 era made their physical education careers: despite being pioneers of women's sport, some of them opposed women's varsity sports.⁶⁹⁶ While it could be written off as a sad case of women refusing others the things they themselves benefitted from, these women's careers depended on female students enrolling in physical education programs. What Lenore Alway and her peers actually opposed was not women playing and participating in sports, but rather women's sports becoming institutionally elitist. If participation in sport was targeted at only those with the talent, time, and money to truly excel, the vast majority of girls would simply never get to play.

The concerns mirrored widespread turn-of-the-century fears of "professionalism" ruining men's sports.⁶⁹⁷ Their fears also played out in the very real decline in both boys and girls' hockey participation in the late 1970s caused in part by "overemphasis on all-star travel teams."⁶⁹⁸ In many states, early identification of the best players, who are then given the majority of resources, is the standard practice for hockey clubs and schools.⁶⁹⁹

In the State of Hockey, however, the sanctioning of varsity hockey for girls became part of the larger choice to go in a different direction. Women had already spent nearly a century asking, "Why can't I play?" All people, in all walks of life, get to ask that question in Minnesota. Here, "Hockey is for Everyone." While the central women's hockey story of the twenty-first century is the progression towards the professional game, the groups working to spread and promote hockey among non-professionals are still an important part of history.

Youth Hockey and the Minnesota Model

For every kid who wants to play, getting into hockey requires a certain amount of support. Alongside the typical youth sport commitment of rides to practice, laundry, and parents willing to cheer from the stands, hockey involves a significantly larger monetary commitment for both gear and access to ice. But here in Minnesota, where community based, non-profit hockey is the norm, and where ice rinks tend to be community-owned shared resources, access is just a little bit easier.⁷⁰⁰

Hockey in Minnesota is governed by a descending series of organizations, with USA Hockey—Amateur Hockey Association of the United States (AHAUS) prior to 1991—at the top nationally, underneath the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), the international governing body. USA Hockey sets policy and procedures, creates development and educational programs for players, coaches and officials, chooses the Select, National, and Olympics teams. Minnesota Hockey—Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) prior to 2008—focuses on development and growth of hockey in Minnesota and governs the 13 geographical districts of hockey in the

⁶⁹⁶ "Cortland History Flashcards." <https://quizlet.com/446017261/cortland-history-flash-cards/> Accessed 10/17/2024.

⁶⁹⁷ "Hockey leagues are not wanted: No Professionalism, Competitions would spoil the game." *Birmingham Gazette*. West Midlands, England. November 30, 1904, p8; "Victorias may not play with Houghton." *The Saint Paul Globe*. Saint Paul, Minnesota. December 10, 1903, p5; "Ehler takes rap at professionals." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 19, 1911, p10.

⁶⁹⁸ Smith, Charlie. "'Where's hockey going? – Lefty Smith'" *West St. Paul Mendota Heights Sun*. West St. Paul, Minnesota. March 21, 1979, pB11.

⁶⁹⁹ Hatten, Mick. "Why Minnesota's youth hockey model keeps numbers rising..." *The Rink Live*. November 5, 2023.

<https://www.therinklive.com/youth/why-minnesotas-youth-hockey-model-keeps-numbers-rising-and-growing-the-gap-with-other-states> Accessed 12/5/2024.

⁷⁰⁰ Hatten, Mick. "Why Minnesota's youth hockey model keeps numbers rising..." *The Rink Live*. November 5, 2023.

<https://www.therinklive.com/youth/why-minnesotas-youth-hockey-model-keeps-numbers-rising-and-growing-the-gap-with-other-states> Accessed 12/5/2024.

state. Each of the 13 Districts—Dakota county primarily falls under District 8—organize tournaments, supervise associations, and enforce Minnesota Hockey’s rules. Finally, 135 community-based, volunteer run associations create teams, develop individual youth players, and grow the game locally. Minnesota Hockey explains the advantage to the system succinctly:

There are three distinct advantages to the community-based model. Perhaps most importantly, this model allows players to develop their hockey skills close to home. In many other states, hockey involves significant travel and leaving home at the ages of 14-16, or even earlier to compete at a high level. In Minnesota, players get to stay at home and play hockey with their best friends from school from Mites through High School. Secondly, our associations work directly with the community in supporting hockey and maintaining a volunteer based, non-profit structure, which keeps the cost of the game down. The third benefit is in many ways a byproduct of the first two as limiting the cost and travel involved in playing hockey allows more kids to participate and learn to love the game.⁷⁰¹

In addition to splitting children into age-appropriate teams, most youth hockey associations also run teams at various levels within those age groups, allowing children with a wide range of skills to play in ways that enable them to see plentiful ice time and grow as players, a system known as the Minnesota Development Model.⁷⁰² Apple Valley/Burnsville Hockey Association’s 2023-2025 Vice President Joanie Baltes believes strongly that the way you develop the best players is by having as many kids as possible play. Not every brilliant player starts out as a star. Given the opportunity to put in the work and grow, stars can be made. In order to facilitate as much participation as possible, associations extensively fundraise to keep costs down, often running equipment drives and exchanges for families to utilize, and provide evaluation and support to place the kids in their area on teams at the right level for their best growth and success. In Minnesota, legal gambling—such as pulltabs—is used extensively to support youth hockey, and many coaches and hockey families are ardent supporters as a result.⁷⁰³ Some associations, like the Duluth Girls’ Hockey Association, have been able to offer hockey to their players for zero fees.⁷⁰⁴

Associations also handle the bigger umbrella tasks—like ordering jerseys and scheduling—so that volunteer coaches can focus on the kids. They also promote and push the idea that the game should be fun, reminding coaches and parents alike when needed. The official position of the Minnesota Development Model is that “a coach’s success is measured by how many kids keep playing hockey.”⁷⁰⁵

And it works. When it comes to participation, Minnesota leads the nation for youth turn out. More than that, Minnesota also leads the nation in turning out the top talent in every area. In women’s hockey alone, Minnesota produced more than twice as many NCAA Division I women’s hockey players than the next highest state—222 women come from Minnesota compared to Massachusetts’ 106—and more than the three next highest states—

⁷⁰¹ Minnesota Hockey. “Hockey’s Organizational Structure.” <https://www.minnesotahockey.org/page/show/1269361-hockey-s-organizational-structure>. Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁷⁰² Minnesota Hockey. *Minnesota Development Model Best Practices*. Revised November 8, 2016. https://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0121/0331/MN_Hockey_Best_Practices_2016.pdf. Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁷⁰³ Phone Interview with Joanie Baltes. December 10, 2024; In Person Interview with Bob Milbert, Melissa Milbert Wendland, and Megan Milbert Tripicchio. Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. December 23, 2024.

⁷⁰⁴ Nowacki, Jon. “Icebreaker tourney paves way for affordable youth hockey.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 13, 2011, p19.

⁷⁰⁵ Minnesota Hockey. *Minnesota Development Model Best Practices*. Revised November 8, 2016. https://assets.ngin.com/attachments/document/0121/0331/MN_Hockey_Best_Practices_2016.pdf. Accessed 8/5/2025; Phone Interview with Joanie Baltes. December 10, 2024; In Person Interview with Bob Milbert, Melissa Milbert Wendland, and Megan Milbert Tripicchio. Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. December 23, 2024.

Massachusetts, New York and Michigan combined for 209 players.⁷⁰⁶ In the first two years of the Professional Women's Hockey League (PWHL), Minnesota came second only to Ontario for number of players—26 to Ontario's 52—despite having an overall population barely over 1/3 Ontario's size.⁷⁰⁷ Letting kids play is the right call from a community point of view, but it is a strategic decision as well.

Outreach to Minnesotan Kids of Color

In 1984 a hockey mom and St. Paul police officer named Debbie Montgomery was on a mission to help her sons play hockey with their friends. Discouraged by certain coaches, but determined to help her kids play, she spent hours researching what she needed to do. Once they were on the ice, racist remarks from other parents were common, but her sons loved the game. When a former Minnesota Gopher named Kyle Peterson, whose love of both hockey and jazz helped him notice the divide between communities, asked her to help him figure out how to get more kids in the cities playing, she jumped at the chance. Montgomery focused on community recruitment, while Peterson arranged for ice time, gear, and coaching. 25 kids later, the Mariucci Inner City Hockey Starter Association was born.

As Kenneth Holoman, the president of the organization in the late 90s, would explain, most hockey kids come from hockey families. Kids whose parents weren't already hockey enthusiasts themselves didn't know where to start and were already at a knowledge disadvantage in picking up the game. In addition, hockey cost money—both for ice time and for gear—and families without a collection of hand-me-down gear had bigger upfront expenses. With volunteer coaching and carpooling, as well as an impressive fundraising push to cover ice time and collect loaner equipment, the Association was able to get kids involved for just \$10 each. By 1993 membership had more than doubled to 63 children, and included girls like 8-year-old Natasha Langlois, the fastest skater on the top-level team. Open to all children, the program was 80% black, but also assisted non-black children whose families were also new to the game or facing other barriers to get involved. President George H.W. Bush named the organization the 1,020th and final of his "Points of Light," saluting volunteerism around the country, at the end of his term.⁷⁰⁸

In 1995 the NHL, aware that hockey overall had little uptake in communities of color, began the NHL Diversity Task Force, and in 1998 they hired Willie O'Ree to head youth development. Forty years earlier he had been the first black man to ever play in the NHL, and only 19 others had followed him in all those years. In Minnesota, they came together with the MAHA to offer clinics. Those events included groups like the Mariucci Inner City Hockey Starter Association and the DinoMights, another inner-city focused team founded by Pastor John Foley that included girls like 9-year-old Sharnesa Slaughter. By 2009, the DinoMights had grown to 94 players and served Central, Powderhorn Park, and Phillips. The DinoMights were fee free, provided rides and community for kids whose parent's work schedules conflicted with practices, and by that time boasted alumni who had returned after graduation to serve as volunteer coaches themselves.⁷⁰⁹

⁷⁰⁶ Hatten, Mick. "Why Minnesota's youth hockey model keeps numbers rising..." *The Rink Live*. November 5, 2023.

<https://www.therinklive.com/youth/why-minnesotas-youth-hockey-model-keeps-numbers-rising-and-growing-the-gap-with-other-states> Accessed 12/5/2024.

⁷⁰⁷ Professional Women's Hockey League. "Players." <https://www.thepwhl.com/en/stats/roster/2/5> Accessed 6/1/2025.

⁷⁰⁸ Bentley, Rosalind. "DinoMights bring diversity to the ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 7, 1998, p21; Douglas, William. "Color of Hockey: Montgomery matriarch of inner-city game in Twin Cities." *National Hockey League*. February 20, 2022. <https://www.nhl.com/news/debbie-montgomery-co-founder-of-minneapolis-hockey-program-330987048>. Accessed 8/5/2025; Brown, Curt. "Youngsters learn real 'cool' sport in St. Paul." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 15, 1993, p1.

⁷⁰⁹ Bentley, Rosalind. "DinoMights bring diversity to the ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 7, 1998, p21; Peterson, Joy. "Youth hockey still at home in the 'hood.'" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 16, 2009, pA11;

In the early 2020s, the NHL and Minnesota Wild sponsored Hockey Is For Me Program—which provides no cost skating lessons and scholarships for kids who want to continue playing—was started after research indicated that youth hockey players in the state were still 86% white.⁷¹⁰ Around the same time, former Richfield high school player turned hockey mom Meredith Lang started the Hockey Niñas to provide a space for her daughters to play with other girls of color. Introduced to coach Tina Campa, the two partnered to form Minnesota Unbounded, a tournament team for girls of color, and later became the Mosaic Hockey Collective, a support organization open to both girls and boys. Lang was named a finalist for the 2022 Willie O’Ree Community Hero Award for her work. Mosaic Hockey Collective now works to provide community and support to kids who benefit from seeing other faces like theirs represented, and to families whose knowledge of the game might be brand new. They hope to grow the game for players, and also see more faces represented in coaching staff, officials, and more.⁷¹¹ Most recently, the Minnesota Starwhals have joined the ranks of groups reaching out to kids in the cities, with retention efforts focused on girls.⁷¹²

Lifelong Hockey and the Women’s Hockey Association of Minnesota

Tell any local women’s hockey player that you are interested in the history of women’s hockey in Minnesota, and they will inevitably respond with the same question: “Have you talked to Sue Ring-Jarvi?”⁷¹³ Speak to Sue, and she will tell you that the Women’s Hockey Association of Minnesota (WHAM) was the product of a lengthy roster of women, from Lynn Olson to Mitzi Witchger, from Sheryl Ekberg to Laura Halldorson. Some of this history appeared in the section on the 1970s, when the overlap between the youth leagues and the earliest women’s leagues occurred, and an extensive retelling can fill a book of its own—and does, in Sue Ring-Jarvi’s own excellent history *Can You Keep Up?* But even the briefest of overviews of what the women’s leagues have done for the culture of women’s hockey as a lifelong pursuit in Minnesota should start with two women from a generation earlier: Marlene Brodt and Loretta Jane Ring.⁷¹⁴

Loretta Jane Ring—who would begin using her middle name because one syllable was easier than three for a teammate to yell before a pass—started playing shinny hockey with her daughter and family in 1973, when she was 47-years-old.⁷¹⁵ Soon after, Jane learned of a mother’s hockey club in Roseville that played Thursday nights at 10pm, organized by Marlene Brodt and women including Katie Farkas, Donna Goff, Judy Jungwirth, and

Stang, Celest. “SCSU hockey player, coach help with DinoMights program in Minneapolis.” *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. May 11, 2009, p28.

⁷¹⁰ Glover, Maury. “‘Hockey Is For Me’ introduces sport to children of color.” Fox 9 News. August 5, 2025.

<https://sports.yahoo.com/article/hockey-introduces-sport-children-color-025828628.html>. Accessed 8/5/2025; Mohs, Marielle.

“Minnesota Wild’s ‘Hockey is for Me’ program looks to remove barriers to sport at young age.” CBS News. August 12, 2024.

<https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/minnesota-wild-hockey-is-for-me-program-looks-to-remove-barriers/>. Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁷¹¹ Wolf, Sydney. “Changing the game for good: Minnesota Unbounded and the Hockey Niñas.” The Rink Live. January 10, 2022.

<https://www.therinklive.com/inside-trl/changing-the-game-for-good-minnesota-unbounded-and-the-hockey-ninas>. Accessed 8/5/2025;

“Game Changer: Meredith Lang of Minnesota Unbounded and the Hockey Niñas.” The Morning Skate. August 18, 2022. <https://morning-skate.com/2022/08/18/hockey-hero-meredith-lang-of-minnesota-unbounded-the-hockey-ninas/>. Accessed 8/5/2025; “The Next

Pioneers of MN Hockey.” Minnesota Hockey. July 18, 2022. https://www.minnesotahockey.org/news_article/show/1232947. Accessed

8/5/2025; Rule, Heather. “Mission: Mosaic.” *Minnesota Hockey Magazine*. February 27, 2023.

<https://minnesotahockeymag.com/mission-mosaic/>. Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁷¹² Haase, Nicole. “The Starwhals Hockey Club is Making Hockey More Accessible in the Twin Cities.” May 17, 2023.

https://www.usahockey.com/news_article/show/1273490. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷¹³ This happened so many times on this project that it became almost comical, and by the time I did finally have a chance to sit down

with Sue Ring-Jarvi it felt like I had won the lottery.

⁷¹⁴ Otherwise unsourced stories in this subsection come from an in person interview with Sue Ring-Jarvi in Roseville, Minnesota on May 6,

2025, and from Ring-Jarvi, Sue. *Can You Keep Up?* Beaver’s Pond Press. Saint Paul, Minnesota. 2025.

⁷¹⁵ Schmitt, Mary. “Women’s hockey gaining popularity in Minnesota.” *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 25,

1977, p39.

Bonnie Handy.⁷¹⁶ All of the women playing were in their late thirties and forties. Jane Ring began playing with them whenever they had room for an extra player, and eventually she and Helen Swanson convinced the other moms to let the twenty-two-year-old Sue Ring join them on occasion. Hooked on the game, Sue would start a club team at the University of Minnesota. With Marlene Brodt's Roseville Strauss Skates team becoming their intense rivals—Sue describes them as friends to “enemies” to friends over the years—the seeds of WHAM today were planted.

In 1978, after four years of club hockey at the University, the Minnesota Women's Hockey League (MWHL) was officially formed, comprised of five teams: the Roseville Strauss, Minnesota Gold, Minnesota Maroon, Rink Rats, and River Falls. They played by NCAA rules. While many of the women were young players who were aging out of the youth leagues or playing club hockey at university, older women like Jane Ring continued to play, showing by example that hockey could be a lifelong pursuit. The women ran girls' ice hockey clinics in order to grow the game. In 1980, as Sue was leaving university, Jane and her husband John gave her the first \$1000 towards jerseys for a new team, and the Blue Js—“Js” for John and Jane—were born. Still playing today, they are the longest continuously playing women's ice hockey team in the state of Minnesota.

Around that same time a young mother, Lynn Olson, was convinced by a broomball teammate to give hockey a try.⁷¹⁷ As equally hooked as the passionate Sue Ring-Jarvi, Olson was a paralegal by profession and an organizer by inclination, and by 1983 she convinced the fifteen-team MWHL to become Amateur Hockey Association of the United States (AHAUS) affiliated. The league held their first All-Stars game that same year, to show the quality of their players.⁷¹⁸ Olson was elected president in 1984, and gave the rechristened Minnesota Women's Hockey Association (MWAHA) new bylaws to align the league with AHAUS play. By 1986 the league had 28 teams and was AHAUS official, and Lynn Olson became the women's director for the MAHA, a position she would hold through the start of girls' varsity hockey. Lynn Olson was awarded the Lester Patrick Trophy for Outstanding Service to Hockey in the United States in 2020 in recognition of her work over the years to grow the game for women of all ages.⁷¹⁹

Over the years, the women of the MWAHA provided more than just a place for women to play. They held clinics, coached youth teams, recruited players, organized tournaments, advocated for varsity hockey during the early 1990s, became many of the earliest high school varsity coaches, provided scholarships—the Jane Ring/Sue Ring-Jarvi Hockey Scholarship has awarded money to almost 60 young women since its inception in 1997—increased Minnesota's reputation by winning multiple national championships, and created a culture in Minnesota where women who wanted to play hockey were considered normal instead of novel. Jane Ring, who played in her own 80th birthday game at the Blaine Super Rink, taught generations of women that “they could do it too.” When she passed away two days before her 90th birthday in 2015, mourners brought hockey skates full of flowers to her funeral, with flags for 75 teams she helped inspire.⁷²⁰

Today, the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota (WHAM, since 2000) has nearly one hundred active teams playing at nine levels, with women in their 20s playing alongside women in their 60s. While many women eventually retire from actively playing the game, WHAM has had more than one woman playing into her 70s and

⁷¹⁶ University of Minnesota Women's Hockey Club. *U of M 1st Annual Women's Ice Hockey Invitational Program*. 1977.

⁷¹⁷ Pierce, Jessi. “Thank you Lynn.” *Minnesota Hockey Journal*. <https://www.mhjonline.com/articles/thank-you-lynn> Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁷¹⁸ Minnesota Women's Hockey League. *All-Star Game Program*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 15, 1983.

⁷¹⁹ “Olson to receive Lester Patrick Trophy.” National Hockey League. <https://www.nhl.com/news/lynn-olson-to-receive-lester-patrick-trophy-319106466>. Accessed 8/29/2025.

⁷²⁰ “Loretta Jane Ring.” Anderson Funeral Homes. https://andersonfuneralhome.com/tribute/details/430/Loretta_Jane_Ring/obituary.html Accessed 8/28/2025.

80s.⁷²¹ While other mixed-gender adult leagues exist in Minnesota—it is the State of Hockey after all—WHAM is particularly successful, and currently the largest women’s league in the country.⁷²²

Team Trans Twin Cities Reaching Out to the Full Spectrum of Players

While opening the game to women has been a century-long struggle of trails blazed, forgotten, and blazed again, only in recent years has the hockey community recognized a broader need. Creating spaces for all players, including those whose identities don’t slot perfectly into a perceived gender-binary, is important. Team Trans Twin Cities is one organization helping to make space for non-binary and trans players to just play the game they love.⁷²³

Founded in 2018, the national Team Trans organization was created after a hockey player was inspired to bring more hockey players who were trans together after meeting only one other trans player at the Gay Games X in Paris. Alongside another player from the NYC Gay Hockey Association, as well as the president of Boston Pride Hockey, he reached out to players all over the country through Facebook. In October of 2019 the group held a Friendship Tournament in Cambridge, MA, with trailblazing professional players Harrison Browne of the National Women’s Hockey League and Jessica Platt of the Canadian Women’s Hockey League in attendance. The opportunity to be in a space with other trans players allowed everyone, professionals and new players alike, to enjoy the game without worrying about potential issues or acceptance. Knowing they wanted more of that experience, Team Trans as an ongoing program was born.

In the Twin Cities, Team Trans held their first hockey game in Minnesota in 2022 at Twin Cities Pride. Among other LGBTQ focused hockey organizations in Minnesota—such as the Twin Cities Queer Hockey Association—Team Trans focuses on organizing tournaments and events that give players an opportunity to come together, relax, and just play hockey. With support from partner organizations including Twin Cities Pride, the Minnesota Wild, and the NHL, they help with gear drives and other ways to lower the cost to play. Since that first Minnesota game they have held annual events including the Team Trans All Trans Draft Tournament, the annual Pride game, and the new Team Trans Friendship Tournament that welcomes allies. They have sent players to the Madison Gay Hockey Association Friendship Series, the Seattle Pride Classic, and the Halifax Pride Cup, where they won first place in 2023. Most importantly, in creating spaces where trans joy is protected, showcased, and celebrated, they have lowered the incidence of suicide in the community.

As one player, Avery C., explained to NBC News, opportunities for trans athletes to be seen as people first is critical in the current political climate:

It doesn’t matter what your gender identity is. Everyone wants that team, everyone wants to feel like they belong, everyone wants to play the game that brings them joy. We’re not blowing the competition away; we’re very average. They should just understand that trans athletes are regular athletes, and trans athletes can be very good at their sports, but so can cisgender athletes.⁷²⁴

⁷²¹ Cowardin, David. “I’ll play til I can’t.” *UMD News*. March 15, 2023. <https://news.d.umn.edu/articles/bonnie-shae-2023>. Accessed 8/30/2025; Blount, Rachel. “At 68, she’s on trail she helped to blaze.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 31, 2012. <https://www.startribune.com/blount-at-68-she-s-on-trail-she-helped-to-blaze/138369304> Accessed 11/8/2024; In person interview with Sue Ring-Jarvi. Roseville, Minnesota. May 6, 2025

⁷²² WHAM. <https://www.whamhockey.org/page/show/100077-home> Accessed 8/5//2025.

⁷²³ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section come from an in-person interview with D and AB in Minneapolis on 9/30/2025.

⁷²⁴ Gao, Max. “All-transgender hockey team takes the ice in Wisconsin.” *NBC News*. <https://www.nbcnews.com/nbc-out/nbc-out-proud/transgender-hockey-team-takes-ice-wisconsin-rcna6321> Accessed 9/30/2025.

D., one of the founders and current president, concurs, “How good you are at hockey is the least important part of this.” Current director of regional expansion Annie Bell is focused on growing the game in multiple regions, including Canada and the West Coast, to reduce the travel costs and risks for players in each area by giving them more opportunities to play locally. Ultimately the goal, like most hockey organizations, is more hockey for everyone, and trans joy given the space needed to thrive.

Minnesota Diversified Hockey and the Hendrickson Foundation

The recognition that “Hockey for Everybody” also means hockey for every *body* has existed since at least the 1960s, when sled hockey was first developed in Stockholm, Sweden at a rehabilitation clinic by a group of former hockey players who wanted to find a way to keep playing the game they loved.⁷²⁵ In Minnesota, hockey for those who need adaptive equipment, rules, or culture are still administered by Minnesota Hockey, under the very broad umbrella of Minnesota Diversified Hockey, an organization directed by Eagan’s Toni Gillen. The group includes Minnesota Blind Hockey, Minnesota Deaf/HoH Hockey, Minnesota Sled Hockey Association, Minnesota Special Hockey, and Minnesota Warriors Hockey (veterans). They are supported financially by the Minnesota Wild Foundation and the Hendrickson Foundation. The latter was founded by coach and player Larry Hendrickson, alongside his friend Mike MacMillan, in 2010 for the express purpose of supporting diversified hockey after he fell in love with sled hockey at a festival in Blaine.⁷²⁶ While structurally a collective, each of these groups makes hockey more inclusive in their own way.

Minnesota Sled Hockey Association

Sled Hockey’s six-decade history makes it the most well-known of adaptive hockey systems, with players sitting in special sleds with skate blades that enable them to maneuver on the ice using two specialized hockey sticks. The sticks have a normal stick blade on one side and a pick that helps with sled propulsion on the other. Body contact rules are the same as in regular hockey.⁷²⁷ Minnesota has had a number of groups that have played or tried to start leagues over the years, but the current organization is the first fully organized 501c3 non-profit to administer the game.⁷²⁸

Founded in 2006 by hockey mom Geri-Anne Zubich, the Minnesota Sled Hockey Association (MSHA) currently sponsors active teams around the state of Minnesota, including the MN Wild Sled team in the Twin Cities, the Rochester Mustangs, the St. Cloud Area Blizzard, the Minnesota Northern Lights Women’s Team, Minnesota Wild Veterans, and the Moorhead Hope Hurricanes.⁷²⁹ Current president Jason Smock, whose son plays in the league, is particularly motivated to grow the women’s game. Focusing on skill development camps since 2022, they work hard to make starting the game low or no-cost.⁷³⁰

Officially, sled hockey was established internationally as a mixed gender sport, but women have been mostly excluded from the highest levels. World Para Ice Hockey is the international governing body for sled hockey, and has held technically mixed-gender world championships and paralympic games since 1994, but in that time only three women—Norway’s Britt Mjaasund Oeyen, Norway’s Lena Schroeder, and China’s Yu Jing—have ever

⁷²⁵ USA Hockey “About Sled Hockey.” <https://www.usahockey.com/sledhockey> Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷²⁶ Rippel, Joel. “Hockey was his passion, his career and his gift to so many.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 28, 2018, pB4.

⁷²⁷ Minnesota Hockey. “Sled Hockey.” <https://www.minnesotahockey.org/sledhockey>. Accessed 8/25/2025.

⁷²⁸ In Person interview with Jason Smock, MSHA president. South St. Paul, Minnesota. December 13, 2024.

⁷²⁹ Minnesota Sled Hockey Association. <https://www.mnsledhockey.org/>. Accessed 8/5/2025; Miranda, Maricella. “Hockey program for parents and children...” *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. February 4, 2008, p5.

⁷³⁰ In Person interview with Jason Smock, MSHA president. South St. Paul, Minnesota. December 13, 2024.

competed in the World Championships or Paralympics.⁷³¹ In 2004, Erica Mitchell McKee made the US National Developmental team, and was both first line and team captain, but was told flat out by coaches that she would never be allowed to try out for the worlds team because of her gender.⁷³² Kelsey DiClaudio made the developmental team in 2014, but was also never put on the final roster, despite an attempt by WPIH to increase the women playing by creating reserved roster slots for women only. Instead of selecting DiClaudio, Team USA administrators let the women's spot go unfilled, in a move that raised eyebrows both on and off the team.⁷³³

In 2007, U.S. Women's Development Sled Hockey Team was formed to combat this issue, and it was finally brought under the auspices of USA Hockey in 2018.⁷³⁴ Rochester's Hanna Hughes, a UMD alumni and MSHA MN Wild Sled Team player was a member of the team from 2016 to 2018.⁷³⁵ From 2022-2024, a Women's World Challenge was held in some acknowledgement of the barriers women players faced. Four teams—Canada, USA, Great Britain, and Team World—competed in the first event in Green Bay Wisconsin in 2022. The U.S. Women's Development Sled Hockey Team, coached by Duluthian and MSHA board member Rosie Misiewicz, won the tournament each year. Bemidji's Chloe Kirkpatrick, who played for the Moorhead Hope Hurricanes, was on the roster all three years, though she was off the ice with an injury in 2022.⁷³⁶ Team World split into Team Pacific and Team Europe for the second two challenges.⁷³⁷

Just this year, the WPIH finally formally sanctioned women's para ice hockey. From August 26-31, 2025 the very first WPIH Women's World Championships were held in Dolny Kubin, Slovakia. Team USA joined Canada, Australia, Norway, Great Britain, and Team World for the games, with Minnesotans Kirkpatrick and Misiewicz continuing their roles. During the final game against Canada, Kelsey DiClaudio opened the scoring with a Michigan goal to the screams of the crowd. When she completed her fourth score—after goals from Jamie Benassi, Catherine Faherty, and Kaden Herchenroether—the game was hers. In a 7-1 victory, Team USA brought home the gold.⁷³⁸ With luck, their victory will help inspire a whole new cohort of girls and women to try out the game.

⁷³¹ "Women's Para ice hockey: Trailblazers, milestones and a legacy in motion." August 25, 2025.

<https://www.paralympic.org/news/women-para-ice-hockey-history-trailblazers-legacy>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷³² Velazquez, Giselle. "Erica McKee Is Ready To Bring World Para Hockey to the Next Level." The Ice Garden. August 25, 2025.

<https://www.theicegarden.com/erica-mckee-is-ready-to-bring-world-para-hockey-to-the-next-level/>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷³³ "For the love of hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 13, 2014, pB3; Gibbs, Lindsay. "Sled hockey women are fighting USA Hockey for recognition." Think Progress. March 19, 2018. <https://archive.thinkprogress.org/women-sled-hockey-sexism-83ebe2518957/?ref=theicegarden.com>. Accessed 1/15/2025.

⁷³⁴ USA Hockey "US Women's Development Sled Hockey Team." <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/womensledhockey>. Accessed 8/5/2025; Doyle, Paul. "Team's Goal: Make It Official." *Hartford Courant*. Hartford, Connecticut. October 5, 2014, pE12.

⁷³⁵ Kennedy, Megan. "Rochester woman named to USA women's sled hockey team." KROC 106.9. <https://kroc.com/hughes-named-to-the-usa-womens-sled-hockey-team/>. Accessed 8/31/2025; "Net Return." Mayo Clinic In the Loop. <https://intheloop.mayoclinic.org/2018/05/22/net-return-former-cancer-patient-wins-gold-with-usa-sled-hockey-team/>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷³⁶ Rubado, Jared. "From China to Bemidji, Chloe Kirkpatrick defied all odds to win sled hockey gold." *The Rink Live*. <https://www.therinklives.com/inside-trl/from-china-to-bemidji-chloe-kirkpatrick-defied-all-odds-to-win-sled-hockey-gold>. Accessed 5/14/2025; Zebracka, Maggie. "Bemidji State freshman Chloe Kirkpatrick leading Team USA's sled-hockey dynasty." BSU Alumni. <https://bsualumni.org/bemidji-state-freshman-chloe-kirkpatrick-leading-team-usas-sled-hockey-dynasty/>. Accessed 5/14/2025.

⁷³⁷ USA Hockey. "Para Ice Hockey Women's World Challenge." <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/ipcwwc>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷³⁸ Paralympic Games. "LIVE | Para Ice Hockey | Gold Medal Game | Day 6 | Women's World Championships | Dolny Kubin 2025." <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOjgx2lvss>. Accessed 8/31/2025. *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 28, 2018, pB4.

Minnesota Warriors Hockey and Veteran Support

Minnesota Warriors Hockey grew out of a recreational therapy hockey program at Walter Reed Hospital, conceived and championed by Shakopee's Andy Qualy and Drew Hill. After Qualy recovered and was assigned home to Minnesota on an Active Duty for Special Work tour with the Minnesota National Guard, Qualy, Hill and Toni Gillen realized there was both a need and an opportunity for locally based hockey teams that catered to wounded, injured, or otherwise disabled veterans. Hill worked on developing the National program through Walter Reed, while Qualy focused on Minnesota as the first satellite program. Lt. Col. Loretta Schlachata-Fairchild, a retired army nurse who happened to also be the treasurer of the Rosemount Hockey Association, was brought in to help on the organizational side. During the 2010-2011 season they purchased 20 sets of jerseys and the founding four men—Andy and his brother Dave Qualy, Dave Thomas, and Pete Hanson—took to the ice in their jeans. After convincing 11 other men, veterans of conflicts ranging from Vietnam to Afghanistan, as young as 21 and as old as 67, to sign up, they were able to play in the 2011 Disabled Hockey Festival at the Schwan Super Rink. While they lost 4-3 to the US Amputee Team, Minnesota Warriors Hockey was born.⁷³⁹

That first summer, the team became a mixed gender team on the ice as Sammi Korinek and Judy Van Voorhis joined the squad. Andy Qualy was introduced to Larry Hendrickson, and the team began receiving organizational funding and support. The program quickly expanded, with players eventually being split into a competitive Green team and a more casual recreational White team. Eventually a Black team was formed to focus on player development. As the Warriors program overall grew nationally, the first expansion in Minnesota saw a team formed in Duluth in 2016 with the help of a Minnesota Wild Foundation grant.

Today, more than 150 men and women play in Minnesota, and teams exist all over the country. The program's formal mission statement is "To organize and administer an ice hockey program that provides a recreational, therapeutic experience and education to Veterans who are injured, wounded or otherwise disabled." They currently provide no cost hockey as a means of getting players back into their communities, providing peer to peer support in an environment that is fun and pro-social. Protecting their players from isolation and suicidal ideation is a major goal.⁷⁴⁰ By fostering comradery, and a sense of community among players whose injuries may be diverse but whose experiences are hard to explain to civilians, they "turn hockey into healing for American veterans."⁷⁴¹

Minnesota Special Hockey

Minnesota Special Hockey (MSH) was developed to provide a space for people with developmental disabilities to play hockey, and to use hockey as a means for fostering "dependability, self-reliance, concentration, teamwork, willingness to share and personal accountability" in their players.⁷⁴² While laudable on its own, the families involved are also quick to point out that MSH is one of those truly rare organizations for kids with cognitive disabilities: one they cannot age out of.⁷⁴³

⁷³⁹ Blount, Rachel. "Wounded veterans put their pain on ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 9, 2011, pC3.

⁷⁴⁰ Hatten, Mick. "Hockey team of military vets..." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. July 12, 2018, p1C.

⁷⁴¹ Otherwise unsourced stories in this subsection are from a phone interview with Mike Irish on 1/10/2025, and from the team history recorded by Tim Loney in the *Warriors Showcase Program*, November 10, 2018.

⁷⁴² Minnesota Special Hockey. <https://www.minnesotahockey.org/page/show/85015-minnesota-special-hockey>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷⁴³ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section are from an in person interview with board member Jen Lynch during an MN Special Hockey Jamboree in New Hope, Minnesota on December 15, 2024 and a phone Interview with founder and board member Jane Cashin on December 11, 2024.

A no-checking league, the program is open to anyone who experiences “limitations in three or more of the major core life competencies: capacity for independent living; economic self-sufficiency; learning; mobility; receptive and expressive language; self-care/direction,” players range in age from children as young as 5 to adults in their 60s. They also come from a wide variety of diagnosis and physical capabilities—from autism and Down Syndrome to ADHD and epilepsy or other seizures.⁷⁴⁴ The organization was founded in 2006 by Susie MacMillan.⁷⁴⁵ She had organized six one-hour skates at the Richfield Ice Arena, which were attended by 50 participants from all over the Metro. Realizing there was potential for a permanent program, she brought on Rick Carlson, Chris Winkel, and former 1970s West St. Paul youth player Jane Osiecki Cashin to help her plan. Assembling a larger board and two initial teams—the Stingers and the Polars—they held a kickoff event at Mariucci Arena. With support from Premier Bank, Minnesota Made Ice Center, and eventually a partnership with the Minnesota Wild, the program has grown exponentially over the last 19 years, with 18 teams in 16 different cities around the state.⁷⁴⁶

Like most leagues, MSH utilizes a skill-based structure, with multiple teams in each city’s program that play at different levels, dependent on the abilities and comfort of the players. At certain levels, within the teams themselves, lines are also organized by ability, and during games lines go on the ice for set periods of two minutes at a time, with everyone facing lines at a similar skill and ability level. Volunteer skaters/coaches, often drawn from local high school teams, accompany players on the ice as needed, and serve to keep play safe for everyone involved. They are required to be USA Hockey certified. Teams are mixed-gender and several of the groups, like Burnsville and Maple Grove, have large numbers of girls.

Volunteers rave about the program, viewing it as an opportunity to remember why they love hockey, and to just have fun playing.⁷⁴⁷ On the other side of the equation, players love having the volunteers as friends and peers, and enjoy being part of the larger hockey community.⁷⁴⁸ Many players assist their own teammates in areas where abilities may be uneven as well. Alexandria’s Hannah Poshek, a player with epilepsy, was named Minnesota Special Hockey Athlete of the Year in 2019 in recognition of her service to her team and the organization.⁷⁴⁹ Older children become mentors to their younger peers, and adults in the program get a chance to be role models for kids going through many of the experiences they once did.⁷⁵⁰ As of 2024 more than 300 athletes play for MSH, and the program seems poised to reap benefits for the community for years to come.⁷⁵¹

Minnesota Blind Hockey

Blind Hockey was invented in Canada in the 1970s. Utilizing a larger, slightly slower puck that makes noise, specialized whistle signals from the referees, a lower net frame, and a few additional rules to facilitate play, blind hockey is open to players whose vision ranges from 10% to totally blind. As with special hockey, some

⁷⁴⁴ “Definition of a MN Special Hockey Player.” <https://www.mnspecialhockey.org/page/show/995755-definition-of-a-mn-special-hockey-player>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷⁴⁵ At the time she was Susie Miller, but she is now married to Hendrickson Cofounder Mike MacMillan.

⁷⁴⁶ “MN Special Hockey History.” <https://www.mnspecialhockey.org/page/show/199608-mn-special-hockey-history>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷⁴⁷ Russo, Michael. “Memorable field trip.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 27, 2013, pC15; LaGarde, Gabrielle. “Minn. Wild Special Team Practice for Brainerd Jamboree on Jan 1.” *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. January 13, 2020, p1.

⁷⁴⁸ Whitefoot, Adelle. “UMD fans show up in force at Xcel Energy Center.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. April 6, 2018, pA1.

⁷⁴⁹ Morken, Eric. “No Slowing Her Down.” *Alexandria Echo Press*. Alexandria, Minnesota. November 22, 2019, p11.

⁷⁵⁰ Feldman, Jason. “Rochester Special Hockey offers a team for players of all ages, abilities.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 20, 2024, p28.

⁷⁵¹ Stuve, Sam. “Alexandria hosts MN Wild Special Hockey Jamboree.” *Alexandria Echo Press*. Alexandria, Minnesota. February 23, 2024, p10.

players are shadowed by volunteers on the ice. The game was introduced into the US at a festival in 2014, and has grown in popularity ever since.⁷⁵²

Blind players in Minnesota originally played under the auspices of Minnesota Special Hockey, but in 2018 the Minnesota Wild Foundation launched its first Blind Hockey program, open to players of all ages. With 18 players, ranging in age from 9-50, in their first season, the program was the largest blind hockey program in the country. While still in its infancy, the program is off to an excellent start. The goal is to eventually grow the program so that teams can be split into youth and adult programs.⁷⁵³

Minnesota Deaf/Hard of Hearing Hockey

Deaf/Hard of Hearing Hockey is a great deal like regular hockey, except that players and coaches have to use means other than shouting to communicate during plays, and referees need a better option than a whistle. Utilizing lights and other signaling, deaf and hard of hearing hockey is open to all players who have been diagnosed with hearing loss. Coaches, officials, and volunteers are either skilled in ASL or paired with interpreters, and strategies for signaling involve hands and sticks. Strategically placed strobe lights indicate whistles, and players are not allowed to use hearing aids or cochlear implants while on the ice.⁷⁵⁴

Deaf/HoH Hockey is the newest member of the diversified crowd. Now in its third season, it is growing the game in a whole new direction for Minnesota.⁷⁵⁵

An Important Minnesota Get Together

Every year since 2020, Minnesota Wild Defender Matt Dumba has held a Hockey without Limits Camp, welcoming kids from diversified hockey, all of the various outreach groups, and the regular youth leagues to come together at the Roseville Oval. Hundreds of kids, of all ages, skills, and needs play and practice together, as one impressive Minnesota get together. “You don’t see that in hockey all the time. I think that makes it even more special,” Dumba told the *Pioneer Press* in 2023.⁷⁵⁶

With kids from high school teams volunteering for diversified hockey, pros holding clinics for the community, women of all ages playing in WHAM and then taking their skills to coach and officiate for other groups, the lines between organizations are intentionally blurred. Any given hockey player might play for a single team, but are making an impact on many more, and together they make up an incredible ecosystem that produces wonderful hockey and even better individuals. Toni Gillen, the director of Minnesota Diversified Hockey, says it best. “In Minnesota, hockey is community hockey. And community means everybody.” While enabling assorted organizations to specialize in their own corners of the hockey world, Minnesota also finds ways to bring everyone together. It is hardly a wonder that the state produces the very best.

⁷⁵² Minnesota Hockey. “History of Blind Hockey.” <https://www.minnesotahockey.org/page/show/4411573-blind-hockey>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷⁵³ Myers, Jess. “State’s 1st blind hockey program providing unique opportunities.” *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. December 21, 2018, p12; Cox, Peter. “Blind skaters share a goal: Let’s play hockey.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 23, 2018, p6.

⁷⁵⁴ “Here’s How it Works.” Minnesota Deaf/HoH Hockey. <https://www.mnwilddeafhockey.com/>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

⁷⁵⁵ “The Next Pioneers of MN Hockey.” Minnesota Hockey. July 18, 2022. https://www.minnesotahockey.org/news_article/show/1232947. Accessed 8/5/2025;

⁷⁵⁶ Mizutani, Dane. “We don’t leave anyone out.” For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted in the *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 22, 2023, p9.

Dakota County Spotlight: Dakota County's Joanie Baltes

Former Youth League Administrator and High School Varsity Player

Joanie Baltes grew up in West St. Paul and Mendota Heights, the oldest daughter of a former South St. Paul Packer, and a Hastings High School valedictorian. Skating with her sister from a young age, she started out in ringette, but got to play hockey starting in third grade. A four-year varsity high school hockey player at Henry Sibley High School, she didn't continue the sport in college, but loved it as a fan for all of her life.⁷⁵⁷

After marriage and welcoming a daughter, life brought her back to Minnesota, and they settled in Apple Valley. She wanted to give her daughter the hockey experience, and when a busy life settled a bit for her family, Joanie registered her daughter in Apple Valley Hockey at the age of seven. At the first meeting for the older mites team, they asked for any parent who could stand on the ice without falling to consider volunteering to coach. Understanding that early skill building could be intimidating for kids and wanting to provide support, she decided to take the plunge into coaching youth hockey.

Joanie quickly realized that some of the players had never seen a woman coach, let alone had one themselves. Many kids identified Joanie as a supportive presence on the ice and the bench during games. As her own daughter grew and moved into travelling hockey, she stayed involved with coaching, and also began working as a team manager. With experience in off-ice admin and on-ice coaching, she eventually became the girls coordinator for Apple Valley Youth Hockey—now Apple Valley/Burnsville Hockey Association—and eventually was elected vice president.

Running a girls program for youth hockey can be a trial by fire. Baltes loved the challenge, and wants to help more kids play for the love of the game. Experience has taught her that the more kids who play hockey, the more successful everyone is, and she worked to keep fun central to the kids in her care.

⁷⁵⁷ Stories in this section are from a phone interview with Joanie Baltes. December 10, 2024.

Dakota County Spotlight: Northfield's Lisa Halvorson Silkey

Current WHAM Player and 1970s Youth League Player

Sometimes, a good story starts in reverse. After a game between the B1 level teams Blizzard and Re-Group in the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota, Lisa Halvorson Silkey got to chatting with another talented player, Sue Korsman, who was closer to her age than some of the younger women on their teams. Mentioning that she'd had a chance to play when she was a kid, she was surprised to learn that Korsman had a similar story. Later that evening, she pulled out the scrapbook her mother had kept from her youth hockey years in Northfield in the 1970s, and quickly spotted Korsman's name on a roster for Farmington in the 1977 Minnesota State Midget Girls' Hockey Tournament. Sure enough, these two WHAM competitors had first met across the ice more than four decades prior.⁷⁵⁸

In the 1970s, Northfield had just enough girls who wanted to play to fill out a single team, so Lisa began playing with girls at vastly different ages when she was in just fourth grade. She had learned to skate on a flooded driveway at her parent's home, and in the early years the kids always played outside. She was at the groundbreaking for the new Northfield Rink in 1974, and also remembers the excitement of sometimes travelling to Shattuck to play. Almost all of the girls on her squad were members of the choir at St. John's, where her mother was the director, and she can remember them all wearing their breezers under their choir robes so that they could run to Sunday games the second that services ended.

In college she was a multi-sport athlete, especially in tennis, but had left hockey behind, as both a player and a fan, after the youth leagues folded.⁷⁵⁹ It wasn't until she returned to Minnesota, in 1995, that she came back to hockey, this time as a referee. She and her sister Kari learned that there was a shortage of officials for the youth leagues, and thought it sounded like fun, so they signed up, and became some of the only female referees in the area. She also began coaching her daughter's U10 team, and discovered that she loved coaching.

After her daughter left to play college hockey, she had time on her hands to refind hockey for herself. She learned about WHAM and has been playing ever since. Silkey has played casually and competitively, placing as a runner up in the 2023 USA Hockey National Championships at the 50+ Tier 1 level and regularly winning pond hockey tournaments, as well as just enjoying going to the rink and laughing with the other moms who finally got to play in their 40s and 50s. She also served as a board member for WHAM working with development camps for a time, and focused on lowering camp costs to make them more accessible.

Silkey has found fun as a fan now with the advent of the PWHL. During the draft in 2024 she was helping staff a booth for WHAM when she was approached by the Smock family with Minnesota Sled Hockey looking for someone to help present one of the draftees. Silkey got to announce the 33rd overall pick of Defenseman Mae Batherson. She's hopeful that the focus on women's hockey will get even more women out to play the game she loves.

⁷⁵⁸ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section are from an in person interview with Lisa Halvorson Silkey. Northfield, Minnesota. November 26, 2024.

⁷⁵⁹ "Unseeded Raake wins women's title." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. July 19, 1982, p10; "Tennis" *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. September 22, 1980, p40; "UW-L shuts down Cardinals." *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. April 21, 1988, p12.

Dakota County Spotlight: West St. Paul's Jane Osiecki Cashin

Current Minnesota Special Hockey President and 1970s Youth League Player.

As a young girl with a somewhat famous Burnsville High School Hockey coach for an uncle, then Jane Osiecki began playing hockey on the rink her dad made by flooding their back yard.⁷⁶⁰ In grade and middle school, she played first hockey and later ringette in the West St. Paul program that flourished in the late 1970s. While her own opportunity to continue playing fizzled in middle school, she went on to create a wealth of opportunities for hundreds of children and adults in Minnesota.

In 2006, Jane Cashin's friend Susie MacMillan had organized a skating program at Richfield Ice Arena, only for attendance to exceed expectations. MacMillan called Cashin and a number of other friends to discuss the possibility of starting a permanent program. Cashin, whose own son could not safely play hockey because of seizures, was in. Minnesota Special Hockey was born, and her son was the first player to officially sign up.⁷⁶¹

Now serving as a founding board member and president of Minnesota Special Hockey, Cashin's mission is to make sure that anyone who cannot play typical hockey for any reason has a space where they can take part in Minnesota's favorite winter past time. She is an enthusiastic supporter of hockey as community, and has helped the program grow from just two teams in 2006 to 18 teams all over the state and a partnership with the Minnesota Wild.

⁷⁶⁰ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section are from a phone Interview with founder and board member Jane Cashin on December 11, 2024.

⁷⁶¹ "The Family Behind The Minnesota Special Hockey." WCCO News. December 23, 2015.
<https://www.cbsnews.com/minnesota/news/the-family-behind-the-minnesota-special-hockey/> Accessed 7/1/2025.

Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Eleanor Lynch and Jen Lynch

Current Minnesota Special Hockey Player and Her Mother, MSH Marketing Director

Eleanor Lynch's hockey story is a pretty typical one for girls in Minnesota. With both a father and an younger brother who played hockey, it was no surprise that a young Eleanor asked to play after watching from the stands. In her case, the opportunity came through Minnesota Special Hockey.⁷⁶²

On the ice, she loves to be a part of the team, citing passing and shooting as well as helping and encouraging her teammates as the best parts. Playing with people of all ages and abilities is part of the fun, and she values the friends she made, both on her team and among the volunteers who come out to help with practices, games, and jamborees.

She finds it especially exciting when members of the Minnesota Wild organization come out, as a huge fan of the team. Through her team, she's had opportunities to volunteer at Wild games and enjoys the whole community. She has attended the Special Hockey Classic and numerous jamborees during her three seasons with the team. And she loves being part of showing other kids that girls can play hockey too.

Special Hockey making such a difference in Eleanor's life led her mother, Jen to becoming the Marketing Coordinator for Minnesota Special Hockey, where she recruits new players and volunteers, as well as members and donors for ice time. She's proud of the program for helping kids and adults maintain points of contact throughout their lives, and has appreciated how many high school programs, such as Prior Lake and Two Rivers, come out to support the teams. She is deeply appreciative of the Hendrickson Foundation, whose Hendrickson Festival she considers one of the best weekends in hockey in the state.

Both of the Lynch women are building a bigger hockey community in Dakota county and in Minnesota, by taking to the ice and by organizing from the stands.

⁷⁶² Stories in this section are from an in person interview with Eleanor and Jen Lynch during an MN Special Hockey Jamboree in New Hope, Minnesota on December 15, 2024.

First Intermission: Five Generations

On June 13, 1896, Division Number 4 of the Ancient Order of Hibernians wished their member, Richard Hoy, congratulations and “goodbye...to bachelordom and the cold tea act,” on the occasion of his June 9 wedding to Miss Agnes Duffy, a “most amiable young lady.”⁷⁶³ Whether he ever had to have a cold tea again is lost to time, but their wedding would bring about five generations of women hockey players who loved the cold. While there are likely other Minnesota families with women who played in every generation, the daughters, granddaughters, great-granddaughters, great-great-granddaughters, and great-great-great-granddaughters of Agnes and Richard Hoy have kept the memory alive.⁷⁶⁴

The Hoyes had six children: Eugene, William, Elizabeth, Rose, Agnes, and Florence.⁷⁶⁵ Hoy daughters Elizabeth and her sister Rose—who used “Rosehelen” during her University years and is listed that way in those records—began the family legacy by playing on the University of Minnesota club and tournament teams. Elizabeth was born April 5, 1900, Agnes and Richard’s third child and first girl.⁷⁶⁶ Rose followed a little over a year later, on August 14, 1901.⁷⁶⁷ In an early sign of her hand-eye coordination and balance, Elizabeth took part in an egg and spoon race for 14-16-year-olds at Lake Nokomis park as a part of Mayor Wallace G. Nye’s city-wide 1913 Fourth of July celebrations. Despite being the youngest in the field, she took third place, winning a set of stationary.⁷⁶⁸ Both sisters were graduates of South High School in Minneapolis, where they both participated in social clubs and Rose was a member of the Girls’ Athletic Association.⁷⁶⁹

In her first year at the University, Elizabeth played as a left wing for the 1918 freshman tournament team, one of 28 women chosen for tournament spots from almost 100 playing that year.⁷⁷⁰ She also regularly played as a goalie, and likely had that position during the non-tournament 1918-1919 season, when she was listed in the sophomore club team.⁷⁷¹ Only five feet at her tallest, she was rightly proud of her place on the team. Her grandchildren heard often how she had lost her two front teeth to a puck during her time between the posts. In 1920, Elizabeth does not appear on any surviving festival or tournament rosters, but she was listed as a skater to watch during the January WAA carnival, and it’s possible she was scouted while practicing with the squads right up until she left in the fall 1919 semester to take a job teaching.⁷⁷² Rose, newly a freshman, did make the 1920 tournament team as a sub. While only the final scores are known that year, her freshmen team won the cup, in a 2-1 overtime victory over the seniors.⁷⁷³

Elizabeth left school in 1919 to teach at Browerville High School and to marry Joseph Francis John in 1920, with Rose as her attendant.⁷⁷⁴ Rose would do the same in 1923 to marry George “Judd” Edmond Holland and to teach

⁷⁶³ “From Division No. 4, City.” *The Irish Standard*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 13, 1896, p5.

⁷⁶⁴ Stories in this piece without a specific alternate citation came from the in person interview with Jana Brown Patrick and Margaret McKenna Herrmann, Elizabeth Hoy’s granddaughters. Prior Lake, Minnesota. May 21, 2025, and from follow-up emails after that interview.

⁷⁶⁵ “Richard Hoy Rites Set for Wednesday.” *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 5, 1929, p10.

⁷⁶⁶ “Births” *Minneapolis Daily Times*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 7, 1900, p5.

⁷⁶⁷ “Births” *Minneapolis Daily Times*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 16, 1901, p5.

⁷⁶⁸ “Prize winners in today’s athletic events at park Fourth celebrations.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 4, 1913, p8.

⁷⁶⁹ South High School. *The Tiger vol. VII*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 1917, p68; South High School. *The Tiger vol. X*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. 1920, p107.

⁷⁷⁰ “Co-Eds Chosen for Hockey Tournament at the University.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 17, 1918, p33.

⁷⁷¹ “Ice Hockey.” *The 1920 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1919, p195.

⁷⁷² “‘U’ Carnival to Take Place at Northrop Field.” *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 18, 1920, p32.

⁷⁷³ “Ice Hockey” *The 1921 Gopher*. University of Minnesota Archives. Spring 1920, p332.

⁷⁷⁴ “John-Hoy” *The Minneapolis Morning Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 5, 1920, p6.

band at Lake Nokomis Junior High.⁷⁷⁵ Both sisters taught and raised families. Rose and Judd had four children: Catherine, George, Lenore, and Rosemary. Elizabeth and Joe had Richard, Mary, Harry, James, Jacqueline, and Theodore, and also raised their niece, Adeline. Joe built Elizabeth a house with everything in reach for her shorter stature. Between teaching and parenting, Elizabeth finished her degree at St. Cloud State in 1955, with the assistance of her sister Agnes who helped with childcare so she could return. Elizabeth pushed all of her children towards a solid education.⁷⁷⁶ Her grandchildren can remember calling her stairs a “wall of fame,” it was so packed with her children’s degrees, from bachelors to doctorates. Her efforts worked—all of her children were incredibly accomplished and lived impressive lives, with Adeline a nurse and childcare professional, Father Richard appointed head of the Crosiers order, Mary traveling internationally with Jimmy Carter Friendship force, Harry serving as an archivist at the National Archives, James standing out as a multisport athlete into his 80s and eventual Cornell professor, and Ted heading social work for Catholic Charities.⁷⁷⁷

It was Elizabeth’s second youngest child, Hoy granddaughter Jacqueline Jeanne “Jackie” John, who would carry the women’s hockey torch through her generation. Born in 1931, she grew up skating, but longed for more. By the time she reached high school she knew she wanted to play hockey. Told she could be a cheerleader instead, she gave it a try, but quickly realized that the fun was in the game. She petitioned again for a spot on the team, but the boys refused, so she instead organized a boycott with her fellow cheerleaders. If they couldn’t play, they weren’t going to cheer. Her friends stuck by her, and Browersville went without cheerleaders that season. Jackie went on to become a registered nurse, earning her degree from the College of St. Catherine. She married John Brown in 1954. They would have one son, Johnny, and six daughters: Jackie, Jana, Julie, Jeanne, Betsy, and Bridget.⁷⁷⁸

In 1977, the University of Minnesota held an anniversary event for the athletics department, with the women of Gamma Phi Beta fundraising for women’s athletics. Elizabeth Hoy John, 76 years old at the time, was the only woman to attend. While the papers didn’t opt to follow up or track down the history around her playing, she was appropriately honored for the first time.⁷⁷⁹ In her 80s, her grandchildren can remember her skating, and she was always incredibly active in her gardens. She sewed and made flannel gowns for her 27 grandchildren every Christmas, but could never abide a bra or girdle, and never jumped on the trend of perming her hair as she aged. Thrifty, practical, and involved in their lives, her grandchildren clearly adored her.

The third generation of family women’s hockey players began almost a thousand miles apart. In Ithaca, New York, James John’s daughter, Hoy great-granddaughter Meg John-Testa, joined an intramural team, the Frozen Assets, while at Cornell’s business school, and took hockey classes with the physical education department. She

⁷⁷⁵ Rose Helen Hoy and George Edmond Holland. Marriage certificate F297. Roseau County, Minnesota. November 29, 1923.

<https://moms.mn.gov/> Accessed 5/23/2025; Email with Jana Patrick, Rose Hoy’s great-niece, following up on a conversation with Rose’s daughter Lenore. May 27, 2025.

⁷⁷⁶ “John, Elizabeth Margaret.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 1991, p20; “Holland, Rose Helen.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 10, 1987, p35.

⁷⁷⁷ Patrick, Jana. “To Have And Have Not.” *A Random Writer Humor Blog*. February 6, 2013.

https://janasrandomwriting.blogspot.com/2013/02/to-have-and-have-not_6.html?m=1 Accessed 5/30/2025; “West, Adeline Mary.” *The Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 30, 2007, pB7; “Father Richard John.” Emblom Brenny Funeral Services.

<https://www.emblombrennyfuneral.com/obituaries/fr-richard-john> Accessed 5/23/2025; “Mary Elizabeth McKenna.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 2, 2020, pB12; “Harry John” Iten Funeral Home.

<https://www.tributearchive.com/obituaries/16814412/harry-john> Accessed 5/23/2025; “James Joseph John.” *The Ithaca Journal*. Ithaca, New York. October 23, 2023, pA9; “Theodore John.” *The Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Milwaukee, Wisconsin. April 14, 2019.

<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/jonline/name/theodore-john-obituary?id=3341874> Accessed 5/23/2025; “John, Elizabeth Margaret.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 1991, p20.

⁷⁷⁸ “Brown, Jaqueline J.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 7, 2012, pB6.

⁷⁷⁹ Nichols, Max. “The First Woman...” *The Minneapolis Star*. February 11, 1977, p30.

also joined the Ithaca Sirens, the first team in a local women's league that was created out of a desire for hockey beyond high school and college, and played with them for thirty years.⁷⁸⁰ The Sirens still exist today.⁷⁸¹ She also played in a co-ed hockey league, the Ithaca Amateur Hockey Association, with her brother Rich and nephew Seamus Miller. Meg did not know that her grandmother had played until after she started.⁷⁸² While she has stepped back slightly in recent years, she still scrimmages and drills with the Ithaca Furies hockey team.⁷⁸³

Back in Minnesota, Jackie Brown's daughter, Hoy great-granddaughter Jana Brown Patrick had skated her entire life but discovered the joy of hockey when she was in her 40s, in 1998. In the beginning, everyone she played with was new to hockey skates, but over the years she was able to play with more and more women who had grown up with the sport. Early on, she attended a College of St. Catherine's alumni game only to discover that all the other the alumni were newly graduated and that they were playing the current college varsity team. Despite being thoroughly outmatched she got a good story out of the experience.⁷⁸⁴ A recreational player with the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota (WHAM) for more than two decades, she played on teams like Xplosion, Victorious Secret, The Stanleys, and Blade Runners over the years.⁷⁸⁵ In her 50s, she spent some time taking lessons with the co-ed Adult Hockey Association (AHA), where she once beat 30 of her male classmates in a shootout competition. She also played co-ed hockey in Arizona while living there with her husband, Steve Patrick.

While in Arizona, she had an opportunity to scrimmage with Bobby Smith in January of 2016 while he was preparing for a North Stars alumni game.⁷⁸⁶ An usher for the North Star games in her youth, Jana made the mistake of telling him about her time there. He put on an old white North Stars jersey in her honor, but as she was wearing black it put them on opposite sides in the scrimmage. With no goalies available that day, the rule on the ice was that you had to hit the pipe for a goal, and Jana managed to score twice. A back injury eventually ended Jana's time in the women's leagues, but she still loves the game.

Jana intentionally set the fourth generation of family women out on to the ice for hockey. Suspecting her daughters, Hoy great-great-granddaughters Lauren and Alana Patrick, would love the game as much as she did, she gave them a choice. Either they could do another year of swimming, which she knew they were already tired of, or they could try hockey. At their first practice, Jana remembers Alana looking daggers at her through the glass. But by the time she came off the ice, she loudly declared, "I love hockey!"

Both Patrick girls played varsity women's ice hockey for Minnehaha Academy in the early 2000s, where Alana began as a freshman forward—just like her great-grandmother Elizabeth in her very first tournament at the University—and Lauren was a sophomore goalie—just like her great-grandmother Elizabeth's preferred position. The family maintained an 1,800 sq ft home rink in their yard in Mendota Heights, after Steve finally consented to cut one out of the woods in the backyard for Jana and the girls to play. The Minnehaha Academy varsity team

⁷⁸⁰ Lawrence, Steve. "Women's Hockey thriving in Ithaca beyond walls of academia." Ithaca.com. November 11, 2011. https://www.ithaca.com/sports/women-s-hockey-thriving-in-ithaca-beyond-walls-of-academia/article_0a375a2e-15ed-11e1-8b84-001cc4c03286.html Accessed 5/22/2025.

⁷⁸¹ Ithaca Siren's Women's Hockey. <https://www.facebook.com/IthacaSirens/> Accessed 5/22/2025.

⁷⁸² Zgoda, Jerry. "A Dream Realized." *The Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 29, 1997, pC1.

⁷⁸³ Email conversation with Meg Jon-Testa. May 31, 2025.

⁷⁸⁴ Patrick, Jana. "Breaking Out." *A Random Writer Humor Blog*. February 28, 2012. <https://janasrandomwriting.blogspot.com/2012/02/breaking-out.html?m=1> Accessed 5/30/2025.

⁷⁸⁵ WHAM Hockey Rosters. "Jana Patrick." https://www.whamhockey.org/roster_players/616637 Accessed 5/28/2025.

⁷⁸⁶ Scoggins, Chip. "North Stars alum Bobby Smith is still a fan favorite in Minnesota." *The Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 2016, <https://www.startribune.com/north-stars-alum-bobby-smith-is-still-a-fan-favorite-in-minnesota/369551671> Accessed 5/29/2025.

even got extra practice in on the family rink during the unseasonably warm 2007 winter, when rinks all over the cities were melting. Coach Evan Ziegler told the *Pioneer Press* at the time that Lauren was a true leader in the locker room, and that Alana was an incredibly fast skater who played offense and defense and was critical on both power plays and penalty kills.⁷⁸⁷ At one point, Jana rented the Hippodrome for a high school varsity game so that the girls could play in the same space that their great-grandmother had once also played.

Alana lettered all four years, was All-Conference and a team MVP in her junior and senior years, and team captain and her school's Hobey Baker HS Character Award recipient in her senior year. She continued to play through college, logging 98 games in her D3 career at St. Olaf between 2010 and 2014, where she was captain in her senior year.⁷⁸⁸ Alana and Jana occasionally even got to play together in women's summer leagues. In 2012, when Alana was playing for St. Olaf, she wrote a short story about her family's generations of women in hockey. In it, she remembered shooting 5,000 pucks as a 12-year-old, and realizing that

Although I never knew Elizabeth, I am almost certain that she would agree with me when I describe the feeling of carving the ice beneath your feet and experiencing the wintry rush of skating as exhilarating and empowering...when I pull on the jersey every Friday and Saturday night, I also remember my true family: the women who inspired me to play the sport that is now my passion...I now skate forward with gratitude, mindful of the generations of role models before me with each exhilarating stride.⁷⁸⁹

In the fifth generation, among the extended Hoy great-great-great-granddaughters, there is already a varsity high school player, and 10-year-old Macy is setting records while playing on a boys' U10 team. The tradition shows no signs of slowing more than a century after Elizabeth and Rose clamped their first skates to their boots and hit the ice at University. No one knows what will happen in the next generations of Hoy descended women. But they will have come from a long line who found the ice empowering, and a family whose history will help them become whoever it is they most want to be.

⁷⁸⁷ Vezner, Tad. "Ice Princesses." *The Pioneer Press*. St. Paul, Minnesota. January 10, 2007, pB1.

⁷⁸⁸ "Alana Patrick" 2013-2014 Women's Hockey Roster. St. Olaf. <https://athletics.stolaf.edu/sports/womens-ice-hockey/roster/alana-patrick/291> Accessed 5/28/2025.

⁷⁸⁹ Patrick, Alana. "Ice in Our Veins." *Hooked on Hockey*. Chicken Soup for the Soul. October 2, 2012, p175-177.

Second Period: Carving a Path Forward

With the enormous success of girls' varsity high school hockey, and women all over the state finding ways to play, a new question appeared: after high school, what came next? At the tail end of the twentieth century, women were ready for more, and pursued it in three main overlapping paths: international play, collegiate play, and semi-professional leagues. In the last twenty-five years, the women who pursued hockey beyond high school regularly played on college teams, Olympic teams, national teams, and semi-pro teams, often simultaneously, and the growth in each area was often a result of the needs or advancements in the others. An entire book—*Too Many Men on the Ice* by Joanna Avery and Julie Stevens—has been written on just the first six years of women's international hockey alone. While Minnesota lagged behind many East coast schools in adopting hockey at the college level, the state's involvement in the growth of professionalism in women's hockey has been extensive.

International competition was the only real upper-level hockey that predated the beginning of sanctioned varsity high school hockey in Minnesota. International invitational tournaments at the youth and women's levels happened through-out the late 1970s and early 1980s, such as the Friendship Tournament in Helsinki that the Minnesota Checkers attended.⁷⁹⁰ In 1987, the first Women's Worlds tournament was held in North York, Ontario, with the blessings of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), though not its formal sanction. Ontario Women's Hockey Association head Fran Rider organized the tournament, with the aid of Canadian Amateur Hockey Association president Murray Costello, as a proof of concept to encourage a later, sanctioned tournament.⁷⁹¹ Tryouts were held for the US team in Buffalo, New York, and fifty women competed for slots on the 21-woman roster. Five Minnesota women were chosen. Deb Ahrens, Laura Halldorson, Mary Brown, Cindy Thompson, and Lori Bivans, joined 16 other women from around the country to represent the United States. In the round robin tournament held from April 21-26, 1987, the US team initially lost to Canada, but then shut out Sweden, the Netherlands, and Japan, and bested Switzerland and Ontario, in route to a bronze medal finish. Canada took the gold, with the province specific Ontario team taking silver. Deb Ahrens, the former Elk River youth league player, was chosen as the US Team MVP.⁷⁹²

These early Minnesotan international stars were either the products of women's club hockey teams or of varsity at East coast schools. Lori Bivans and Cindy Thompson were Blue Js, Deb Ahrens was a Rink Rat, and Mary Brown was a Goaldigger, while Laura Halldorson played for Princeton after serving on the Minnesota Checkers in high school. Minnesota university club teams unofficially represented their alma maters in national and international play for almost two decades. The University of Minnesota club team received press for their regular Nationals showings in the 1980s and 90s, and the University of Minnesota Duluth's Lady Bulldogs were treated by the *Duluth News Tribune* as if they were another UMD varsity team.⁷⁹³ But over the course of two decades of consistent interest and genuine star players, no Minnesota school was willing to fully invest in a women's program.

⁷⁹⁰ "Minnesota Checkers to play in Finland, Soviet Union." *Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 10, 1979, p28.

⁷⁹¹ Podnieks, Andrew. "IIHF WW30 – Story #12." IIHF.com. April 7, 2020. <https://www.iihf.com/en/news/18481/ww-30-story-12>. Accessed 8/14/2025; La Rose, Jason. "One Giant Leap." Hockey Canada. June 29, 2017. <https://www.hockeycanada.ca/en-ca/news/2017-tcaa-a-giant-leap-for-womens-hockey> Accessed 8/14/2025;

⁷⁹² "Five women hockey players..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 18, 1987, p42; Ontario Women's Hockey Association. "1987 FIRST WOMEN'S WORLD HOCKEY TOURNAMENT." *2007-2008 Handbook*. May 26, 2007, p139-140; "Some weeks ago..." *The Globe*. Worthington, Minnesota. May 23, 1987, p13.

⁷⁹³ "Women's Hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 5, 1987, p49; Malkovich, Renee Gais. "Women's Hockey Gaining." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 13, 1988, p11.

In March of 1990, the IIHF made the women's tournament official, and the first sanctioned Women's World Championship was held in Ottawa. Team USA took the silver medal in the competition, beating Switzerland, Norway, Finland, and Sweden on their way to the final. Golden Valley's Kelley Owen, Duluth's Shawna Davidson, and Coon Rapid's Jeanine Sobek were the three Minnesotan women on the team. They lost to Canada, 5-2, the first rivalry game in a 20-year-long stretch in which Canada and the USA would vie for the top spot in every international women's ice hockey competition played at the highest levels.⁷⁹⁴

Meeting next in Finland in 1992, Shawna Davidson and Jeanine Sobek would again make Team USA for Worlds, alongside Edina's Jenny Hanley and River Falls, WI's Karyn Bye, who Minnesota papers would regularly claim as their own. Minnesotans Joy Woog and Kerry Brodt—that daughter of Marlene Brodt and older sister of Winny and Chelsey—were also invited to training camp but did not make the final cut. This competition had added weight—the International Olympic Committee (IOC) had informed the IIHF that they were watching to evaluate whether women's ice hockey would be a viable candidate for adding to the planned 1998 Nagano Olympics, potentially as a demonstration sport.⁷⁹⁵ The US women would again take the silver medal, falling to Canada, but the game clearly impressed, as the IOC voted to add women's ice hockey as a medal sport to the 1998 games.⁷⁹⁶ That summer the Team USA training camp was held at St. Cloud State's National Hockey Center.⁷⁹⁷ A year later, most of the same Team USA, including the three Minnesotans, played in a series of exhibition games at the Alamodome in Texas for the US Olympic Festival.⁷⁹⁸

Meanwhile, in November of 1993, the first All-American Women's Intercollegiate Ice Hockey Tournament was held at St. Cloud's National Hockey Center and Mariucci Arena. Harvard, Yale, Brown, and Dartmouth, as well as four Minnesota based club teams—St. Cloud State, Minnesota-Duluth, University of Minnesota, and the Minnesota Thoroughbreds—were in attendance. Davidson, Hanley, Sobek, and other Minnesotan women who had moved East for Hockey careers, like Libby Witchger, pushed to host the tournament in a bid to convince local universities to start varsity intercollegiate programs. The Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission, USA Hockey, the Department of Recreational Sports at the University of Minnesota, and the National Hockey Center in St. Cloud came together to organize the event. Ticket inquiries came in from all over the state.⁷⁹⁹ 6,000 people came out to watch the tournament, and tickets were in such high demand that the event attracted scalpers, which the organizers took as a compliment. They received inquiries all weekend from other schools wanting to participate the following year.⁸⁰⁰ The tournament would expand over the years, and is still played today.⁸⁰¹

⁷⁹⁴ "Team USA Rosters" EliteProspects.com. <https://www.eliteprospects.com/team/19290/usa/1989-1990?tab=stats> Accessed 8/15/2025.

⁷⁹⁵ "Five Minnesotans..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 14, 1991, p22; "Davidson to play..." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. October 29, 1991, p10; "Three state women..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 9, 1002, p32.

⁷⁹⁶ "Canadians cheer new Olympic sports." *Waterloo Region Record*. Kitchner, Ontario. July 22, 1992, p27.

⁷⁹⁷ Killeen, Mike. "From top to bottom." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. July 31, 1992, p17.

⁷⁹⁸ Weiner, Jay. "The more, the merrier for women's hockey at festival." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 29, 1993, p27.

⁷⁹⁹ Weiner, Jay. "The more, the merrier for women's hockey at festival." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 29, 1993, p27; Zarvorat, Nolan. "Taking ice hockey into a new arena." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 12, 1993, p32; "Women's hockey gets own showcase." *St. Cloud Times*, St. Cloud, Minnesota. November 12, 1993, p15.

⁸⁰⁰ "Women's hockey nets praise." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 28, 1993, p50; "Women's hockey Gains Momentum." *The Albert Lea Tribune*. Albert Lea, Minnesota. January 9, 1994, p4B.

⁸⁰¹ Gilbert, John. "Wildcats win tournament, again." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 12, 1995, p34; National Sports Center. "All American Girls 30th Anniversary" <https://nscsports.org/what-you-need-to-know-about-the-all-american-girls-30th-anniversary-tournament/> Accessed 8/15/2025.

In April of 1994 the IIHF Women's World Championships were held in Lake Placid, NY, with Sobek, Davidson, and Bye again on the team. Again, they took silver in a loss to Canada. Reflecting on the growth of the game, Cindy Curley, a member of the 1990 Team USA told the Associated Press "We're happy to do whatever we can to help further the sport. But we don't want to be considered pioneers. We want to be considered a part of the mainstream."⁸⁰² Within the year, USA Hockey recognized that women's hockey development was an area where they needed to put support and focus. In April of 1995, they held the first of four open tryouts in Eden Prairie for the first US women's Olympic ice hockey team. Forty women came out for what Val Belmonte, the director of the coaching program for USA Hockey, called "a search for a Gretzky in a haystack." Some were hopefuls, but others, like Minneapolis High School coach Mary Brown, were there for the moment and for what was in many ways an inexpensive coaching clinic.⁸⁰³

That same spring, as Minnesota became the first state in the nation with sanctioned girls' varsity high school hockey, Jay Weiner of the *Star Tribune* recognized many of the women who had left the state to get their chance to play hockey, including Michelle Erickson, Ellen Frump, Regina Renner, Julie Otto, Michelle Werner, Libby Witchger, Joy Woog, and Alana Blahoski. Veterans of either the Thoroughbreds or boy's hockey, or both, they had missed their chance to play for their high schools, many by a single year, and for them the tournament was bittersweet.⁸⁰⁴ Jenny Hanley had managed to have a collegiate hockey career in Minnesota, but she did it by foregoing scholarships to play Division III men's hockey for the Hamline University Pipers.⁸⁰⁵ Applying for schools in the 1995 spring semester, graduating South St. Paul Packer Melissa Milbert had no choice but to look East for scholarship and play opportunities.⁸⁰⁶ Player of the Year Jaime DeGriselles from Apple Valley went to New Hampshire.⁸⁰⁷ The need for collegiate level play was clear.

Augsburg University was the first to make the decision to start varsity women's hockey, in March of 1995. For head coach, they hired Jill Pohtilla, the former Minnesota Checkers player who had become a high school coach for Anoka/Champlin Park. Much like the early high school teams, her first team was a mix of youth hockey players and other sport athletes who were excited for the opportunity, including two softball players, Karlyn Marshall and Heather Hanson, who opted to try goal.⁸⁰⁸ Dakota county's Sarah Burrock and Courtney Hagen also served on the squad. Their first season, the Augsburg women played mostly local club and amateur teams, but were able to travel a few times to take on East Coast varsity. While their first game took place on November 3, 1995, against the U of M club team, the very first game in which a Minnesota collegiate varsity women's hockey team played another collegiate varsity team took place on November 9, 1995, when they lost to Dartmouth, but still made history.⁸⁰⁹

Just prior to those games, on October 31, 1995, the University of Minnesota announced their own plan to roll out women's varsity ice hockey, which they did by sending Gopher softball star Amber Hegland, the first woman

⁸⁰² "Team USA Rosters" EliteProspects.com. <https://www.eliteprospects.com/team/19290/usa/1989-1990?tab=stats> Accessed 8/15/2025; "Davidson on US Team." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 22, 1994, p12; "Women work to make USA a contender in Olympics." *Herald and Review*. Decatur, Illinois. April 7, 1995, p25.

⁸⁰³ Wicker, Brian. "A serious skate." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 23, 1995, p42.

⁸⁰⁴ Weiner, Jay. "Breaking the ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 21, 1995, p1A-6A.

⁸⁰⁵ "Edina girl plans to play college hockey." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. June 1, 1991, p33; Associated Press. "Hamline Goalie Scores a victory for women." *The Post Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. November 16, 1991, p41.

⁸⁰⁶ In Person Interview with Bob Milbert, Melissa Milbert Wendland, and Megan Milbert Tripicchio. Inver Grove Heights, Minnesota. December 23, 2024.

⁸⁰⁷ Gilbert, John. "Wildcats win tournament, again." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 12, 1995, p34.

⁸⁰⁸ "Augsburg." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 14, 1995, p37.

⁸⁰⁹ "1995-1996 Women's Hockey Schedule." <https://athletics.augsburg.edu/sports/womens-ice-hockey/schedule/1995-96> Accessed 8/15/2025.

to play in the boys' varsity state tournament, out onto the ice in a traditional hockey sweater with the women's department M logo. She was expected to have a chance to play in her senior year.⁸¹⁰ The University placed classified ads for the coaching position in July of 1996, seeking a coach with at least three years of experience with coaching ice hockey, coaching women preferred.⁸¹¹ While she would call it her dream job, Laura Halldorson was clearly also a dream candidate. Like her soon to be friendly local rival, Coach Pohtilla, Halldorson had been a Minnesota Checker during their National Champion years. Like so many Minnesota women of the era, she headed East for college so that she could continue playing, and became a Princeton Tiger and teammate of Patty Kazmaier. She played in the first trial Women's Worlds in 1987, and shortly after was recruited by Princeton to serve as an assistant coach. After two years, she was hired as head coach for Colby College in Maine, and led the team there for another seven. She was also only 33. When she signed, she became the highest paid women's hockey coach in the country.⁸¹²

Momentum continued to build, and in October of 1996 the first Three Nations Cup—comprised of Canada, Finland, and the USA—for the women was held in Ottawa, with the US falling to Canada in the final. Jeanine Sobek and St. Paul's Alana Blahoski played for Team USA.⁸¹³ Back at home in Minnesota, Gustavus Adolphus College and Saint Mary's University both announced varsity women's ice hockey in January and February of 1997, with Gustavus planning to roll out for the 1997-98 Season and SMU the year after.⁸¹⁴ The third sanctioned IIHF Women's World Championships were held in Kitchener, Ontario around the same time, with Sobek and Blahoski on the squad.⁸¹⁵ While Team USA would again face Canada and again walk away with the silver medal, Blahoski was praised for her play in the worlds tournament.⁸¹⁶

St. Cloud State became the fifth school in Minnesota to announce varsity women's ice hockey in March, although they intended to roll out the program in 2001. While the SCSU club teams—they had expanded to three full teams between 1990 and 1997—was disappointed in the timeline, they were excited that the school would eventually have real opportunities for the sport.⁸¹⁷ That summer, the US Olympic Committee, as part of their mission to expand the game and build their future talent pool, awarded the Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC) a \$440,000 grant to help accelerate the implementation collegiate varsity women's ice hockey. The College of St. Benedict, St. Catherine's University, St. Thomas University, Carleton College, Macalester College, Concordia University, and Hamline University all announced plans on varied timelines to roll out the sport.⁸¹⁸ Up North, the University of Minnesota-Duluth also announced a program, and the College of St. Scholastica followed shortly thereafter. Team USA veteran Shawna Davidson, who had just missed the cut for the 1998 Olympic team, was already on staff at St. Scholastica as a softball coach, and the school was eager to

⁸¹⁰ Zgoda, Jerry. "'U' unveils plan for women's hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 1, 1995, p27.

⁸¹¹ "Head Coach Women's Ice Hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 28, 1996, p111.

⁸¹² Borzoi, Pat. "It's time U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame inducts its first woman." MinnPost.com. Archived at https://web.archive.org/web/20100624062317/http://www.minnpost.com/patborzi/2008/03/17/1165/its_time_us_hockey_hall_of_fame_inducts_its_first_woman Accessed 8/15/2025; Jackson, David. "Gophers select Halldorson." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 24, 1996, p37.

⁸¹³ Cox, Damian. "The US gets jump on Nagano." *The Toronto Star*. Toronto, Ontario. December 14, 1996, p6.

⁸¹⁴ "SMU to add varsity women's hockey." *The Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. February 5, 1997, p7.

⁸¹⁵ "Sobek, Blahoski named to US roster." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 1997.

⁸¹⁶ "Blahoski assist helps US women's team win." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 2, 1997, p26.

⁸¹⁷ Cook, Robin. "Huskies add women's sports." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. March 14, 1997, p17; Killeen, Mike. "Dream comes true for women's hockey players." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. March 14, 1997, p17.

⁸¹⁸ Larson, Tom. "The future is now for Blazers' skaters." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. July 21, 1997, p11.

bring her on for their new women's ice hockey program.⁸¹⁹ Mankato State was the first state college to announce a team for the 1998-99 season.⁸²⁰

In mid-October of 1997, the University of Minnesota Gophers women's ice hockey team walked into their newly refurbished locker room together, as a team, for the very first time. Coach Laura Halldorson wanted to mark the moment. Seventeen Minnesota women, many recognizable names from the rosters of the first high school varsity teams, and six women from around the country made the final roster cut of 23. Dakota county's own Angela Borek, Megan Milbert, and Betsey Kukowski appeared on that first squad, though Farmington's Amber Hegland would later join for the 1998-1999 season. Team USA's Jenny Schmidgall signed a letter of intent with the Gophers, but was busy with Olympic preparation for Nagano and not expected to appear unless she was cut. In a first for women's ice hockey, Halldorson had secured equipment deals from Louisville and Nike. Libby Witchger served as assistant coach for the team she just missed playing for.⁸²¹

On November 2, 1997, two Minnesota women's college varsity ice hockey teams met for the first time, coached by two Minnesota women hockey players who had been competing and playing together since they were seven years old. Jill Pohtilla's three-year-old Augsburg squad, whose 1997-1998 roster included Dakota county's Carrie Stefaniak, Meg Schmidt, Sarah Burrock, and Annie Simons, met Laura Halldorson's Gopher women before a crowd of 6,854. The Minnesota Checkers were brought out at the beginning of the game to honor the history and the two coaches they had produced. Walking out for that opening moment, Halldorson slipped and fell, an accident that delighted the press who held it up as the last little hiccup before the start of a program they already expected to become legendary. During the Gopher men's 75th season, the team had a #75 jersey that traveled around the squad, so the Gopher women created an honorary #1 jersey for their opening season. In a perfect, symbolic moment, team captain Julie Otto of Buffalo, MN scored the first goal for the Gophers while wearing the honorary #1 jersey, off an assist by Blaine's Laura Tryba. Even as her team fell to the Gophers 8-0, Pohtilla was pleased by what the night meant for their sport.⁸²² A few days later, the U of M would fall to Harvard 3-2, with South St. Paul sisters Melissa and Megan Milbert facing each other across the ice.⁸²³

At the very end of 1997, Team USA finally beat Canada in a major tournament final, winning the 1997 Three Nations Cup.⁸²⁴ By early January of 1998, both Canadian and US teams held a series of exhibition games as a preview for the Olympics, where the press' main impression was of a surprisingly physical game. As a Canadian player explained, "no checking" meant "You're not allowed to lower your shoulder and level somebody, but you're allowed to guide them into the boards. It's a fine line."⁸²⁵ The enthusiasm for women's hockey led the director of media relations for Hockey East, Edward Saunders, to take the leap and create the Women's Professional Hockey League, Inc. "There is a strong recognition of the need for a place for the world's top players to compete," he explained. Saunders intended to begin league play with five teams, all located on the

⁸¹⁹ Bennet, Bruce. "St. Scholastica could be next." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. September 9, 1997, p21.

⁸²⁰ Gilbert, John. "Carroll recruiting cream of the crop." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 12, 1998, pC7.

⁸²¹ Zgoda, Jerry. "Halldorson is building memories." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 14, 1997, p31; University of Minnesota Team Rosters. <https://gophersports.com/sports/womens-ice-hockey/roster/1998-99> Accessed 8/15/2025; Souhan, Jim. "Gophers women put their debut on ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 3, 1997, pC1; "Scholz, Hegland named U captains." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 21, 1998, p34.

⁸²² "Augsburg v Minnesota." <https://gophersports.com/sports/womens-ice-hockey/stats/1997-98/augsburg/boxscore/10278> Accessed 8/15/2025; Zgoda, Jerry. "A Dream Realized." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 29, 1997, pC1; Souhan, Jim. "Gophers women put their debut on ice." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 3, 1997, pC1; Barreiro, Dan. "Halldorson's trip into history is worthwhile." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 3, 1997, pC1.

⁸²³ Zolecki, Todd. "Harvard skates past 'U' women." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 7, 1997, p38.

⁸²⁴ "Yanked!" *The Hamilton Spectator*. Hamilton, Ontario. December 22, 1997, p54.

⁸²⁵ Ewing, Lori. "Rivals putting on the hits." *Calgary Herald*. Calgary, Alberta. January 19, 1998, p38.

East coast, in November of 1998. A number of women from Olympic and international teams signed letters of intent to play, including Alana Blahoski.⁸²⁶ While that league was ultimately unable to find investors, mostly due to concerns that there was not yet a talent pool large enough to fill professional teams, the recognition that women wanted more than club play was clear.⁸²⁷

On February 8, 1998, at noon in Nagano, women's ice hockey officially dropped the puck as an Olympic sport. Canada, China, Finland, and Japan joined the United States to compete for the first medals. Karyn Bye, Alana Blahoski, and Edina's Jenny Schmidgall were the local women on the team. The games opened predictably, with Finland shutting out Sweden, the US shutting out China, and Canada delivering a brutal 13-0 shutout to hosts Japan. While the round-robin tournament incentivized running up the score—as ties for the finals would be settled by points—the mismatched teams felt some awkwardness with the format.⁸²⁸ In the final, Team USA once again faced Canada. While their previous exhibition match, held just before the games began, had been a penalty-filled slug fest—the US served 30 minutes of penalties while Canada sat in the box for 18—the gold medal game was significantly more controlled. Gretchen Ulion, Shelley Looney, and Sandra Whyte combined for three goals, while Canada's Danielle Goyette was only able to put one power play goal past US goalie Sarah Tueting. Team USA won the gold and the first Olympic glory. Karyn Bye skated out with the flag.⁸²⁹ While devastated, Canadian coach Shannon Miller saw the bigger moment when the medals were awarded. "I had a feeling of joy go through my body because I realized an Olympic gold medal was being hung on a female hockey player. I couldn't believe the impact it had on me," she said. "Tomorrow's the start of our journey to take it back," Canadian player Karen Nystrom assured the press.⁸³⁰ And they would.

For the next five years, Canada would beat the US in the finals of the 1999, 2000, 2001, and 2004 IIHF Women's World Championships, the 1999, 2000, 2002, and 2004 Three/Four Nations Cup—Sweden joined in 2000, and the US sat out in 2001 after 9-11—, and also hand them the silver in the 2002 Winter Olympics in Salt Lake City. Only in the 2003 Four Nations Cup would Team USA best their rivals. Over the course of those five years, Blahoski, Bye, and Schmidgall would be joined by Eagan's Natalie Darwitz and Brooklyn Park's Krissy Wendell—both still in high school—as well as Roseville's Winny Brodt and Apple Valley's Annamarie Holmes in various configurations of Team USA. Darwitz was the youngest person ever named to the US national team at 15.⁸³¹ The 2001 IIHF Women's World Championships, held in locations all around Minnesota, followed the trend, but brought a great deal of local excitement. The young Darwitz and Wendell wowed the crowds, and Schmidgall-Potter impressed after a year off from maternity leave. A crowd of 5,632 filled Mariucci Arena, and Canada took

⁸²⁶ Huebner, Barbara. "Women's hockey league to name sites today." *The Boston Globe*. Boston, Massachusetts. February 2, 1998, p45; "Women's pro hockey league due next fall." *The Vancouver Sun*. Vancouver, British Columbia. February 3, 1998, p62; "Blaoski [sic] to play in pro hockey league." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 4, 1998, p26.

⁸²⁷ Lillard, Margaret. "A league of their own? Not quite yet for women hockey players." *The News-Herald*. Morgantown, North Carolina. July 12, 1998, p20.

⁸²⁸ Lopresti, Mike. "Gender equity with a wallop." *The St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. February 8, 1998, p25; "Can U.S. take gold in women's hockey?" *The St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. February 8, 1998, p27; Litke, Jim. "U.S. hits the ice running." *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. February 9, 1998, p11; "US shuts out Japan; China makes finals." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 12, 1998, p29.

⁸²⁹ Lillard, Margaret. "Tueting solid gold in goal for US." *Potomac News*. Woodbridge, Virginia. February 18, 1998, p33; "U.S. Women topple Canada for hockey gold." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. February 17, 1998, p6; Blount, Rachel. "Red, white and blue—and gold." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 18, 1998, p1.

⁸³⁰ Lillard, Margaret. "Queens on Ice." *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. February 18, 1998, p9.

⁸³¹ Blount, Rachel. "Not your typical Freshman." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 26, 1999, p44; "Wendell, Darwitz named to national team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 11, 2000, p36; "Five from state on national team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 2, 2000, p36; "Minnesotans lead Team USA." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 6, 2002, p21; Blount, Rachel and Jay Weiner. "Home-grown." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 6, 2002, pSA3.

the gold in a 3-2 battle.⁸³² The 2002 Olympics were another hard-fought battle ending in silver for the previously undefeated American squad, but one filled with Minnesota connections—in addition to Team USA's Bye, Darwitz, Schmidgall-Potter, and Wendell, Teams Finland, Sweden, and Russia all featured women who had done their collegiate training at UMD. One Swedish player, Josefin Pettersson, had immigrated when she was four and attended Richfield High School when she made her Olympic debut. Despite the disappointing finish, Team USA's Katie King kept perspective: "We have to remind ourselves that we won the silver medal...that's not too shabby."⁸³³

Throughout those 5 silver-filled years, women's hockey in the US, and in Minnesota, continued to explode. Reflecting on the way that Olympic women's hockey had impacted the country, sports analyst Mariah Burton Nelson gave credit to the sportsmanship shown by both the US and Canadian teams, and the way that women's hockey in particular allowed women to be in competition and united at the same time

Two things impressed me about Olympic women's hockey. One is how excited American women are about it...It begins to open possibilities for all of us, for women who hadn't even considered doing that and who are thinking, 'Maybe I could be other than what I was culturally conditioned to be.'...While American men reacted with such bad sportsmanship in defeat, by contrast [Canadian coach Shannon Miller]...sees all women hockey players as her teammates, not just her own team. Even in the face of her defeat, she was able to rise above it...A lot of nonathletic women see themselves reflected in athletes and are cheering for them...part of what keeps us from competing is the masculine definition of competing as demolishing the opponent. We don't want to do that...because we know what it is like to lose, to be humiliated, ashamed, left out, excluded...What's going to change it is partly relationships—women caring about other women enough to compete, to be role models for each other, enough to teach the younger generation how to compete.⁸³⁴

The women of Team USA took the role seriously, many going on speaking tours and serving as ambassadors for the sport. Alana Blahoski would become a coach at Mankato State, while Karyn Bye became a sports analyst for MSC and joined the staff of the Minnesota Wild in fan development and community affairs.⁸³⁵

The first official women's college National Championship, under the auspices of the American Women's College Hockey Alliance, was held in 1998, with the first Patty Kazmaier Memorial Award given out to the top college woman player in the nation. The NCAA required 40 teams before it would step in, and only 30 played across three divisions that year. While East coast teams ruled the day—New Hampshire won the tournament and player Brandy Fisher took home the Kazmaier Award—Minnesota made it through to the semifinals before

⁸³² Allenspach, Kevin. "World's finest skate into town." *The St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. March 29, 2001, p31; Ratnayake, Hiran. "Crowd sparse for Sweden's win." *The St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. March 31, 2001, p23; Allenspach, Kevin. "US rolls on past Sweden." *The St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. April 1, 2001, p35; Allenspach, Kevin. "US rolls to 13-0 win." *The St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. April 3, 2001, p23; "USA wins, 9-0." *The St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. April 6, 2001, p30; "2001 - IIHF Women's World Championship." USA Hockey. <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/page/show/4286761-2001-iihf-women-s-world-championship>. Accessed 8/21/2025.

⁸³³ Blount, Rachel. "Not foreign to Duluthians." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 7, 2002, pC10; Blount, Rachel. "She's way ahead of schedule." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 7, 2002, pC10; Prout, Bill. "Former Husky Josefin Petterson an Early Trailbreaker in Hockey." Center Ice View Blog. February 11, 2022. <https://centericeview.wordpress.com/2022/02/11/former-husky-josefin-petterson-an-early-trailbreaker-in-hockey/> Accessed 8/15/2025; Jones, Tom. "Canada's turn." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 22, 2002, pSA1.

⁸³⁴ Winegar, Karin. "Winning Women." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 19, 1998, p21.

⁸³⁵ Blount, Rachel. "A golden '98 for 3 Olympians." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 31, 1998, p40.

falling to the eventual champions, and finished in fourth place.⁸³⁶ The following season, Jenny Schmidgall suited up for the Gophers, and the tradition of Olympic teammates competing against each other in college varsity seasons started for women's ice hockey.⁸³⁷ That year, the University of Minnesota came third, though national champions Harvard won with Duluth's Alison Kuusisto in goal and Duluth's Angie Francisco's hat trick critical in their 5-3 win over New Hampshire.⁸³⁸ One year later, Schmidgall was again in Minnesota colors, but this time for Minnesota-Duluth, playing for former Team Canada coach Shannon Miller. While the Bulldogs beat the Gophers 5-4 in their first ever match up, and would enter the National tournament seeded ahead of their metro rivals, the year belonged to the Gophers. Coming from behind—both in the game and in the season—the Gophers beat Brown 4-2 with goals from Massachusetts' Courtney Kennedy, Burnsville's Laura Slominski, Ontario's Nadine Muzerall and Roseville's Winny Brodt.⁸³⁹ That same year, Augsburg would come second in the Division III Championships.⁸⁴⁰ In 2001, after the NCAA took over, Minnesotans would continue to dominate, winning Division I 11 of the next 16 years. Shannon Miller's UMD Bulldogs would take the National title in 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008 and 2010, Laura Halldorson's Gophers in 2004 and 2005, and Brad Frost's Gophers in 2012, 2013, 2015, and 2016.⁸⁴¹ 2002 would also bring the completion of Ridder Arena, the first arena dedicated to women's hockey, at the University of Minnesota. St. Cloud State played the U of M on October 19 in the first ever game played on that ice. Krissy Wendell, scoring twice in the 8-0 victory for the U, told the *Star Tribune* "It's our ice. I love it."⁸⁴²

Late 2004 brought a major shift for Minnesota women: the founding of Minnesota's first semi-professional—at the time—women's hockey team, the Minnesota Whitecaps. The Whitecaps were joining four established Canadian teams in the newly configured Western Women's Hockey League (WWHL).⁸⁴³ Jack Brodt and Dwayne Schmidgall—the fathers of Kerry, Winny, and Chelsey Brodt and Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, respectively—founded the team to create an opportunity for their daughters to continue their playing careers after college.⁸⁴⁴ Early on, the team was technically pay-to-play, as players drew no salary or stipend and were expected to sell \$2000 of program ads or tickets to cover the budgets for their league and ice time. But the quality of competition was at the top of the international pool, and Minnesota's female hockey powerhouses signed on. Winny Brodt, Renee and Ronda Curtin, Amber Fryklund, Ryann Geldner, Amber Hegland, Jennifer Hempel, Emily Kearns, Amanda Mathison, Brittney Ralph, Angie Rieger, Laura Slominski, Megan Van Beusekom, Shari Vogt, and Dagney Willey formed the Minnesotan core of the first squad.⁸⁴⁵

⁸³⁶ "New Hampshire, Brown advance to first women's hockey championship." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. March 22, 1998, p41.

⁸³⁷ Eldred, Sheila Mulrooney. "'U' newcomers have a leader in Nagano star." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 30, 1998, p37.

⁸³⁸ "Box Scores." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 28, 1999, p56; Huebner, Barbara. "Duluth duo leads Harvard." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 29, 1999, p18.

⁸³⁹ Gustafson, Craig. "No longer unknown." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 4, 1999, p29; Schmid, Pam. "Gophers bring home the title." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 26, 2000, pC7.

⁸⁴⁰ Division III Runners-Up Plaque from the collection of Mary Brown.

⁸⁴¹ "Women's Ice Hockey Championship History." NCAA.com. <https://www.ncaa.com/history/icehockey-women/nc> Accessed 8/21/2025.

⁸⁴² "Who said that?" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 21, 2002, pC20; "Ridder Arena." University of Minnesota Athletics. <https://gophersports.com/sports/2018/5/21/facilities-ridder-arena-html> Accessed 8/15/2025.

⁸⁴³ "4 from area on Whitecaps roster." *The St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. September 28, 2004, p24.

⁸⁴⁴ Minnesota Whitecaps. "About." <https://mnwhitecaps.com/about/> Accessed 8/1/2025.

⁸⁴⁵ Weiner, Jay. "Women's hockey: Long strides made, but a long way to go." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

November 4, 2005, pA1; "2004-2005 Whitecaps Roster." ESportsdesk <https://admin.esportsdesk.com/leagues/rosters.cfm?leagueID=5109&clientID=2178>. Accessed 8/15/2025; Rand, Michael. "Still lacing up skates and chasing pucks." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 15, 2006, pC2.

Team USA travelled to Linköping, Sweden, in April of 2005 for the IIHF Women's World Championships, with Minnesotans Darwitz, Schmidgall-Potter, Wendell, and Van Beusekom on the team, alongside assistant coach Alana Blahoski and Inver Grove Heights Dan Schaefer as equipment manager. Gophers Courtney Kennedy, Kelly Stephens, and Lyndsay Wall also joined the squad. In a grueling, scoreless three periods and overtime match, the US finally won their first World Championship in the first worlds shootout. Krissy Wendell, Natalie Darwitz, and California's Angela Ruggiero each bested Canadian goalie Kim St. Pierre in the shootout. US goalie Chanda Gunn only let one past her for Team USA's first Worlds gold.⁸⁴⁶

By late 2005, fully one half of the US population of girl high school hockey players played in Minnesota. Minnesotan women made up 20% of the NCAA Division I players—which drew from an international pool. And a third of the women still in consideration for the Olympics were Minnesotans. Team USA coach Ben Smith went on the record that the best line in hockey, male or female, at the time, was the Gopher's Natalie Darwitz-Krissy Wendell-Kelly Stephens line. But getting the fans to take notice—Gopher women's hockey games, the best attended in the nation, rarely broke 2,000 people in the seats—and come to begin with was a problem. "If we can get people inside the rink to see a game, they'll come back. The problem is getting people to even put it on their list to go," explained Darwitz.⁸⁴⁷

For the 2006 Turin Olympics, the marketers were handed the reigns. On December 27, 2005, the final roster of Team USA was announced in a televised ceremony in the rotunda at the Mall of America. Filled with cheering youth hockey players, and a deeply moved Lynn Olson, the audience watched as the women were brought to the stage in uniform, under a shower of balloons.⁸⁴⁸ Minnesotans Wendell, Darwitz, and Schmidgall-Potter and Gophers Kennedy, Stephens, and Wall made the team. Tricia Dunn-Luoma, a some-time member of the national team since 1997, had relocated to Minnesota in 2004 and married into the state. Krissy Wendell was named team captain.⁸⁴⁹ Conversation around the games focused on the over-dominance of the US and Canadian teams, and for the first time involved angry letters sent to Canada's coach Melody Davidson after a 16-0 shutout over Italy set an Olympics hockey record.⁸⁵⁰ But Finland showed some serious skill, forcing the US to fight back from a 3-1 deficit in final game before the semis.⁸⁵¹ Then, in a stunning shootout victory, Sweden eliminated the United States in the semifinals. While the defeat was devastating for the young team, the overall effect on hockey worldwide was positive. Giving full credit to outstanding Swedish goaltender Kim Martin, Jenny Schmidgall-Potter went on the record to say "It's a great victory for their country and program. I just wish it didn't have to happen tonight."⁸⁵² The US went home with a bronze medal.⁸⁵³ Kim Martin committed to play for Minnesota-Duluth.⁸⁵⁴ And flying home early, Jenny Schmidgall-Potter did what Minnesota Olympians do best: rushed to the

⁸⁴⁶ "2005 - IIHF Women's World Championship." USA Hockey. <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/page/show/4286759-2005-iihf-women-s-world-championship>. Accessed 8/22/2025; "US women win world hockey title." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. April 11, 2005, p4B.

⁸⁴⁷ Weiner, Jay. "Women's hockey: Long strides made, but a long way to go." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 4, 2005, pA1; Weiner, Jay. "Brodt among 9 Minnesota Olympians." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 26, 2005, pC1.

⁸⁴⁸ Weiner, Jay. "On the beat." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 7, 2006, pC2.

⁸⁴⁹ Blount, Rachel. "Born for Team USA." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 11, 2006, pC1.

⁸⁵⁰ "A bronze battle." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 11, 2006, p16; Associated Press. "More criticism likely after another Canadian rout." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 13, 2006, pSA3.

⁸⁵¹ Weiner, Jay. "Finns' flying start gives US momentary jolt." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 15, 2006, pS3.

⁸⁵² Beacham, Greg. "No North American final." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. February 18, 2006, p8; Reed, Tom. "USA's loss good for hockey." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 18, 2006, p22; Blout, Rachel.

⁸⁵³ Associated Press. "Canadian women take gold again, US settles for bronze medal." *Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. February 21, 2006, p6.

⁸⁵⁴ "Sweden's Martin commits to UMD." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 21, 2006, pC16.

stands to cheer for the Coon Rapids High School girls, coached by her husband Rob Potter, in their AA state semifinal victory.⁸⁵⁵

By 2006, the Minnesota Whitecaps players were still working to raise their own funds, but their expected contributions had been halved. Officially in the highest level of post-college league play in North America, they were still playing for the love of the game. Amber Hegland told the *Star Tribune's* Rachel Blount

We all share a common goal of creating more opportunity for girls to play, and we want to put ourselves up there as role models and leaders for young girls. It's tough, and it means making sacrifices. But this is a choice I would make 10 times out of 10, because I believe in it. This is going to help women's hockey grow.

They gave hockey clinics and took the time to give autographs after every game, even while holding down other jobs and driving miles from home to play. Across the board, the Whitecaps management was doing the same. No staff drew salaries, and the team doctor, Howard Fidler, donated both time and equipment in the hopes that his own daughters might someday have better opportunities. "It has to start somewhere," argued Winny Brodt.⁸⁵⁶

Women players at the top had to work around other issues as well. Jenny Schmidgall-Potter played until the fifth month of her second pregnancy—cracking jokes about too many men on the ice—and then made it back to the Whitecaps and then Team USA to play in the 2007 IIHF Womens World finals just shy of 13 weeks post-partum. Alongside fellow Minnesotans Natalie Darwitz, Krissy Wendell, Gigi Marvin, and Tiffany Hagge, she took home the silver and respect from the Canadian team.⁸⁵⁷ Schmidgall-Potter, Darwitz, and Marvin would return, with Orono's Rachael Drazan in 2008 and Loretto's Megan van Beusekom in 2009, to achieve gold for Team USA in Worlds for the second and third ever time.⁸⁵⁸

In the fall of 2008 USA Hockey established a year-round residency program in Blaine, to officially give its women players a chance to prepare full time for the Olympics. In previous years they had occasional training camps, but no year-round support, and almost all had found ways to train on their own. After the Turin Olympics bronze, USA Hockey appointed a director of women's hockey operations, Michele Amidon, and gave her the resources to improve the program. Women who made the initial roster of 17 were given living stipends, facilities, and a schedule to play against the Whitecaps, college and men's teams, and other opportunities. Players selected included Minnesotans Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, Natalie Darwitz, Megan Van Buesekom, St. Paul's Erin Keys, and Hastings's Erica McKenzie. Tom Osiecki of Burnsville and Jason Lesteberg of St. Cloud State were hired to coach.⁸⁵⁹

2010 brought some huge moments for Minnesota women. In the 2010 Olympics, Team USA—with Darwitz, Schmidgall-Potter, and Gigi Marvin—took the silver, but played in front of record-breaking crowds in Canada, including a record setting 16,347 fans at Scotiabank Place in Vancouver during a pre-Olympics exhibition match,

⁸⁵⁵ Augustoviz, Roman, and Pam Schmid. "Coon Rapids coach gets a surprise." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 2006, pC12.

⁸⁵⁶ Blount, Rachel. "The Whitecaps pay a big price to play the game they love." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 24, 2006, pC1.

⁸⁵⁷ Blount, Rachel. "Mother of two helps define toughness." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 10, 2007, pC2.

⁸⁵⁸ "Past IIHF Championships." USA Hockey. <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/page/show/4286745-year-by-year-results>. Accessed 8/15/2025.

⁸⁵⁹ Blount, Rachel. "U.S. women's hockey has a place to call home." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 22, 2009, pC1.

broken just weeks later when 16,805 fans watched the gold medal game.⁸⁶⁰ Eight members of Team USA were players for the Minnesota Whitecaps, who had a stellar season around the Olympics. Clinching the WWHL championship in February, they met the Canadian Women's Hockey League (CWHL) champions Brampton Thunder of Ontario for the Clarkson Cup in March. In a 4-0 shutout, the Minnesota Whitecaps became the first US team to claim the cup. Megan Van Beusekom-Sweerin earned the shutout, while Chelsey Brodt-Rosenthal, Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, Maggie Fisher, and Brooke White-Lancette scored for the Whitecaps.⁸⁶¹

In 2011, Karyn Bye-Dietz was selected as the second US woman to be inducted into the IIHF Hockey Hall of Fame—after former Team USA captain Cammi Granato of Illinois in 2008, who was in the first class of women inducted—and the first locally claimed, due to River Falls, WI proximity to Minnesota, and her years working for the Minnesota Wild. Dietz was also lauded for her work on the telecasts of the Minnesota girls' high school hockey state tournament. She would be followed by California's Angela Ruggiero in 2017 and Eagan's Natalie Darwitz in 2024, the only four US women inducted in the international Hall of Fame to date.⁸⁶²

The Whitecaps would play one more season—2010-2011—with the WWHL before it was folded into the CWHL without an option for the Whitecaps to continue. They would become an independent team, playing exhibition games against collegiate and other high level women's teams, until 2018.⁸⁶³ On December 12 and 13, 2015, the independent Minnesota Whitecaps would play in the very first pro women's games in Minnesota against the National Women's Hockey League (NWHL) Boston Pride, who were paid to play. They split the results, with Boston winning 5-1 on Saturday and Minnesota winning 5-4 on Sunday.⁸⁶⁴

2011 to 2016 saw the US and Canada again in an endless vie for gold in international competition, with the US claiming the gold medal in the IIHF Women's World Finals in 2011, 2013, 2015, and 2016, with Canada claiming the championship only in 2012. Jenny Schmidgall-Potter and Gigi Marvin were joined over the years by St. Cloud's Anne Schleper, Roseville's Lee Stecklein, Vadnais Height's Hannah Brandt, Roseau's Sarah Erickson, St. Paul's Stephanie Anderson, and Plymouth's Dani Cameranesi.⁸⁶⁵ Marvin, Schleper and Stecklein, along with Minnesota born Molly Schaus, played for the 2014 silver medal Olympic team in Sochi, while Olympic teammates Amanda Kessel, Jocelyne and Monique Lamoureux, and Megan Bozek had Minnesota ties through their time with the Gophers, Julie Chu was a Whitecap, and Brianna Decker played for Shattuck-St. Mary's High

⁸⁶⁰ "Canada beats United States in front of record-setting women's hockey crowd." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 3, 2010, p20; Beacham, Greg. "Oh Canada: US Falls." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. February 26, 2010, p31; "2010 Vancouver Olympic Winter Games Women's Tournament." USA Hockey. <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/page/show/2908085-2010-vancouver-olympic-winter-games-women-s-tournament>. Accessed 8/15/2025.

⁸⁶¹ Feldman, Jason. "Women's hockey takes center stage once again." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 5, 2010, p27; "Chu leads Whitecaps." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 31, 2020, p7; Starkman, Randy. "Whitecaps swamp Thunder." *The Toronto Star*. Toronto, Ontario. March 29, 2010, p54.

⁸⁶² "Bye Dietz named to international Hall of Fame." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 19, 2010, pC2; CBC Sports. "First women players inducted into IIHF Hall of Fame." May 15, 2008. <https://www.cbc.ca/sports/hockey/first-women-players-inducted-to-iihf-hall-of-fame-1.713204>. Accessed 8/15/2025; O'Hara, Nolan. "Former Gophers coach, player Natalie Darwitz named to IIHF Hall of Fame." *Sports Illustrated*. January 15, 2024. <https://www.si.com/college/minnesota/hockey/former-gophers-coach-player-natalie-darwitz-named-to-iihf-hall-of-fame>. Accessed 8/15/2025; "Angela Ruggiero Named to IIHF Hall of Fame Class of 2017." *Our Sports Central*. January 17, 2017. <https://www.oursportscentral.com/services/releases/angela-ruggiero-named-to-iihf-hall-of-fame-class-of-2017/n-5228841>. Accessed 8/15/2025.

⁸⁶³ Spencer, Donna. "Minnesota Whitecaps cry foul on exclusion from Canadian Women's Hockey League." November 18, 2011. *The Huffington Post*. https://web.archive.org/web/20151224122700/https://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2011/11/18/minnesota-whitecaps-cry-f_n_1102142.html Accessed 8/14/2025.

⁸⁶⁴ "Big test for Whitecaps." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 12, 2015, pC9; "Whitecaps split." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 14, 2015, pC3.

⁸⁶⁵ "Past IIHF Championships." USA Hockey. <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/page/show/4286745-year-by-year-results>. Accessed 8/15/2025.

School. Noora Raty and Mira Jalosuo on Team Finland also had Minnesota ties through their time as Gophers.⁸⁶⁶ Gigi Marvin expressed her hopes that her second Olympic silver might be her last of that particular color.⁸⁶⁷

In 2017, dissatisfaction with the status quo hit a breaking point internationally. Team USA threatened to boycott the IIHF Women's World Championship if USA Hockey didn't work with the players to negotiate a contract for better wages and support. Team USA head coach Robb Stauber, who had led the Minnesota Whitecaps since 2015, stuck by his team, and the women, including Minnesotans Gigi Marvin, Lee Stecklein, Hannah Brandt, Plymouth's Kelly Pannek and Andover's Maddie Rooney, stuck to their guns. USA Hockey opted to cut a deal, and after granting a livable wage, the US women were ready to hit the ice. Riding the momentum of their off-ice victory, they brought home the gold and an energized squad. Stauber was told he would coach the Olympics.⁸⁶⁸

Dani Cameranesi and Minnetonka's Sidney Morin would join Cayla Barnes and Haley Skarupa as the new additions to the Olympic roster. All five 2017 Team USA Minnesotans—Marvin, Stecklein, Brandt, Pannek, and Rooney—, three players with Gopher ties including Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson, Monique Lamoureux-Morando, and Amanda Kessel, Whitecaps Kendall Coyne and Alex Rigsby, and nine other returning players completed the 2018 US Olympic Team.⁸⁶⁹ Brandt's older sister, Marissa—who used her Korean name, Park Yoon Jung, as a hockey player—, was chosen for Team Korea, her country of birth, and players from Minnesota universities appeared on several rosters, including UMD alumni Sarah Murray as the head coach for Team Korea.⁸⁷⁰

US Coach Robb Stauber's choices were vilified, especially after several of his cuts won major awards, but he was ultimately vindicated when Team USA brought home the gold for the first time in 20 years. In the very first Olympic final to feature a shootout, Andover's Maddie Rooney held off four of Canada's shots, clinching victory. "I know she has ice in her veins," Stauber told the press. During regulation, Hilary Knight had scored off an assist from Sidney Morin, and after two Canadian goals Kelly Pannek assisted Monique Lamoureux-Morando for the equalizer. After a scoreless overtime, Gigi Marvin sank the first American goal of the shootout, followed by two Canadian goals and then a tying goal by Amanda Kessel. In round 6 Jocelyne Lamoureux-Davidson sank a third, a trick shot she had dubbed "Oops I Did It Again" after the Brittany Spears' song. "That was the most beautiful shootout goal I have ever seen," Dani Cameranesi told the *Star Tribune*. Rooney faced down Canadian Meghan Agosta for the final shot, and stopped it in her pads. The crowd went wild.⁸⁷¹

Just three months later, the Minnesota Whitecaps officially went pro, joining the National Women's Hockey League.⁸⁷² Ronda Curtin-Engelhardt was announced as co-coach alongside Jack Brodt, and Laura Slominski was

⁸⁶⁶ Graff, Chad. "Olympic Hockey." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. January 2, 2014, p7; Bloom, Molly. "44 with Minnesota ties competing in Sochi." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. February 8, 2014, p9A; "US women fall to Canada." *The Austin Daily Herald*. Austin, Minnesota. February 21, 2014, p11.

⁸⁶⁷ Feldman, Jason. "Two-time Olympian Marvin is looking ahead to 2018." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. March 31, 2014, p25.

⁸⁶⁸ Schlossman, Brad. "Women's Hockey Team threatens to boycott World Championship." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. March 17, 2017, p10; Allen, Kevin. "US women united on the ice, too." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. April 2, 2017, p57; Blount, Rachel. "Stauber selected as U.S. coach." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 2, 2017, pC8.

⁸⁶⁹ Blount, Rachel. "Minnesotans dominate women's roster." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 2, 2018, pC3.

⁸⁷⁰ Mikus, Matt. "Meet the Olympians from Minn." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. February 9, 2018, pA1; "Olympic women's hockey games to watch." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 9, 2018, p12.

⁸⁷¹ Wellens, Matt. "Duluth native leaves imprint on Olympics women's hockey team." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. February 8, 2018, p11; "US goalie delivers golden performance in shootout." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 22, 2018, p16; Blount, Rachel. "So bold, so gold." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 2018, pC1.

⁸⁷² "Whitecaps join the NWHL." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. May 16, 2018, p10; Hatten, Mick. "Whitecaps to join NWHL in 2018-19." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. May 16, 2018, pD1; Blount, Rachel. "Women's pro league acquires Whitecaps." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 16, 2018, pC1.

announced as assistant coach.⁸⁷³ Former Gopher Amanda Leveille became the first free agent signed to the team in mid-June, and St. Paul's TRIA Rink, in partnership with the Minnesota Wild, was announced as their home ice by the end of the month.⁸⁷⁴ Maplewood's Allie Thunstrom signed in August, followed quickly by signings for Sadie Lundquist, Amy Menke, Lauren Barnes, Emma Stauber, Julie Friend, and McKenna Brand.⁸⁷⁵ By the time the season began in October, many of the veteran players who made the roster were still in a bit of shock. "We grew up never thinking this was a possibility, to be paid to play a game we love," Olympian Hannah Brandt told the *Star Tribune*.⁸⁷⁶

On October 6, 2018, at 4pm, the puck dropped in the first game to feature a professional Minnesota women's hockey team. The Whitecaps took on the Metropolitan Riveters.⁸⁷⁷ Before a sold-out crowd of 1,200, the Whitecaps shutout the NWHL defending champions 4-0, and then beat them again 3-1 on Sunday.⁸⁷⁸ They would ride the wave through a spectacular opening season all the way to the March 17, 2019 Isobel Cup championship game, seizing victory and becoming the only team to have won both it and the Clarkson Cup. Lee Stecklein scored the game winning goal 49 seconds into overtime.⁸⁷⁹

One week later, the CWHL held their 2019 Clarkson Cup finals, and a week after that the CWHL players were informed that their league was folding, effective immediately. But the US women's off-ice successes in 2017 had left a lasting impact, and players had seen it on both sides of the border. While both the NWHL and international play would continue—the US would bring home gold in the 2019 IIHF Worlds, and then silver in 2021 and 2022, as well as a silver medal in the 2022 Olympics in Beijing, and the Whitecaps would play for a few more seasons—everything was about to really change.⁸⁸⁰

Notable Teams and Women of the Olympics, the Whitecaps, and Minnesota College Hockey

A partial record of women and achievements on the collegiate, international and historic professional level can be found in the *Notable Teams and Women of the Olympics the Whitecaps and Minnesota College Hockey.pdf* document.-

⁸⁷³ Blount, Rachel. "Ex-Gopher to become Whitecaps coach." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 12, 2018, pC1.

⁸⁷⁴ Blount, Rachel. "Former U goaltender to break new ground." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 18, 2018, pC6; Blount, Rachel. "Whitecaps' home games set for cozy Wild practice rink." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 27, 2018, pC5.

⁸⁷⁵ Blount, Rachel. "Thunstrom joins Whitecaps." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 2, 2018, pC7; "Former beaver Lundquist signs with Whitecaps." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. August 23, 2018, p4; Carlson, Vance. "Playing for Pride." *Park Rapids Enterprise*. Park Rapids, Minnesota. August 25, 2018, p9.

⁸⁷⁶ Blount, Rachel. "Pro Women's Hockey Arrives in State Excites Whitecaps." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 5, 2018, pC1.

⁸⁷⁷ Star Tribune Editorial Board. "Whitecaps crest the 'State of Hockey'." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 6, 2018, pA6.

⁸⁷⁸ "Whitecaps sweep 2 games on their opening weekend." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. October 8, 2018, p12.

⁸⁷⁹ "Whitecaps work OT to win title." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. March 18, 2019, p10; Mizutani, Dane. "Whitecaps Capture Isobel Cup." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. March 19, 2019, p4.

⁸⁸⁰ Rutherford, Kristina. "Questions, frustration remain in wake of CWHL's decision to fold." Sportsnet.ca. March 31, 2019. <https://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/nhl/questions-frustration-remain-wake-cwhls-decision-fold/>. Accessed 5/21/2025; "Past IIHF Championships." USA Hockey. <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/page/show/4286745-year-by-year-results>. Accessed 8/15/2025; "US Women's Olympics results by year." USA Hockey. <https://teamusa.usahockey.com/page/show/2906628-previous-women-s-olympic-ice-hockey-tournaments>. Accessed 8/15/2025.

Dakota County Spotlight: Farmington's Amber Hegland

Former Whitecaps, Gophers, and Boys' High School Varsity Player, later High School Varsity and Pro Coach

In 1991-92, a 5'5", 135lb cornerback for the Farmington High School Tigers football team spotted the ball coming around their side of the defensive line, and made the first open-field tackle of their career to stop it. It was the sort of exciting moment experienced by a lot of high school athletes, with one small twist. The cornerback in question was sophomore Amber Hegland. "People should try it if they want to," she told the *Star Tribune*, "The girls I know all encouraged me. They think it's cool I had enough guts to play."⁸⁸¹ In 1994, playing for the Farmington boys' varsity ice hockey team as the first woman to play in the boys' hockey state tournament, she was again facing down boys from Mahtomedi. While returning her tackle wasn't an option, they did check her right into the boards. For the Farmington boys, she was a teammate who always played her part.⁸⁸² That mentality—happy to be one part of a much bigger, valuable whole—would characterize her style of both play and coaching from that point forward.

A multi-sport athlete, she lettered in softball, hockey, volleyball, academics, golf, and football, and was a member of the Minnesota Thoroughbreds in her spare time. In 1993 and 1994, she made the *Star Tribune* All-Metro softball team as well as the 1994 All State team, and when looking at colleges, she signed with the University of Minnesota to play softball.⁸⁸³ In her collegiate debut, she went 2 for 3 at bat.⁸⁸⁴ Her sophomore year she led the Gophers in hitting with an average of .438—she'd end with a career average of .399, still Minnesota's record—and broke the school record for RBIs at 43. She was named a second team All-American that same year.⁸⁸⁵ When the University revealed that they were going to start women's hockey, they asked Hegland to be a part of the announcement, and she got to play in her final year of eligibility.⁸⁸⁶

After graduation, armed with a teaching degree and coaching certification, she took a job coaching girl's hockey and softball at Wayzata High School, something she told the *Star Tribune* she had wanted to do since seventh grade. Having had the unwavering support of her coaches and teammates all through her time in Farmington, she wanted to create that environment for other girls. Her coaching philosophy, drawn from her own mentors, was a mixture of positive feedback, believing in the team, and teaching everyone—not just the stars. She wanted athletes to become complete people, both on and off the field. "Winning is great," she said, "But being successful is even better."⁸⁸⁷ In 2005, while also playing for the semi-pro Minnesota Whitecaps, she took the Wayzata girls' hockey team to state for the very first time.⁸⁸⁸ In 2016 Hegland took over coaching at Maple

⁸⁸¹ Augustoviz, Roman. "Gridiron Girls." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 10, 1992, pA1.

⁸⁸² Brown, Curt. "Hegland checks into record book." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 10, 1994, p39.

⁸⁸³ "Star Tribune All Metro Softball Team." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 9, 1994, p44; "Colleges: Minnesota: Announced that..." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 14, 1993, p60; 1994 All-State Team Class A." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 2, 1994, p26.

⁸⁸⁴ "Gophers Roundup." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 18, 1995, p35.

⁸⁸⁵ "Big Ten honors 'U' softball player." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 27, 1996, p26; "'U' women win pair." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 10, 1996, p28; "Nelson is first-team All-American." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 23, 1996, p40; "Most Memorable Athletes of Title IX: Amber Hegland." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 12, 2022, pC7; "Amber Hegland" M Club Hall of Fame. <https://gophersports.com/sports/2018/5/21/sports-m-club-spec-rel-hof-hegland-html>. Accessed 8/15/2025.

⁸⁸⁶ Zgoda, Jerry. "'U' unveils plan for women's hockey." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 1, 1995, p27; University of Minnesota Team Rosters. <https://gophersports.com/sports/womens-ice-hockey/roster/1998-99> Accessed 8/15/2025.

⁸⁸⁷ Haga, Chuck. "The making of a coach." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 15, 2002, pB2.

⁸⁸⁸ Stensaas, Brian. "Wayzata girls go to state hockey for first time." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 16, 2005, pW11; "2004-2005 Whitecaps Roster." ESportsdesk <https://admin.esportsdesk.com/leagues/rosters.cfm?leagueID=5109&clientID=2178>. Accessed 8/15/2025; Blount, Rachel. "The Whitecaps pay a big price to play the game they love." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 24, 2006, pC1.

Grove just weeks before the season began and took the AA Crimson to both their first state tournament and second place, losing in overtime 3-2 to Eden Prairie in the finals.⁸⁸⁹ She was inducted into the University of Minnesota Hall of Fame that same year.⁸⁹⁰

In 2018, Amber Hegland was the first girls ice hockey varsity high school coach to reach 200 career victories, and to this day is one of only three coaches to manage it. When she left high school coaching in 2020—she was an assistant coach for the professional Minnesota Whitecaps in the NWHL for a few more years—she had 248 coaching victories to her name, though she didn't consider it particularly important. "Coaching has never been about me. It's always been and always will be about getting kids to understand their true potential and learn skills to help them to find success."⁸⁹¹ In all her trailblazing, Hegland has never lost sight of all the other women and girls on the path.

⁸⁸⁹ La Vaque, David. "Eagles take advantage, and title." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 21, 2016, pC8.

⁸⁹⁰ "Eleven picked for Gophers' Hall." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 1, 2016, pC3.

⁸⁹¹ LaVaque, David. "About that 200 club: Count Amber Hegland as a well-qualified member." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 27 2023. <https://www.startribune.com/high-school-girls-hockey-amber-hegland-coaches-200-wins-minnesota/600247246>. Accessed 8/15/2025.

Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Laura Slominski

Former Whitecaps, Team USA Development, St. Olaf, and Varsity High School Player, Current High School Coach.

In February of 1996, the first ever defending girls high school state champions, Apple Valley, saw their hopes of a repeat dashed by Burnsville sophomore Laura Slominski. In a 5-2 victory in the Section 2 semifinals, Slominski had two goals and three assists and was touted as “instrumental” in Burnsville’s victory, with coach Tom Osiecki explaining that she was “an incredibly smart player. And she works. She comes off the ice exhausted, then she’s ready to go 30 seconds later. She’s got great playmaking ability and a great set of wheels.”⁸⁹² Burnsville finished second in 1996, and Apple Valley returned the Section 2 Semifinals defeat in 1998, but Slominski’s work ethic and clever playmaking stood out throughout her high school career. Named to the 1998 All-Metro Girls’ Hockey Team and the All-State second team, she was the Ms. Hockey Award winner in 1998, as well as winning Burnsville’s Athena Award and the Mount Olivet All Sportsmans’ Club Female High School Athlete of the Year.⁸⁹³ She also set Burnsville’s all-time point and goal records—for both boys and girls. “This is the best team I’ve ever had that didn’t make it to a state tournament, boys or girls,” Coach Osiecki told the *Star Tribune*. “I know you can’t accurately compare boys and girls statistically, but we don’t play a wide open style where we score a lot of goals. Yet Laura Slominski broke a school point record that has stood for 29 years.”⁸⁹⁴

A few short years later she was setting records for the University of Minnesota, scoring three power-play goals in a single game against St. Cloud.⁸⁹⁵ She regularly appeared in statistics and game reports, and in her free time, she liked to come home to play in pickup games at Neill Park in Burnsville.⁸⁹⁶ During the University of Minnesota’s first national title in 2000, Slominski scored what wound up being the game winning goal in their victory over Brown.⁸⁹⁷ In 2002, her senior year, she was a team captain and was named one of 10 finalists for the Patty Kazmaier Award.⁸⁹⁸ She finished her college career with 65 goals and 97 assists.⁸⁹⁹

Shortly after graduation, she worked as an assistant coach at St. Olaf under her former high school coach, Tom Osiecki, who called her the “hardest working athlete I have ever coached.” It was a mentality he wanted to see passed down to his teams.⁹⁰⁰ She joined the semi-pro Minnesota Whitecaps in 2004, and continued playing in women’s leagues throughout her coaching career.⁹⁰¹ She coached at Bloomington Kennedy High School after St.

⁸⁹² Wicker, Brian. “Slominski powers Burnsville.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 14, 1996, p31.

⁸⁹³ “Star Tribune 1998 All-Metro Girls’ Hockey Team.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 17, 1998, p28; Gilbert, John. “Surprised Slominski is named Ms. Hockey.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 23, 1998, pC10; Augustoviz, Roman. “Iversen, Slominski honored.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 10, 1998, p45.

⁸⁹⁴ Gilbert, John and Roman Augustoviz. “Brodt helps Roseville shut down Darwitz.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 1998, p39.

⁸⁹⁵ “Gophers ranked No. 2.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 18, 2000, p30.

⁸⁹⁶ “Laura Slominski: Neighborhood Rinks.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 5, 2001, p161.

⁸⁹⁷ Schmid, Pam. “Gophers bring home the title.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 26, 2000, pC7; Young, Troy. “Success chases out the demons.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. March 28, 2000, p23.

⁸⁹⁸ “Kazmaier Finalists.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 7, 2002, pC2.

⁸⁹⁹ “Laura Slominski.” Gopher Women’s Hockey. <https://gophersports.com/sports/womens-ice-hockey/roster/laura-slominski/10433> Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁹⁰⁰ “UWS Women.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. November 14, 2003, p33; Harris, Nicole. “Tom Oseicki coached 25 years...” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 21, 2004, pS12.

⁹⁰¹ Weiner, Jay. “Women’s hockey: Long strides made, but a long way to go.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota.

November 4, 2005, pA1; “2004-2005 Whitecaps Roster.” ESportsdesk <https://admin.esportsdesk.com/leagues/rosters.cfm?leagueID=5109&clientID=2178>. Accessed 8/15/2025; Rand, Michael. “Still lacing up skates and chasing pucks.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 15, 2006, pC2.

Olaf, before taking an assistant position at St. Cloud State. She was in consideration for the US Olympic team in 2006.⁹⁰² The next year, the University of Minnesota brought her back as an assistant coach.⁹⁰³

In 2009, as a first year coach for Edina High School, Slominski became the first woman to have both played and coached in the state girls high school hockey tournament.⁹⁰⁴ That same season, playing for the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota Blue Js, Slominski and her A Division teammates took the women's national hockey championship in Rochester, NY.⁹⁰⁵ She was thrilled by the growth of the game at all levels, noting that, "The top-10 teams, more often than not, are three-line teams. It's not just about having one good line anymore."⁹⁰⁶ In 2013, while playing in the women's leagues, she suffered a neck injury that required major surgery, but managed to make it back to the ice for her Edina girls four months later. "These kids mean so much to me. It's about the hockey, but it's more about the relationships and making a difference."⁹⁰⁷

In 2016 she took a break from high school coaching to spend more time with her daughter's team.⁹⁰⁸ She briefly returned to coaching to join the Minnesota Whitecaps as an assistant coach during the 2019 Isobel Cup winning season.⁹⁰⁹ Laura is now teaching at Eastview High School and is entering her third season as an Assistant Coach with the Eastview/Burnsville Co-op Varsity Girls Hockey Team.⁹¹⁰

⁹⁰² Allenspach, Kevin. "SCSU hires women's hockey assistant." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. August 18, 2005, p19.

⁹⁰³ "SCSU women's coach heads to Minnesota." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. August 1, 2006, p24.

⁹⁰⁴ "State tourney still thrills Slominski." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 2009, pC8.

⁹⁰⁵ "Johnson part of national championship team." *Wadena Pioneer Journal*. Wadena, Minnesota. April 30, 2009, p11.

⁹⁰⁶ LaVaque, David. "Coming around." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 17, 2009, pC8.

⁹⁰⁷ Berggren, Dave. "Edina coach returns to ice following serious injury." *Kare 11*. <https://www.kare11.com/article/sports/high-school/edina-coach-returns-to-ice-following-serious-injury/89-107571167>. Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁹⁰⁸ Sherman, John. "Slominski era ends in Edina." *Sun Current*. April 15, 2016. https://www.hometownsource.com/sun_current/sports/slominski-era-ends-in-edina/article_6960aa19-b027-586d-a257-7af4ad5d7720.html Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁹⁰⁹ Blount, Rachel. "Ex-Gopher to become Whitecaps coach." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. July 12, 2018, pC1;

Johnson, Randy. "Whitecaps to play in Lake Placid bubble." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 26, 2020, pC6.

⁹¹⁰ Email exchange with Laura Slominski. September 1, 2025.

Dakota County Spotlight: Eagan's Natalie Darwitz

Former Team USA, Whitecaps, Gopher, and Varsity High School Player, Former General Manager of PWHL Minnesota, Hall of Fame initiate to all three Hockey Halls of Fame, and Current CEO of the Minnesota Hockey Hall of Fame.

As the youngest of three, Natalie Darwitz had two options: either go with her mom and sister to ballet, or with her dad and brother to the rink. From the time she was tiny, she knew the answer: she wanted to be on the ice. Begging her parents to let her play, they made her a deal: if she still wanted to play hockey when she was five, they'd sign her up. The morning of her fifth birthday, she came flying down the stairs, ready to go, and never looked back.⁹¹¹

Darwitz started with youth boys' leagues, where her peers generally didn't care that she was a girl—it was just the adults that were odd about it. In seventh grade, at just 13-years-old, she made the Eagan varsity girls' hockey team, and by early November she had been identified in the press as “expected to be the next young phenom.”⁹¹² By December, she was the leading scorer in the state, and her coach was raving about her, “She's a very exciting player. Every time she picks up the puck, she does something different.”⁹¹³ In her first year, she made the All-Metro Girls' Hockey team, the All-State second team, and was instrumental in taking Eagan to state.⁹¹⁴ Coaches all over the metro raved about her speed and her hockey sense. More than her skills, she was just fun to watch.⁹¹⁵ Before she reached her freshman year, Olympics talk was common, and she was placed on the Olympics development team in the summer after seventh grade.⁹¹⁶ At just 14-years-old, while still attending Dakota Hills Middle School, she was the high school Metro Player of the Year.⁹¹⁷

When she talks about those years, she's quick to talk about the fun of cross-town rivalries, the need to beat girls like Michele Sikich and Bethany Peterson to the puck, and the joy of playing for your hometown. Lake Placid became just another part of her summer ritual, as a kid who just wanted to play hockey. She became close to the other Minnesota girls and women, and loved their bond across the metro when they returned to school. By ninth-grade, at just 15, she made the US women's national team, and went to Finland for the Three Nations Cup, in between excelling on her high school team, making All-State teams, and setting records at home.⁹¹⁸ A star player whose focus was solidly on her teammates, she gave a delightful interview after one victory against

⁹¹¹ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section are from a phone Interview with Natalie Darwitz on July 22, 2024; or from her three Hall of Fame Induction profiles, including the Hockey Hall of Fame https://www.hhof.com/induction/induction2024/about_darwitz.html, the IIHF Hall of Fame <https://www.iihf.com/en/static/5114/hall-of-fame>, and the US Hockey Hall of Fame <https://www.ushockeyhall.com/page/show/4632951-natalie-darwitz>.

⁹¹² “Players to watch.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 12, 1996, p28.

⁹¹³ Paulsen, Jim. “Player of the Week: Natalie Darwitz.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 17, 1996, p28.

⁹¹⁴ “1996-1997 Star Tribune All-Metro Girls Hockey Team.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 17, 1997, p36; Wicker, Brian. “Darwitz, Eagan gain state spot.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 16, 1997, p55; “Girls hockey.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 19, 1997, p32.

⁹¹⁵ Millea, John. “Young star on the rise.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 19, 1997, p31.

⁹¹⁶ Augustoviz, Roman and Dennis Brackin. “Women's triumph plays well in Minnesota.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 18, 1998, p36.

⁹¹⁷ “Roseville's loss leaves girls hockey wide open.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 21, 1997, p28; Wells, Jim. “Dominating eighth grader.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 14, 1998, p18; Mulrooney Eldred, Sheila. “Darwitz's star is on the rise.” *St. Cloud Times*, St. Cloud, Minnesota. February 8, 1998, p33; Gilbert, John. “Darwitz sets the standard.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 17, 1998, pC6.

⁹¹⁸ Augustoviz, Roman. “Darwitz makes US squad.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 31, 1998, pC10; “Girls Hockey All Metro Team.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 18, 1999, p30; “Girls Hockey All Metro Team.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 22, 2000, pC12; “Eagan's Darwitz puts on record-setting show in consolation.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 2000, p42.

Duluth, where she had led the scoring, but understood that the game was more than that. “Hockey is about more than just scoring goals. You also have to back check and set up your teammates, and today I think I let everybody down,” she told a reporter.⁹¹⁹

Her Three Nations Cup appearance—the first of many medals, this one a silver—was the start of an eleven-year career on Team USA, beginning when she was just 15 and ending when she was 26. By the time she finished her sophomore year in high school, she had set the state high school records for most points at 468 and most goals at 316, which still stand to this day. She finished her final high school game with a hat trick.⁹²⁰ With another Olympics on the horizon, she was ready to commit to the national program full time, and spent her last two years of high school in training.⁹²¹

Over the course of her national career, Darwitz competed, and excelled, in ten Three/Four Nations Cups, winning gold in 2003 and 2008 and silver in the rest. She went to the IIHF Women’s World Championships eight times, bringing home three gold and five silver medals as a leading scorer. For her Worlds play, she was named the Best Forward in the World and awarded the USA Hockey Bob Johnson Award for excellence in international play in 2008.⁹²² And she climbed the Olympic podium three times, once for bronze and twice for silver.⁹²³ She was team captain for her final three years. In between her international success, she played three years at the University of Minnesota, helping the Golden Gophers to back to back NCAA championships in 2004 and 2005. With the game winning goal in 2005, she was named NCAA Most Outstanding Player and was an All-American.⁹²⁴ She also spent two years with the WWHL Minnesota Whitecaps, in 2007 and 2008.

Darwitz began coaching in 2007, taking positions at Eagan High School, the University of Minnesota, and Lakeville South High School over the first few years. As the head coach of the Hamline University Pipers from 2015-2021, she was credited with turning around a previously struggling Division III program and taking them to nationals for the first time in just two seasons. In 2019 she was inducted into the US Hockey Hall of Fame. She returned briefly to assistant coaching at the University of Minnesota, before winning the job of general manager for the brand new PWHL Minnesota franchise in 2023.

With the PWHL, Darwitz and her fellow general managers built their franchises from scratch, a period they described as “[building] the airplane while it was flying.” Unpacking gear and arranging catering tables, Darwitz was an extremely hands on GM who took her organization from a powerpoint presentation to a championship winner in just ten short months. In her regular duties, she assembled a team that was professional, talented, and largely locally based, to the delight of the community.⁹²⁵ Over the course of the 2024 season, she learned that she was set to be inducted into the Hockey Hall of Fame alongside her longtime teammate Krissy Wendell-Pohl, the first US women’s duo ever admitted in the same class, and she also became the fourth US woman ever to be inducted into the IIHF Hall of Fame. When she was let go after PWHL Minnesota won the inaugural Walter

⁹¹⁹ Gustafson, Craig. “Eagan hands Duluth first shutout.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 31, 1999, p53.

⁹²⁰ Minnesota State High School League. “Girls Hockey Records.” <https://www.mshsl.org/mshsl-records-girls-hockey>. Accessed 8/1/2025; Augustoviz, Roman. “Last game hat tricks....” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 2000, p40

⁹²¹ Augustoviz, Roman. “Darwitz finishes with a flourish.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 27, 2000, p40; Augustoviz, Roman. “Darwitz invited to join US team.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 22, 2000, p48.

⁹²² USA Hockey. “Bob Johnson Award.”

https://www.usahockey.com/layout_container/show_layout_tab?layout_container_id=16921001&page_node_id=837446&tab_element_id=54968 Accessed 8/1/2025; IIHF 2008 Worlds. https://stats.iihf.com/Hydra/138/IHW138Z09_85B_2_0.pdf. Accessed 8/1/2025.

⁹²³ “Darwitz, Wendell lead Team USA.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 14, 1999, p43.

⁹²⁴ Gopher Sports. “Gophers Win Second Straight NCAA Championship.” March 27, 2005.s

https://gophersports.com/news/2005/3/27/Gophers_Win_Second_Straight_NCAA_Championship Accessed 8/1/2025.

⁹²⁵ Blount, Rachel. “From Dream to Team...in just a few months.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 8, 2024, pC1.

Cup, she never lost sight of the goal, which was women's hockey finally getting the respect and attention it deserved.

In August of 2025, it was announced that a Minnesota Hockey Hall of Fame was in the works. Recognizing that Minnesota needed an opportunity to celebrate and highlight its own amazing hockey history, the organization hopes to break ground in June of 2026 in Inver Grove Heights.⁹²⁶ They'll probably succeed, as arriving young, moving fast, and succeeding impressively has been the lifelong story of their Chief Executive Officer, Eagan's Natalie Darwitz.

⁹²⁶ Myers, Jess. "New Hall of Fame planned to celebrate hockey in Minnesota." *Pioneer Press*. August 21, 2025. <https://www.twincities.com/2025/08/21/xxx-not-ready-xxx-new-hall-of-fame-planned-to-celebrate-hockey-in-minnesota/>. Accessed 8/21/2025.

Second Intermission: The Time is Now for this Family to Unite

While fears about “professionalism” in sports were settled for men long before questions of varsity play for women even arose, the road to true professional sports was not perfectly straightforward for men either. In the middle of the twentieth century, men who played realized that they were putting their bodies and lives on the line largely to enrich owners.

The NBA was the first to unionize as the National Basketball Players Association (NBPA) in 1954, though the union would not be formally recognized by the league until 1964. That year Bob Cousy, Tom Heinsohn, and Oscar Robertson convinced the chosen All-Stars to threaten a boycott of the first televised All-Star game if the league didn’t agree to basics like a minimum wage, per diem, health benefits, and a pension plan.⁹²⁷ The National Football League Players Association (NFLPA) formed in 1956 with demands for basics like safety equipment and cleaned uniforms.⁹²⁸ Baseball attempted to unionize four times, with the Brotherhood of Professional Base Ball Players in 1885, the Players’ Protective Association in 1900, the Fraternity of Professional Baseball Players of America in 1912, and the American Baseball Guild in 1946. All of these efforts failed, but in 1965 a group of players sought the aid of United Steelworkers of America economist Marvin Miller, who helped them form the Major League Baseball Players Association, seeking basic employment rights as in other professions.⁹²⁹ Men’s hockey had one of the biggest struggles, as early attempts to unionize in the 1950s were met with blatant union busting through aggressive firing. Finally, in 1967, president Bob Pulford and executive director Alan Eagleson successfully leveraged Canadian labor laws to get the NHL to recognize the National Hockey League Players Association.⁹³⁰ All of these efforts came well after the men’s leagues themselves were well established.

In contrast, the current Professional Women’s Hockey League (PWHL) was established union first. In 2019, the players, coaches, general managers, and the founder of the Canadian Women’s Hockey League (CWHL) were suddenly informed that the league was folding in a conference call with the board one week after their championship. The lack of notice and transparency around the decision created a host of bad feelings and stress among many of the players. While the five-team National Women’s Hockey League (NWHL) still existed in the US, and some discussions around expanding were had, the future for women’s hockey, especially in Canada, was uncertain. The NWHL’s opaque finances were also a cause for concern. By May, more than 200 players—including major stars like the United States’ Kendall Coyne Schofield and Canada’s Marie Philip-Poulin—announced a boycott of the professional game. Until professional women’s hockey could meet bare minimum standards for player compensation and stability, the most well-known women in hockey would not play.⁹³¹ In a statement concurrently released on social media, the players explained that

We are fortunate to be ambassadors of this game that we revere so deeply and yet, more than ever, we understand the responsibility that comes with ambassadorship: To leave this game in better shape than when we entered it...We cannot make a sustainable living playing in the current state of the professional

⁹²⁷ NBPA. “What is the NBPA and what do we do?” <https://nbpa.com/about> Accessed 5/21/2025.

⁹²⁸ NFLPA. “How the NFLPA Works.” <https://nflpa.com/about> Accessed 5/21/2025.

⁹²⁹ MLB Players. “History.” <https://www.mlbplayers.com/history> Accessed 5/21/2025.

⁹³⁰ Ross, J. Andrew. “Trust and Antitrust: The Failure of the First National Hockey League Players’ Association, 1957–1958” (*The Journal of Business and Economic History On-line*, Vol.8. 2010; NHLPA. “Frequently Asked Questions.” <https://www.nhlpa.com/the-pa/what-we-do/faq> Accessed 5/21/2025.

⁹³¹ Rutherford, Kristina. “Questions, frustration remain in wake of CWHL’s decision to fold.” Sportsnet.ca. March 31, 2019. <https://www.sportsnet.ca/hockey/nhl/questions-frustration-remain-wake-cwhls-decision-fold/> Accessed 5/21/2025; Kaplan, Emily. “Women’s hockey stars to boycott pro leagues.” ESPN. May 2, 2019. https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/26655231/women-hockey-stars-boycott-pro-leagues Accessed 6/13/2025.

game. Having no health insurance and making as low as two thousand dollars a season means players can't adequately train and prepare to play at the highest level...We may have represented different teams, leagues, and countries—but this sport is one family. And the time is now for this family to unite...It's time for a long-term viable professional league that will showcase the greatest product of women's professional hockey in the world.⁹³²

Whitecaps players Hannah Brandt, Lee Stecklein, and Kendall Coyne-Schofield were among the women who joined in boycott and the newly formed Professional Women's Hockey Players Association (PWHPA). Brandt told the *Star Tribune* that "We want to put the best women's ice hockey product on the ice for the fans, but we need support in order to make that a reality."⁹³³ Speaking to ESPN, Toronto player Sarah Nurse explained that while everyone understood the pay gap and pay equity would take time, the issues of professionalism were more important. Teams regularly practiced late into the night with ice times starting at 9:30pm, had to travel to away games without any medical staff, and held players responsible for their own laundry and supplies like tape. With a salary cap of \$100,000, teams like the Whitecaps were paying the 25 women on their roster an average of \$4,000 for the season, with many players making far less. While the NWHL did offer catastrophic insurance for hockey related injuries, players had to hold down separate full time jobs to have preventative and standard medical care. Boston player Alyssa Gagliardi spoke to the frustration of professional women's hockey being unable to provide the level of resources NCAA teams were given, and that the quality of play necessarily suffered when women couldn't be dedicated to training because they had to support themselves in other ways.⁹³⁴

Billie Jean King, who had founded both the Women's Tennis Association and the Women's Sports Foundation, and her wife Ilana Kloss joined the players in an advisory role after a call from Kendall Coyne Schofield asking for advice.⁹³⁵ Budweiser, Adidas, and Dunkin' Donuts also stepped up to sponsor the Association and a barnstorming tour, called the "Dream Gap Tour," to showcase women's hockey around the country. Some women, like the Whitecaps Allie Thunstrom, chose to continue to play in the NWHL, and reported that the players on both sides of the boycott supported each other, though NWHL staff, like commissioner Dani Rylan, indicated some anger from administration. Between the remaining league and the Dream Gap Tour, players thought there was potential for building momentum and benefitting everyone. Some players hoped that the NHL might see fit to partner with a new women's league, following the same model as the professional basketball and soccer leagues, who share staffing resources for mutual benefit. The NHL did provide financial support to the CWHL and NWHL, and continued to support the NWHL with the funds allotted for both leagues after the CWHL folded.⁹³⁶

⁹³² *Statement of the Professional Women's Hockey Players Association*. May 2, 2019. As posted by member Hilary Knight at <https://x.com/HilaryKnight/status/1123965390747525121> and others simultaneously. Accessed 6/13/2025.

⁹³³ Johnson, Randy. "Whitecaps standouts and other Olympians won't play until demands are met." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. May 3, 2019. Archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20240119150521/https://www.startribune.com/lee-stecklein-hannah-brandt-among-whitecaps-saying-no-to-pro-hockey-until-demands-are-met/509384562/?refresh=true> Accessed 6/13/2025.

⁹³⁴ Kaplan, Emily. "Sorting out the current landscape of professional women's hockey." ESPN. September 20, 2019. https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/27643375/sorting-current-landscape-professional-women-hockey Accessed 6/13/2025; Elite Prospects "Minnesota Whitecaps 2018-2019 Roster." <https://www.eliteprospects.com/team/19483/minnesota-whitecaps/2018-2019> Accessed 6/14/2025.

⁹³⁵ Zgoda, Jerry. "Team Captain, PWHL pioneer." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 27, 2024, pC1.

⁹³⁶ McKenzie, Bob. "More than 200 players call for overhaul of women's pro hockey." TSN.ca. May 2, 2019. <https://www.tsn.ca/more-than-200-players-call-for-overhaul-of-women-s-pro-hockey-1.1299658> Accessed 6/14/2025; Kaplan, Emily. "Sorting out the current landscape of professional women's hockey." ESPN. September 20, 2019. https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/27643375/sorting-current-landscape-professional-women-hockey Accessed 6/13/2025; Ingemi, Marisa. "Women's pro hockey leagues with no

After a year complicated by the Covid-19 pandemic, both the PWHPA and the NWHL made significant strides towards the future players wanted. The NWHL made efforts to better support players. They doubled the salary cap in 2021, after an influx of private ownership and rebranding as the Premier Hockey Federation (PHF), and then more than doubled it again in 2022.⁹³⁷ On May 24, 2022, news leaked that the PWHPA had signed a letter of intent with Billie Jean King Enterprises and the Mark Walter Group to explore launching a new league. Scotiabank and Deloitte had both been brought in to develop a business plan.⁹³⁸ While the PHF announced that the salary cap would again double for the 2023-2024 season, by June of 2023 news leaked that the Mark Walter Group had acquired assets of the PHF in a sale. With the PWHPA officially certified as a union, the establishment of a collective bargaining agreement was the last step towards the formation of a completely new league.⁹³⁹

On July 2, 2023, the day after player representative Kendall Coyne Schofield gave birth to her first child, the PWHPA unanimously ratified that collective bargaining agreement between the NWHL and the players, now to be called the Professional Women's Hockey League Players Association (PWHLPA).⁹⁴⁰ Effective August 1, 2023 through July 31, 2031, the agreement established a baseline for professionalism. It also introduced a minimum wage, a requirement that no fewer than six players on each team must be signed to a three-year contract at essentially at least twice that wage, and, unusually, a salary average rather than a salary cap. Players were guaranteed insurance and paid parental leave for either adoption or birth, by either the player or their partner. It established concussion protocols and medical care. The contract also explicitly protected participation in the Olympics and International Ice Hockey Federation tournaments through a scheduling block.⁹⁴¹

PHF players, who did not have their own union, were informed that their contracts were being voided, and that if their careers did not continue with the new league, they would be eligible for a severance package. Rumors swirled that Minnesota might not get a team in the new league, as the team was the most regionally isolated of the former PHF teams. Players were startled by the timing, as the PHF had been actively signing two-year contracts—including contracts with Eagan's Natalie Snodgrass and Lakeville's Maggie Flaherty—just days prior to the change. Despite the confusing timeline, players seemed eager to support the new league, with women

communication as season nears." *The Boston Herald*. Boston, Massachusetts. September 7, 2019.

<https://www.bostonherald.com/2019/09/07/womens-pro-hockey-leagues-with-no-communication-as-season-nears/> Accessed 6/20/2025.

⁹³⁷ "NWHL to double Salary Cap in Season Seven." Our Sports Central. April 28, 2021.

<https://www.oursportscentral.com/services/releases/nwhl-to-double-salary-cap-in-season-seven/n-5684979> Accessed 6/20/2025;

Associated Press. "Premier Hockey Federation to more than double salary cap, add expansion franchises." ESPN.com. January 18, 2022.

https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/33091153/premier-hockey-federation-increase-salary-cap-add-franchises-boost-women-hockey Accessed 6/20/2025; Wawrow, John. "NWHL Rebrands to Premier Hockey Federation Entering 7th Year." NBC New York. September 7, 2021. <https://www.nbcnewyork.com/news/sports/nwhl-rebrands-premier-hockey-federation-entering-7th-year/3258432/> Accessed 6/20/2025.

⁹³⁸ Salvian, Hailey. "PWHPA, Billie Jean King Enterprises exploring starting women's hockey league: Source." *The New York Times*. New York, New York. May 24, 2022. <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/3490779/2022/05/24/pwhpa-billie-jean-king-enterprises-exploring-starting-womens-hockey-league-source/> Accessed 6/20/2025

⁹³⁹ Salvian, Hailey. "PHF doubling salary cap for 2023-24 season, increasing to \$1.5 million." *The Athletic*. December 14, 2022. Archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20221215000016/https://theathletic.com/4000426/2022/12/14/premier-hockey-federation-salary-cap/> Accessed 6/20/2025; "Sources: Premier Hockey Federation sale could unite women's hockey." ESPN. June 29, 2023.

https://www.espn.com/nhl/story/_/id/37937093/premier-hockey-federation-sale-unite-women-hockey Accessed 6/20/2025.

⁹⁴⁰ Zgoda, Jerry. "Team Captain, PWHL pioneer." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 27, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁴¹ *Collective Bargaining Agreement between Professional Women's Hockey League and Professional Women's Hockey League Players Association*. Ratified July 2, 2023; Burgess, Melissa. "Highlights & Comparables of the PWHLPA Collective Bargaining Agreement." Victorypress.org. July 8, 2023. <https://victorypress.org/2023/07/08/highlights-comparables-of-the-pwhlpa-collective-bargaining-agreement/> Accessed 6/20/2025.

like Edina's Anna Klein telling the *Duluth News Tribune* that "this will, in the end, benefit women's hockey. Looking at it from that perspective, I think is important."⁹⁴²

In late July, league representative and former director of women's hockey for Team USA, Reagan Carey, sought to reassure Minnesota:

There aren't too many arguments [against] that in hockey, Minnesota—and specifically for girls and women's hockey—is the backbone of the nation in terms of growth and development, from youth to high schools to Division I and its long-standing presence at the pro level. I would imagine Minnesota continues to be a strong market and influence, and in this new league, everything is still on the table.⁹⁴³

On August 29, 2023, the league made it official. Along with Boston, New York, Toronto, Ottawa, and Montreal, team Minnesota was named as one of the inaugural six teams of the Professional Women's Hockey League.⁹⁴⁴ It was time to take the ice.

⁹⁴² Wellens, Matt. "Bulldog alums react to slippery pro situation." *The Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. July 2, 2023, pA6; Myers, Jess. "New pro women's hockey league's formation leaves Whitecaps' future in limbo." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. July 5, 2023, p11.

⁹⁴³ Shipley, John. "Don't count Minnesota out of new pro hockey league." *West Central Tribune*. Willmar, Minnesota. July 26, 2023, p14.

⁹⁴⁴ Silverman, Alex. "PWHL announces plans for inaugural season." *Sports Business Journal*. August 29, 2023.
<https://www.sportsbusinessjournal.com/Articles/2023/08/29/pwhl-launch/> Accessed 6/20/2025.

Third Period: Professional, with a Minnesota flavor.

The Professional Women's Hockey League/Ligue Professionnelle de Hockey Féminin (PWHL/LPHF) came off the bench in August of 2023 with a bold statement: just like the NHL in 1942, the women would have their own "Original Six." Minnesota, Montréal, Toronto, Ottawa, Boston, and New York would begin the league, but they were only going to be the start, and they'd be playing by January.⁹⁴⁵ Writing for the *Star Tribune*, Rachel Blount declared that "the basics—and more importantly, the money—are in place to launch the most viable, polished pro league in the history of the women's game," citing the patronage of Mark and Kimbra Walter, a leadership and board of directors experienced with pro-sports—including executive vice president of hockey operations and former Team Canada player Jayna Hefford—the collective bargaining agreement, and the consulting relationship with the NHL as the evidence.⁹⁴⁶

On September 2, 2023, the league announced that Natalie Darwitz had accepted the position of general manager for the Minnesota franchise, and that the team had won the lottery for the first pick of the inaugural draft. Other general managers in the league included Danielle Marmer for Boston, Danièle Sauvageau for Montréal, Pascal Daoust for New York, Michael Hirshfeld for Ottawa, and Gina Kingsbury for Toronto. Darwitz promised to sign the best possible team, but with a "Minnesota flavor," recognizing that Minnesotans would show up for their home-grown favorites. She told the press that she hadn't

slept for a good month, just because of the excitement and how special this is to me. We didn't have this opportunity [before]. So to now be a part of it, in a different route than we dreamed about as little girls, I could not pass it up. I'm super grateful and excited that I get to lead the Minnesota team.⁹⁴⁷

During a ten-day free agency period in which general managers were allowed to sign up to three players to their rosters, Darwitz stuck to the local heroes plan. She signed Lee Stecklein, Kendall Coyne Schofield, and Kelly Pannek, all three Olympic medalists and IIHF world champions. Stecklein and Coyne Schofield were both members of the Minnesota Whitecap's 2019 Isobel Cup winning squad, and Plymouth's Pannek and Roseville's Stecklein were both local high school and University of Minnesota stars.⁹⁴⁸ Roseau's Charlie Burggraf, who had previously coached Darwitz while she was at the U of M, was announced as head coach.⁹⁴⁹ Lieksa, Finland's Mira Jalosuo—a U of M alumni—and St. Paul's Jake Bobrowski were named assistant coaches. Both had previously worked as assistant coaches for Darwitz at Hamline University.⁹⁵⁰

In the lead up to the draft, it was speculated that Minnesota's first pick would go to Taylor Heise, a Lake City native and former Ms. Hockey winner. In college, she was a two-time First Team All-American and Patty Kazmaier Award winning forward for the U of M under Darwitz's positional coaching, and was the IIHF

⁹⁴⁵ Shipley, John. "Minnesota makes cut for women's hockey league's 'Original Six.'" For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted in the *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. August 30, 2023, pB11.

⁹⁴⁶ Blount, Rachel. "Minnesota team is one of six in new pro league." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 30, 2023, pC2.

⁹⁴⁷ Blount, Rachel. "Darwitz to lead PWHL team." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 2, 2023, pC4.

⁹⁴⁸ Shipley, John. "Minnesota's PWHL team adds three free agents." For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted by the *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. September 7, 2023, p15; "Three with Minnesota ties sign with women's hockey team." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 7, 2023, pC2.

⁹⁴⁹ "Burggraf will coach PWHL team." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 16, 2023, pC3.

⁹⁵⁰ Shipley, John. "PWHL team may select former Gopher Taylor Heise." For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted by the *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. September 18, 2023, p10; "Jake Bobrowski." University of Minnesota Coaching Staff page. <https://gophersports.com/sports/womens-ice-hockey/roster/coaches/jake-bobrowski/2535>. Accessed 8/5/2025; "Mira Jalosuo." St. Cloud State Coaching Staff page. <https://scsuhuskies.com/sports/womens-ice-hockey/roster/coaches/mira-jalosuo/8060>. Accessed 8/5/2025.

tournament MVP during Team USA's 2022 silver medal run.⁹⁵¹ On September 18, 2023, Heise went first in Toronto, and told CBC's livestream that "It's my home. Everyone I love is there...I'm just honored that I'm going to be able to play and to show little girls that anything is possible if you keep working hard." Billie Jean King announced the pick. Walking the purple carpet before a crowd of little girls, Heise told the press she remembered doing the same as a kid when Team USA and Team Canada would meet in Minnesota. "I remember standing and waiting for an hour for autographs...I want them to know [playing professional hockey] is an opportunity too," she said. Before the draft ended, Heise was back on a plane to Minnesota to make a 10am training session at Ridder Arena.⁹⁵²

With their other fourteen draft picks, the team chose six more Minnesota women (Excelsior's Grace Zumwinkle, Lakeville's Maggie Flaherty, Chanhassen's Sidney Morin, Wayzata's Sophia Kunin Shaver, Mound's Liz Schepers, and North Oaks' Sydney Brodt), three other Americans (Littleton, CO's Nicole Hensley, Fairport, NY's Natalie Buchbinder, and Anchorage, AK's Clair DeGeorge), two Finnish players (Laitila's Susanna Tapani and Helsinki's Minttu Tuominen), two Ontario based Canadians (Kingston's Amanda Leveille, and Thunder Bay's Michela Cava) and one Czech player (Horní Cerekev's Denisa Krížová, pronounced "Shish-oh-vah"). Many of the choices had additional Minnesota ties: Heise, Leveille, and Zumwinkle played for the University of Minnesota, Flaherty, Brodt, Morin, and Cava attended the University of Minnesota Duluth (UMD), and DeGeorge skated for Shattuck St. Mary's and then Bemidji State. Morin, Leveille, Brodt, Krížová and Schepers were all former Minnesota Whitecaps. DeGeorge had settled in Rochester while working as a Mayo Clinic nurse, and Hensley, who played for Team USA in the 2018 and 2022 Olympics, had made Minnesota her home since 2020.⁹⁵³

Women with Minnesota ties were selected across the draft. Vadnais Height's Hannah Brandt and Blaine's Emily Brown were selected by Boston, Elk River's Madison Bizal went to Montréal, Roger's Paetyn Levis was chosen by New York, and Lino Lake's Gabbie Hughes, a UMD alumni, was picked by Ottawa. Five additional UMD alumni were drafted, with Jocelyne Larocque chosen by Toronto, Ashton Bell and Katerina Mrazova headed to Ottawa, and Emma Soderberg and Jess Healey Boston-bound. Minnesota Whitecaps players Amanda Boulier and Olivia Knowles went to Ottawa and Toronto respectively.⁹⁵⁴

In the lead up to training camp, which was scheduled to begin on November 15, Taylor Heise took time to meet with girl's youth league in Kasson, MN. "Community engagement is huge," she told the *Rochester Post Bulletin*, reminiscing about college players she had looked up to for visiting during her own youth hockey years.⁹⁵⁵ During this time, Park Rapid's McKenna Brand, Warroad's Gigi Marvin, Eagan's Lauren Bench and Natalie Snodgrass,

⁹⁵¹ Shipley, John. "Minnesota's PWHL team adds three free agents." For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted by the *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. September 7, 2023, p15; Shipley, John. "PWHL team may select former Gopher Taylor Heise." For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted by the *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. September 18, 2023, p10.

⁹⁵² Shipley, John. "Minnesota picks Heise first in PWHL draft." For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted by the *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. September 19, 2023, p14; Zgoda, Jerry. "Minnesota takes Heise first overall." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 19, 2023, pC1; Shipley, John. "Being 1st pick makes Taylor Heise hungrier." For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted by the *Pine & Lakes Echo Journal*. Brainerd, Minnesota. September 20, 2023, pXB3.

⁹⁵³ Shipley, John. "Minnesota picks Heise first in PWHL draft." For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted by the *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. September 19, 2023, p14; Zgoda, Jerry. "Minnesota takes Heise first overall." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 19, 2023, pC1; Feldman, Jason. "Heise makes more hockey history." *Rochester Post Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. September 20, 2023, p6.

⁹⁵⁴ Wellens, Matt. "Bell, Hughes reunited as UMD all over PWHL draft." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. September 20, 2023, pB1; "2023 PWHL Draft Live Page." Archived at <https://web.archive.org/web/20230919133728/https://www.thepwhl.com/2023-draft>. Accessed 8/5/2025.

⁹⁵⁵ Feldman, Jason. "Lake City's Heise, No. 1 pick in PWHL Draft, coming to Kasson." *Rochester Post Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. October 4, 2023, p6; Feldman, Jason. "Heise brings challenges, encouragement to Dodge County." *Rochester Post Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. October 18, 2023, p5;

Andover's Claire Butorac and Maddie Rooney, and Bloomington's Nikki Nightengale all signed contracts or received invitations to training camps across the league.⁹⁵⁶

The preparation in the offices of the league was proceeding at a breakneck pace. The PWHL unveiled the league logo, with the crossed hockey sticks and puck forming the large W in "PWHL," in late October, more than a month after the draft.⁹⁵⁷ Speculation was rampant about potential team names, schedules, and venues. In Minnesota, general manager Natalie Darwitz frantically unpacked equipment—at least one shipment arrived at TRIA rink while she and a few staff members were alone—and furnished practice spaces, which she acknowledged wasn't normal for a general manager. She reassured concerned friends that it would be a good memory someday. PWHL board member Stan Kasten also described the rush, but explained that "We weren't going to put [the inaugural season] off another year. We made that commitment to the players, who have been fighting for so long. But to speed things up, that obviously cost us everything being perfect on day one...I'm proud of what we've done."⁹⁵⁸

In mid-November, 28 players descended on Tria Rink in St. Paul to compete for the 23 and two reserve spots on Minnesota's roster. They walked in to find Darwitz herself sweeping the locker room. "Natalie never got a chance to play in a league like this, but she's making sure the opportunity that's here today is as good as it can be for this generation of players. That means so much," player Kendall Coyne Schofield told the *Star Tribune*.⁹⁵⁹

Coach Charlie Buggraf and Darwitz took the final roster selections slowly, though Kelly Pannek, Grace Zumwinkle, Taylor Heise, Nicole Hensley, Kendall Coyne Schofield, Lee Stecklein, and Susanna Tapani all signed officially heading into camp. The roster was scheduled to be finalized after a series of evaluation scrimmages in New York in early December.⁹⁶⁰ Even as she found some of the moments bittersweet—"just thinking back to the Krissy Wendells, the Curtin sisters, the Brodts, how much we all would have relished in this," she told Dean Spiros during one practice session—Darwitz was excited for the season.⁹⁶¹ Speaking to Chip Scoggins, she spoke about the parity of talent spread across the small league

Sometimes when you turn on the Olympics and you're watching women's hockey for the first time, you're like, it's 10-0. There's not going to be any 10-0 games [in the PWHL]. The product on the ice is going to be phenomenal. It's the best players in the world.⁹⁶²

On November 28, the league announced that Minnesota had secured the Xcel Energy Center as PWHL Minnesota's home ice, and that they'd open their season with an away game at the Tsongas Center v. Boston on January 3, followed by a home opener v. Montréal on January 6. Jayna Hefford, the league vice president of hockey operations, gave general manager Natalie Darwitz and her deep ties in the Minnesota hockey

⁹⁵⁶ 2024 Preseason Rosters. <https://www.thepwhl.com/en/stats/roster/1/7> Accessed 6/1/2025.

⁹⁵⁷ "The newly launched..." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. October 25, 2023, pC2.

⁹⁵⁸ Blount, Rachel. "Training camp underway for still-unnamed Minnesota team." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 16, 2023, pC6; Blount, Rachel. "From Dream to Team...in just a few months." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 8, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁵⁹ Blount, Rachel. "From Dream to Team...in just a few months." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 8, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁶⁰ Blount, Rachel. "Training camp underway for still-unnamed Minnesota team." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 16, 2023, pC6.

⁹⁶¹ Spiros, Dean. "In new pro league, Darwitz finds 'my calling.'" For the *Pioneer Press*, reprinted in the *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 12, 2023, p9.

⁹⁶² Scoggins, Chip. "PWHL built to succeed with wealthy owners, star talent." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 17, 2023, pC2.

community credit for making the team the only franchise with an NHL venue for the full first season.⁹⁶³ A few days later, the league released a full schedule, with two breaks for international play built into the season.⁹⁶⁴ Before the season began, they announced that games would be streamed on the PWHL's YouTube channel and that Canadian viewers would also be able to watch over TSN, Canadian Broadcasting Corp., and Sportsnet.⁹⁶⁵

In the final rosters, twenty Minnesota women were selected to play in the regular season, the league's second largest origin group after Ontario. Across the league, Gabbie Hughes and Natalie Snodgrass signed with Ottawa, Hannah Brandt, Emily Brown, Gigi Marvin and Sidney Morin joined Boston, Paetyn Levis committed to New York, and Madison Bizal made it official with Montréal. In Minnesota, Lauren Bench, Sydney Brodt, Claire Butorac, Maggie Flaherty, Taylor Heise, Sophia Kunin, Nikki Nightengale, Kelley Pannek, Maddie Rooney, Liz Schepers, Lee Stecklein, and Grace Zumwinkle stayed to play for their home state.⁹⁶⁶ Darwitz would explain later in the season, "I'm really proud that our roster is heavily Minnesota and Midwest-based. We believe great talent is in our backyard, and that's only going to grow our organization. That's really important to us."⁹⁶⁷ Joining them in the final PWHL Minnesota lineup were Brooke Bryant, Natalie Buchbinder, Michela Cava, Melissa Channell-Watkins, Abby Cook, Kendall Coyne Schofield, Clair DeGeorge, Brittyn Fleming, Emma Greco, Nicole Hensley, Dominique Kremer, Denisa Krížová, Amanda Leveille, and Susanna Tapani.⁹⁶⁸

During the holidays, Minnesota coach Charlie Buggraf resigned for personal reasons, and Darwitz expressed sadness and appreciation for all he had done for the team over the last two months. Former NHL player and women's US National team coach Ken Klee, who had previously interviewed for both the general manager and coaching positions, took over as head coach a week before Minnesota's first game. While the timing wasn't ideal, Klee was pleased with the team and felt ready for the season, and Darwitz called the situation "a little shot of adrenaline," she hoped would help the team succeed.⁹⁶⁹

In the opening game of the league on New Year's Day, 2024, New York met Toronto at the Mattamy Athletic Centre in Toronto before a sold-out crowd of 2,537 fans. Ella Shelton scored the first goal in the league, and the eventual game winning goal, for New York in a 4-0 shutout.⁹⁷⁰ Two days later, in the first game played in the US, Minnesota came flying off the bench. In front of a crowd of 3,552 at the Tsongas Center they beat Boston 3-2. Taylor Heise scored the first goal for Minnesota at 3:58 in the first period, with Sophia Kunin and Grace Zumwinkle making Minnesota's other two goals. Despite Boston outshooting Minnesota 35-16, Nicole Hensley's 33 saves won the day.⁹⁷¹

⁹⁶³ Blount, Rachel. "Minnesota's franchise..." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 29, 2023, pC2; Blount, Rachel. "From Dream to Team...in just a few months." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 8, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁶⁴ Blount, Rachel. "PWHL team releases full schedule." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 1, 2023, pC6.

⁹⁶⁵ Zgoda, Jerry. "What to know about the new Professional Women's Hockey League." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 1, 2024, pC2.

⁹⁶⁶ 2024 Regular Season Rosters. <https://www.thepwhl.com/en/stats/roster/1/7> Accessed 6/1/2025.

⁹⁶⁷ Blount, Rachel. "Bringing cup home makes all feel real." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 1, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁶⁸ 2024 Regular Season Rosters. <https://www.thepwhl.com/en/stats/roster/1/7> Accessed 6/1/2025.

⁹⁶⁹ Spiros, Dean. "Minnesota women open PWHL play Wednesday." For the *Pioneer Press*, reprinted in the *Rochester Post Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. January 3, 2024, p12; Zgoda, Jerry. "Before first league game, a coaching move." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 3, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁷⁰ Keating, Steve. "PWHL launch gives women a league of their own." For *Reuters*, published in the *Rochester Post Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. January 2, 2024, p27.

⁹⁷¹ Blount, Rachel. "New era in women's hockey off to perfect start." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 4, 2024, pC1.

After a few days of video review and refining, Minnesota was ready to do the home crowd proud.⁹⁷² The front office had to open more seating sections after a surge of sales. Speaking to Rachel Blount, Kendall Coyne Schofield brought home the message of playing at the Xcel:

Young girls and young boys can come here and watch the Wild one night, and the PWHL Minnesota the next night. And both of them can have the same dream of being a professional hockey player. When we come out [Saturday], that's what's going to resonate with me.⁹⁷³

13,316 fans were right there with her. A record-breaking crowd for any women's professional hockey game that had come before, the State of Hockey was lining up at the doors before 1pm. Dressed in Gophers and Wild gear, or in anything close to the purple color assigned to the team they could find, and carrying homemade signs, they filled the lower bowl of the Xcel Center, as well as parts of the club and upper-deck sections. Girl hockey players and their families came in droves, a demographic that had been courted, but that showed up in number far beyond expectations. Whole team rosters booked blocks of tickets and sat together in uniform from all over the state. They "jumped and danced and screamed." They chanted "Minn-e-so-ta!" And they celebrated wildly as their own Grace Zumwinkle nailed a hat trick and Maddie Rooney sealed the shutout. The 3-0 victory over Montréal was the first and only home-opening win for a team in the league.⁹⁷⁴

Within days, Minnesotans were throwing out opinions on team names and asking for merchandise—one writer to the *Star Tribune*, Mark Grimes of Minneapolis, insisted that, after hearing "Minnesota Superior" floated as an option, a more Minnesotan choice would be the "Not-so-Bads."⁹⁷⁵ As PWHL Minnesota continued to be the only undefeated team through the first two weeks, Judith Monson assured the league that, as they could be "trusted to name snowplows and a baby giraffe," Minnesotans should weigh in on the name.⁹⁷⁶

While stars like Taylor Heise started to take a breath and play their best, fans across the state were thrilled.⁹⁷⁷ Gopher hockey player Madeline Wethington—a member of the Brodt hockey family—told the *Daily Delivery* podcast that,

It's been super exciting to see the support so many people have had, and it's awesome to see so many little girls in the stands. Having them have the dream to have the opportunity to play professional hockey...it's just going to make the game grow even more.⁹⁷⁸

Game attendance had, expectedly, dropped from the record setting opening night, but PWHL Minnesota still brought in more than 5,000 spectators per game, and had the league-high average attendance at 8,658. Kendall Coyne Schofield, who had played for the Minnesota Whitecaps and was used to driving into downtown St. Paul for a game, was blown away by all the "Event Parking Here" signs needed for the level of traffic the games brought in. Across the league, 50,856 fans had attended the first ten games, and 25,974 of those had been at

⁹⁷² Spiros, Dean. "First PWHL game in Minnesota will be a monumental event." For the *Pioneer Press*, reprinted in the *Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. January 6, 2024, p21.

⁹⁷³ Blount, Rachel. "Ready to bring their dream home." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 6, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁷⁴ Orrick, Dave. "PWHL hits home for fans." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 7, 2024, pB1; Blount, Rachel. "Zumwinkle's hat trick leads Minnesota before 13, 316 at X." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 7, 2024, pC1; Scoggins, Chip. "New team's home opener was a game to remember for everyone." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 7, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁷⁵ Grimes, Mark. "Letter to the Editor: Aw, Shucks." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 10, 2024, pA6.

⁹⁷⁶ Monson, Judith. "Thanks, and a thought." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 15, 2024, pA8; Blount, Rachel. "At least one team doing well at home." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 14, 2024, pC3.

⁹⁷⁷ Blount, Rachel. "Minnesota remains new-season perfect." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 11, 2024, pC1;

⁹⁷⁸ Daily Delivery. "Worth Repeating." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 14, 2024, pC2.

Minnesota's three games alone. Intentionally marketing to girls' teams in particular, PWHL Minnesota ensured crowds who came in ready to cheer, and then gave them something to cheer for.⁹⁷⁹

January 18, PWHL Minnesota grabbed another first in league history, with the first overtime win against PWHL Ottawa. After falling two goals behind early on, Susanna Tapani got Minnesota on the board, and Grace Zumwinkle got the tie on a pass from Kelly Pannek. Tapani then scored the game winning goal in overtime.⁹⁸⁰ Zumwinkle, who was quickly becoming a fan favorite, told the *Star Tribune*,

It's just so cool to see everything come full circle. The buy in from the Wild and everyone else in the state has been truly so special for all of us...Now to have girls coming to our games and for them to be able to dream of this, something they can obtain, is something that is very cool for our sport.⁹⁸¹

Minnesota's goal tending tandem, Nicole Hensley and Maddie Rooney, were drawing early accolades as well.⁹⁸² The January winning streak did not last, a disappointment for locals but a sign of the depth and talent across the entire league. PWHL Montréal handed the team their first 2-1 loss in front of a crowd of 5,001 at home. Speaking to the press, Klee and the team focused on all the ways they could and would improve. "It's right there," Klee told the *Star Tribune*, "I look every game: Are we generating chances? Are we doing the things we're supposed to do? For the most part, we are...I can't complain with our effort or our go. I just need some people to relax a little bit and [score]."⁹⁸³

Abby Boreen, a former Gopher player from Somerset, Wisconsin, joined the team on January 24 to replace an injured Amanda Leveille. The team traded wins and losses into the first international break of the season, when teams split for the USA/Canada Rivalry Series.⁹⁸⁴ Heading into the break, Kendall Coyne Schofield was thrilled about the shift in discourse thanks to the league:

For a long time, we talked about us and Canada, us and Canada, us and Canada. But we're not talking about that anymore. We're talking about professional hockey and what city you represent, what championship you want to bring to your city. Every night it's just great hockey and that's what we've waited for for so long.⁹⁸⁵

While many of the women themselves were playing for Team USA or Team Canada, the administrative teams were adding another first for the league to Minnesota's accomplishments. In a three-player deal announced on February 11, PWHL Minnesota traded Susanna Tapani and Abby Cook to PWHL Boston, in exchange for 2023 Patty Kazmaier winner Sophie Jaques. The move had not originally been planned, but had sprung out of a conversation between Minnesota GM Natalie Darwitz and Boston GM Danielle Marmer who realized there was a move that could mutually benefit their rosters. Jaques had previously played with Liz Schepers and Clair DeGeorge, and felt like a perfect fit. Coach Ken Klee, who himself had been traded twice in his NHL career,

⁹⁷⁹ Blount, Rachel. "Drawing board to Drawing Crowds." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 17, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁸⁰ "Tapani tallies two for PWHL Minnesota in OT win." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 18, 2024, pC4.

⁹⁸¹ Souhan, Jim. "Zumwinkle on PWHL's impact." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 21, 2024, pC2.

⁹⁸² Blount, Rachel. "Clash between top two teams in league." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 24, 2024, pC5.

⁹⁸³ Blount, Rachel. "Drawing board to Drawing Crowds." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 17, 2024, pC1; Spiros, Dean. "Minnesota's power-play struggles prove quite costly in 2-1 loss to Montreal." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. January 25, 2024, p13; Zgoda, Jerry. "Payback for home opener." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 25, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁸⁴ The Rink Live. "Boston beats Minnesota in overtime." *Alexandria Echo Press*. Alexandria, Minnesota. January 28, 2024, pXB3; Wolf, Sydney. "OT goal propels PWHL Minnesota past New York." *Bemidji Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. January 29, 2024, pXB3; Wolf, Sydney. "Spooner's big afternoon lifts Toronto over Minnesota." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 4, 2024, p8; "Limping into an extended break after Saturday slide." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 4, 2024, pC5.

⁹⁸⁵ Zgoda, Jerry. "Most storied rivalry returns to St. Paul." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 11, 2024, pC8.

reassured the fans that “this is pro sports.”⁹⁸⁶ The newly configured lineup immediately came out and won their next game.⁹⁸⁷

A few days later, in a ringing endorsement of women’s hockey as a whole, Toronto and Montréal met at Scotiabank Arena and set a new all-time attendance record of 19,285.⁹⁸⁸ Headed into the middle of the short season, PWHL Minnesota won some and lost quite a few in a fairly noticeable slump after Taylor Heise went out with an injury from the Rivalry series, but did get to experience a sold-out crowd of 10,172 at Place Bell in Montréal.⁹⁸⁹ At the end of February the league announced that playoff positioning would be by selection: the top team would choose its semi-finals opponent out of the bottom two qualifying teams. In addition, eliminated teams would accumulate points towards their position in the draft by winning after their point of elimination, incentivizing play for the teams that fell behind.⁹⁹⁰

In March, Minnesota saw a bit of a comeback after Taylor Heise returned, with victories over New York and Ottawa, the latter being the franchise’s first shootout win. “I thought every line was good today,” Klee said after the shootout victory, which included the first goals of the season from Denisa Krížová, “I was really happy with the effort.”⁹⁹¹ Nicole Hensley recorded her first shutout of the season next against Boston, putting Minnesota in a three-way tie for the top of the league with Montréal and Toronto.⁹⁹² A 5-1 victory over New York, with standout goals from Michela Cava—with 2—Grace Zumwinkle, Claire Butorac, and Kendall Coyne Schofield put Minnesota at the top of the league. A win against Montréal left them secure heading into the break for the IIHF Women’s Worlds.⁹⁹³

Returning to the ice on April 18, PWHL Minnesota needed just one point—a 3-point win, 2-point overtime/shootout win, or 1-point overtime/shootout loss—to clinch a playoff berth. Instead, in a devastating run oddly familiar to any fan of Minnesota’s professional men’s teams, the squad lost five games in a row in regulation time and failed to clinch a spot on their own terms.⁹⁹⁴ Fate intervened, however, and PWHL Ottawa’s loss to Toronto eliminated them from the playoffs, giving Minnesota the final spot.⁹⁹⁵

Toronto, sensing a skid, picked Minnesota as their opponents for the semi-finals.⁹⁹⁶ For the first two games, a devastating 4-0 shutout in Game 1 and a 2-0 shutout in Game 2 of the best of 5 series, their instincts seemed to be paying off.⁹⁹⁷ But then, PWHL Minnesota came home, with a message from coach Ken Klee: “we need to win one game.” Before a crowd of 3,344 Minnesota faithful, Lakeville’s Maggie Flaherty sent a powerful shot across

⁹⁸⁶ Zgoda, Jerry. “First trade proves it’s a business.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 14, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁸⁷ Spiros, Dean. “Retooled Minnesota grinds out win over Ottawa.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 15, 2024, p12.

⁹⁸⁸ “PWHL.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 17, 2024, pC6.

⁹⁸⁹ “Minnesota takes down Ottawa again in 2-1 win.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 18, 2024, p6; “PWHL’s top teams play to sellout crowd.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 19, 2024, pC2; Dorsey, Gavin. “Offense continues to slump in shutout vs. Boston.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 2024, pC2; Spiros, Dean. “Streaking Toronto thwarts slumping Minnesota in overtime.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. February 28, 2024, p16.

⁹⁹⁰ “PWHL unveils postseason format.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 29, 2024, pC5.

⁹⁹¹ The Rink Live. “Taylor Heise returns, Minnesota gets back on track with win over New York.” *Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. March 4, 2024, p40; Spiros, Dean. “Minnesota edges Ottawa.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. March 6, 2024, p16; Blount, Rachel. “Franchise’s first shootout has sweet result.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 6, 2024, pC3.

⁹⁹² Blount, Rachel. “Hensley earns her first shutout vs. Boston.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 14, 2024, pC3.

⁹⁹³ “Minnesota back alone at top of PWHL standings.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. March 17, 2024, pC7.

⁹⁹⁴ Blount, Rachel. “Playoff fate lies in Ottawa’s hands.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 5, 2024, pC2.

⁹⁹⁵ Wolf, Sydney. “Despite losing 5 straight, Minnesota makes PWHL playoffs.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 6, 2024, p13.

⁹⁹⁶ Blount, Rachel. “Minnesota gets PWHL foe: Toronto.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 7, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁹⁷ LaVaque, David. “Going scoreless in Toronto.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 9, 2024, pC3; Wolf, Sydney. “Playoff hopes looking grim as Minnesota drops Game 2 to Toronto.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 11, 2024, p37.

the ice, through multiple players, and into the net for Minnesota's first post season goal. "Maggie made a great shot through a screen and I think we all could kind of take a breath there and realize we can do this thing," Liz Schepers later told the press. Denisa Krížová quickly popped the puck into the net during a scramble for the cushion, and Maddie Rooney refused to let a single shot by in a 2-0 shutout win to keep them in the playoffs.⁹⁹⁸

Toronto player Natalie Spooner, who had been the league's leading scorer, was injured during the third period and would not return for the rest of the playoffs, though she later explained that her knee had felt wrong before she took a final hit into the boards from Grace Zumwinkle, and returned in the second season.⁹⁹⁹ Minnesota had out shot Toronto 22-9 during the first two periods, and momentum seemed to be on their side even before that unfortunate turn of events.¹⁰⁰⁰ Two days later, they held on for more than 80 minutes of scoreless play, only for Claire Butorac to score in the second overtime, tie the series, and force a Game 5.¹⁰⁰¹

After struggling with powerplays all season—the team was 5 for 61—a shift in fortune must have been felt when both Denisa Krížová and Taylor Heise scored powerplay goals. Toronto pulled their goalie in an attempt to tie it up, scoring once, but Heise and Sophia Kunin both made empty net goals to send Minnesota into the first ever Walter Cup finals against PWHL Boston. "We just tried to go one game at a time," Coach Klee told the press. "We said, 'Hey, we just got to win today, and that's it. These guys did an unbelievable job of staying with it.'"¹⁰⁰²

Game 1 of the finals series at the Tsongas Center in Boston wound up a chaotic 4-3 loss for Minnesota, in which bouncing pucks stole the show.¹⁰⁰³ Game 2, Nicole Hensley locked down her goal, while Michela Cava and Sophie Jaques, facing her former teammates, netted one and two respectively in a 3-0 victory. Press after the game focused heavily on the choice to put Hensley in net, but Ken Klee made it clear that he considered both Maddie Rooney and Hensley his inseparable, evenly ranked goaltending duo. Longtime friends and Team USA teammates, their unusual, supportive dynamic was lauded as part of the overall winning strategy for the team.¹⁰⁰⁴

Game 3 brought the team home once again. In front of 9,054 fans at the Xcel Energy Center, Taylor Heise, Sydney Brodt, Michela Cava, and Grace Zumwinkle each scored in a 4-1 victory. "I think, at the end of the day, great players step up in great moments. And this is definitely one of those," Heise told the *Star Tribune*. Heise was praised by teammates and staff for being "on a roll at the right time," as she outperformed her own regular season in the finals.¹⁰⁰⁵

⁹⁹⁸ Wolf, Sydney. "Minnesota bounces back in Game 3 against Toronto." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 14, 2024, pXB2; Blount, Rachel. "Two goals, and just in time." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 14, 2024, pC1.

⁹⁹⁹ Salvian, Haley. "Inside MVP Natalie Spooner's grueling return to the PWHL: 'I can come back from this'." *The New York Times*. New York, New York. April 13, 2025. <https://www.nytimes.com/athletic/6132519/2025/02/13/natalie-spooner-pwhl-mvp-toronto-injury-comeback/>. Accessed 7/1/2025.

¹⁰⁰⁰ Blount, Rachel. "Two goals, and just in time." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 14, 2024, pC1.

¹⁰⁰¹ Wolf, Sydney. "Minnesota wins 2OT thriller to force Game 5 against Toronto." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. May 16, 2024, p6; LaVaque, David. "Two-OT win keeps alive season for Minnesota." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 16, 2024, pC1.

¹⁰⁰² Blount, Rachel. "Minnesota completes semifinal comeback." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 18, 2024, pC1.

¹⁰⁰³ Wolf, Sydney. "Minnesota drops 1st game of PWHL finals to Boston." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 20, 2024, pXB4; Blount, Rachel. "Boston gets the lucky bounce." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 20, 2024, pC4.

¹⁰⁰⁴ Blount, Rachel. "Minnesota rebounds to even series." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 22, 2024, pC4; Blount, Rachel. "Friendship in net helps Minnesota flourish." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 24, 2024, pC1.

¹⁰⁰⁵ Wolf, Sydney. "Minnesota impresses at home in Game 3 victory over Boston." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 25, 2024, p32; Blount, Rachel. "Minnesota is one win from Walter Cup." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 25, 2024, pC2; Blount, Rachel. "Heise rises to the occasion in her PWHL rookie season." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 26, 2024, pC1.

13,104 Minnesota fans came out for Game 4, knowing a Minnesota victory could be imminent. They packed the Xcel, chanting “We want the Cup!” before the players were even introduced. Billie Jean King greeted the crowd to cheers and tears. And for one brief second in the second overtime, there was elation as it looked like Sophie Jaques had scored. But after gear was thrown and the crowd went wild, jubilation morphed into concern as a huddle of officials reviewed the goal. It was determined that there was goaltender interference, and the goal was overturned. Alina Müller scored seconds later for Boston, and the series was forced into Game 5.¹⁰⁰⁶

In the lead up to the last game, the *Star Tribune*’s Rachel Blount, whose coverage of women’s hockey had been excellent from as far back as the 1998 Olympics, pointed out that the “dramatic twist” in Game 4, and all of the drama of the inaugural season, was the sort of storyline a “league’s leaders could only dream of.” Taylor Heise agreed, saying “This is not an obstacle. It’s an honor. We get to play a championship Game 5.” Ken Klee put it bluntly, “A game 5 is great for the league and great for the sport.” And Lee Stecklein put it in perspective, “Now, it’s one game. One game with everything on the line. We’re ready for it.”¹⁰⁰⁷

The morning of Game 5 in Boston, the *Star Tribune* published multiple letters from fans asking that media and the state step up its coverage and support of women’s sports, especially when it came to the PWHL.¹⁰⁰⁸ Fans packed Minneapolis’ A Bar of Their Own to watch the game together, and countless more tuned into the livestream.¹⁰⁰⁹ And the team delivered. In a dominant performance, PWHL Minnesota decisively claimed the Cup. Nicole Hensley recorded the shutout as Liz Schepers, Kendall Coyne Schofield, and Michela Cava scored in the 3-0 victory. Taylor Heise and Michela Cava had assists. The team outshot Boston 44-17, in a full-circle reversal of the shots on goal in the first ever Minnesota game at Tsongas Center, all the way back on January 3. Taylor Heise was named the first Ilana Kloss MVP, and a few weeks later Grace Zumwinkle would be picked as Rookie of the Year.¹⁰¹⁰ The team celebrated in Boston and then flew home the next morning to cameras and signs waiting at baggage claim.¹⁰¹¹

The celebrations continued, with the Walter Cup coming to Minnesota and continuing the tradition of the Stanley Cup where each winning player got a day with it. A public celebration was held at the Xcel Center after rain canceled a downtown parade. Fans came out by the thousands anyways to get a chance to see the cup. And players prepared for change, knowing the draft was coming and one-year contracts might not be renewed.¹⁰¹²

¹⁰⁰⁶ Blount, Rachel. “Walter Cup chase goes to Game 5.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 27, 2024, pC3; This writers own recollections and records of being in the crowd during the game include texting her siblings in tears when Billie Jean King came out.

¹⁰⁰⁷ Blount, Rachel. “Red, white and blue—and gold.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 18, 1998, p1; Blount, Rachel. “Ready to make near-title into the real thing.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 29, 2024, pC2; Nordstrom, Tracy. “Congrats to the first Walter Cup champions, and Rachel Blount!” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 31, 2024, pA10.

¹⁰⁰⁸ “Let us support women’s sports.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 29, 2024, pA8.

¹⁰⁰⁹ Lavinsky, Aaron. “State of Hockey.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 30, 2024, p1.

¹⁰¹⁰ “Zumwinkle named top rookie.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 12, 2024, pC3.

¹⁰¹¹ Blount, Rachel. “First and foremost.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 30, 2024, pC1; Wellens, Matt. “Former Bulldogs lead Minnesota to PWHL crown.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. May 30, 2024, pA5; Wolf, Sydney. “PWHL Minnesota wins inaugural Walter Cup.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 30, 2024, pXB2; Blount, Rachel. “Champagne, tears flow as Minnesota celebrates title.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 31, 2024, pC6; Feldman, Jason. “Heise makes history...” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. June 1, 2024, p25.

¹⁰¹² Spiros, Dean. “Minnesota savoring celebrations...” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. June 1, 2024, p36; Blount, Rachel. “Bringing cup home makes all feel real.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 1, 2024, pC1; Myers, Jess. “Fans turn out in droves to celebrate Minnesota’s title.” *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. June 4, 2024, pA8.

And just days later, the news broke that Natalie Darwitz had been let go as the general manager of the team. Both the league and Darwitz declined to comment when the news broke, though league sources were cited as indicating it was a clash between Darwitz and Ken Klee in the press. Minnesota hockey fans were largely left stunned, and local press was quick to point out glowing past statements by league officials and the things Darwitz had accomplished for the team.¹⁰¹³ A day later, the league released a statement, indicating that the decision had been difficult and that it had happened after both an internal and an external review. Vice president Jayna Hefford did take a moment to say that the league had, “incredible respect” for Darwitz. Darwitz herself declined to comment on any specifics, but did express her pride in everything the organization and the team had built.¹⁰¹⁴ In a later interview with the Dakota County Historical Society, she emphasized that she still wanted the league to grow and to be truly successful, and for the professional women’s hockey game to continue to succeed.¹⁰¹⁵

Through the post season, Minnesota fans raised their objections to the ouster but also pledged their support for the team. Many fans continued to push for better coverage and recognition for Minnesota’s winning women.¹⁰¹⁶ Some protested Darwitz’s ouster with signs at the Draft, which took place at Roy Wilkins Auditorium on June 10, but were still eager to support women’s hockey. During the draft, Minnesota used their picks to select Toronto’s Claire Thompson, Bismarck, ND’s Britta Curl, Czech Republic citizen and St. Cloud State player Klára Hymlárová, Hermosa Beach, CA’s Dominique Petrie, Bowmanville, Ontario’s Brooke McQuigge, New Minas, Nova Scotia’s Mae Batherson, and Amherst NY’s Katy Knoll. While no Minnesotan players were drafted by Minnesota, Montréal drafted Abby Boreen—whose short-term waiver in Minnesota left her eligible—Minneapolis’ Izzy Daniel and Lino Lakes’ Anneke Linser were selected by Toronto, New York selected Blaine’s Gabby Rosenthal, and Ottawa took Maple Grove’s Mannon McMahon and Edina’s Madeline Wethington. Coach Ken Klee did indicate that Abby Boreen had been part of their plan, but was picked by Montréal before they had a chance.¹⁰¹⁷

The selection of Britta Curl raised additional controversy. While she was an excellent hockey player and had been highly recommended as a teammate, her social media activity included liking posts that expressed opposition to trans women in sports, promoted Covid-19 conspiracies, and supported Kyle Rittenhouse. Just a few days after the draft, the 24-year-old Curl released a video saying that she wanted to apologize and take ownership of the hurt she had caused. She concluded by saying “I hope you can extend me the grace to prove to you who I really am.”¹⁰¹⁸ A month later, the dismissals of three coaches—assistant coach Jake Bobrowski, goalie coach Brennan Poderzay, and skills consultant Johnny Sibel—caused more consternation in the local press.¹⁰¹⁹

In September, American Hockey League executive Melissa Caruso was brought in to be the new general manager for PWHL Minnesota. Caruso was a 15-year hockey executive who had climbed from an internship to a

¹⁰¹³ Myers, Jess. “PWHL ousts title-winning Minnesota GM Darwitz.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. June 8, 2024, p31; Blount, Rachel. “Darwitz out as PWHL Minnesota GM.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 8, 2024, pC1.

¹⁰¹⁴ Blount, Rachel. “Darwitz’s removal came after evaluation.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 9, 2024, pC1; Shipley, John. “Ousted GM Darwitz remains silent on reasons for firing.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. June 10, 2024, p12.

¹⁰¹⁵ Phone Interview with Natalie Darwitz. July 22, 2024.

¹⁰¹⁶ “Women’s sports coverage.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 3, 2024, pA8.

¹⁰¹⁷ Myers, Jess. “Princeton star Fillier goes first overall in draft.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. June 11, 2024, p28; Johnson, Randy. “Minnesota drafts for defense” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 11, 2024, pC2; Blount, Rachel. “Anger amid the festivities.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 11, 2024, pC1.

¹⁰¹⁸ Wurzer, Cathy and Gracie Stockton. “Will PWHL Minnesota controversies, drama, overshadow fledgling league’s future?” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. June 15, 2024, p9; “PWHL Minnesota pick apologizes for past activity on X.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 16, 2024, pC9.

¹⁰¹⁹ Myers, Jess. “3 PWHL Minnesota coaches fired as turnover continues.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. July 13, 2024, p16.

vice presidency.¹⁰²⁰ On accepting the job, Caruso was quick to praise Natalie Darwitz for what she had built and to acknowledge that the controversy and pressure was a challenge she intended to address. “It’s no secret what Natalie built here in Season I was really an incredible foundation for this team...I know all eyes are on me...I’m lucky to have inherited what I have inherited,” she told the press. She also said she felt she was lucky to have Ken Klee as a leader in the locker room. A Boston native, she had been living in St. Paul since 2022 and was happy to get this opportunity in her newly adopted state.¹⁰²¹

A few days after Caruso’s hiring was announced, a major league announcement dropped. The original six would no longer be known as “PWLH [Location],” but had received new names and logos. The team put out a simple message first, “A cold front is rolling in 09.09.2024,” and then dropped the name in a short video. The newly dubbed Minnesota Frost would join the Boston Fleet, Montréal Victoire, New York Sirens, Ottawa Charge, and Toronto Sceptres. The Frost’s logo was a stylized F designed to invoke icicles, and they retained a dark purple color scheme alongside lilac and blizzard white. Teams themselves were not involved in the branding process, but Kendall Coyne Schofield went on record to say that she loved the new look. Many hockey-loving Minnesotans, in turn, were amused by the accidental connection to long time Gopher women’s ice hockey coach Brad Frost, who laughingly assured friends and the press that he had not paid for the endorsement. PWHL vice president of business operations Amy Scheer said, “The next step is waiting to see how fans bring these logos to life in the arena.”¹⁰²²

December 1, 2024 the fans were ready. The *Minnesota Star Tribune* published a full spread Season Preview that morning, highlighting major players and talking expectations.¹⁰²³ 8,022 Minnesotans packed into the Xcel to watch the team raise their championship banner and then take on the New York Sirens. They were prepared with signs and chants, including one adapted from 2000’s cheerleading movie *Bring It On*—“Brr, it’s cold in here/There must be some [Frost] in the atmosphere.” Despite ultimately losing 3-2, the team was excited for the season.¹⁰²⁴ The team spent most of December winning, with victories over Boston, Toronto, Ottawa, and New York, before facing another loss against Montréal at the end of the month.¹⁰²⁵

Board member Stan Kasten had told the press that the NHL had proposed facilitating “neutral site games” in other markets in order to build enthusiasm for the league outside of the original six back when the league first announced itself.¹⁰²⁶ A few games were held at neutral sites during 2024, but in the new season, the schedule became a major feature, with “Takeover Tour” games scheduled in eight cities—Raleigh, Buffalo, Detroit, St. Louis, Denver, Seattle, Vancouver, and Quebec City. The games were intended both to expand the audience, but

¹⁰²⁰ Shipley, John. “PWLH Minnesota hires Caruso as next general manager.” *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. September 4, 2024, p29; Zgoda, Jerry. “PWLH team tabs Caruso to replace Darwitz as GM.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 4, 2024, pC1.

¹⁰²¹ Zgoda, Jerry. “New GM credits Darwitz’s foundation.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 5, 2024, pC1.

¹⁰²² Wolf, Sydney. “PWLH Minnesota becomes the Frost.” *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. September 10, 2024, pXB4; Zgoda, Jerry. “PWLH Minnesota now has a nickname: Frost.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 10, 2024, pC1; Neal, La Velle E. “Women’s hockey gives state two Frosts.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. September 15, 2024, pC2.

¹⁰²³ Zgoda, Jerry. “From Walter Cup champs to ‘Team Turmoil,’ the Frost had some fun, too.” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 1, 2024, pC6-7.

¹⁰²⁴ Spiros, Dean. “Frost raise championship banner before losing season opener to New York.” *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. December 2, 2024, pA10; This writer attended the game and got a good laugh out of the chanting.

¹⁰²⁵ Hetterheimer, Cassidy. “Frost break through...” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 5, 2024, pC2; Hetterheimer, Cassidy. “A night for Sophie’s Squad” *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 20, 2024, pC1; “Frost keep win streak alive against New York.” *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. December 23, 2024, pA12; “Frost Suffers First Regulation Defeat.” *Detroit Lakes Tribune*. Detroit Lakes, Minnesota. December 29, 2024, p6.

¹⁰²⁶ March, Lochlan. “Women’s pro hockey begins play in January.” For the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, reprinted in the *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. September 2, 2023, p16.

also to test markets for a planned expansion of up to two teams in 2025-2026.¹⁰²⁷ Injuries and illness had taken out rotating groups of the Frost roster in early January, and the Frost lost four of their nine January games going into the international break.¹⁰²⁸ They did win in Denver, however, in their first appearance in the Takeover Tour, in front of a crowd of 14,018 fans, the largest US attendance for a women's hockey game at that point.¹⁰²⁹

At the midway point of the season, the Frost's overall depth stood out. "We have to be able to have all our lines contribute on different nights, and we know it. That's how we were successful last year—our depth," Coach Klee told the press.¹⁰³⁰ Klára Hymlárová, the first St. Cloud State grad to play in the league, spoke about the way the team was practicing on different lines and the fun of playing on a squad that was so focused but adaptable.¹⁰³¹ The return from the international break was rough, however. Minnesota fell 3-2 in overtime to the Sceptres in their first game back, and then lost all but one of their games in February. The win, against Montreal, was Maddie Rooney's first shut out of the season.¹⁰³² In the nine games between March and April, with a large international break in the middle, the Frost won only four times, putting themselves in a precarious position.¹⁰³³

With exactly three games left in the league, all taking place on Saturday, May 3, the final three spots in the playoffs were all up for grabs. Unlike the year before, when a final regulation loss left PWHL Minnesota with a slim chance of playoff hopes—which they clinched thanks to an Ottawa loss—this year the team needed either a regulation victory to ensure a spot, or an overtime victory, but only if Ottawa lost.¹⁰³⁴ With their backs against the wall, the Frost beat the Fleet 8-1 to secure their spot.¹⁰³⁵ As reporter Jess Myers put it, "If you know the brief history of the top North American women's hockey league, that means the team in purple has got 'em right where they want 'em. [sic]"¹⁰³⁶

Not looking for a repeat of Toronto's choice the year before, Montréal chose the Ottawa Charge as their opponents for the semi-finals, setting up another semi-finals series between Minnesota and the Toronto Sceptres.¹⁰³⁷ Toronto opened with a 3-2 victory, but the Frost responded two days later with a 5-3 win, with Sophie Jaques breaking a 3-3 tie with 6:13 left in the third period.¹⁰³⁸ They then beat Toronto 7-5 at home in

¹⁰²⁷ Wawrow, John. "PWHL releases its neutral-site schedule." *Winona Daily News*. Winona, Minnesota. November 19, 2024, pC6.

¹⁰²⁸ Carothers, Tom. "Battered Frost down Boston." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. January 3, 2025, pA12; Spiros, Dean. "Frost beat Boston in OT for second time in a week." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. January 9, 2025, pXB2; Hetterheimer, Cassidy. "Overtime strike vaults Frost into first." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 9, 2025, pC3; "Sirens rally late and down Frost in shootout." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. January 16, 2025, pXB2; "Frost fall into tie for first." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 18, 2025, pC6; Spiros, Dean. "Frost left chasing after early goal." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. January 22, 2025, pB8; Spiros, Dean. "Thompson leads Frost past Toronto..." *Alexandria Echo Press*. Alexandria, Minnesota. January 29, 2025, pXB2.

¹⁰²⁹ Glenn, Reid. "First SCSU grad I PWHL an 'asset' for Minnesota." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. January 30, 2025, pB1.

¹⁰³⁰ Brown, Alyce. "Frost look well-positioned to defend title." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 4, 2025, pC3.

¹⁰³¹ Glenn, Reid. "First SCSU grad I PWHL an 'asset' for Minnesota." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. January 30, 2025, pB1.

¹⁰³² "Frost fall on dramatic late overtime goal to Toronto." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. February 12, 2025, p19; "Minnesota Frost surrender four straight goals in loss to Boston." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. February 17, 2025, p4; "Rooney shuts out Montreal as Frost get back in the win column." *The Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. February 19, 2025, p22.

¹⁰³³ Spiros, Dean. "Frost have a tough job ahead and plenty of time to think about it." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. April 12, 2025, pB12; "Frost keep playoff hopes alive with win over Ottawa." *Brainerd Dispatch*. Brainerd, Minnesota. May 1, 2025, pXB2.

¹⁰³⁴ Rippel, Joel. "Frost stay in playoff hunt." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 1, 2025, pC5; "Frost still have playoff hopes." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 3, 2025, pD4; Zgoda, Jerry. "Frost are back in must-win territory." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 3, 2025, pC3.

¹⁰³⁵ PWHL. "2024-2025 Regular Season Schedule." <https://www.thepwhl.com/en/stats/schedule/2/5/all-months/homeaway?league=1>. Accessed 9/1/2025.

¹⁰³⁶ Myers, Jess. "Back in playoffs, Frost looking for a Cup repeat." *Alexandria Echo Press*. Alexandria, Minnesota. May 7, 2025, pXB3.

¹⁰³⁷ "Frost to play Toronto." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 6, 2025, pD3.

¹⁰³⁸ Rippel, Joel. "Sceptres push past Frost." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 8, 2025, pC2; Rippel, Joel. "Frost come home even up." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 10, 2025, pC3.

Game 3, with Lee Stecklein emerging the hero.¹⁰³⁹ Four days before her 33rd birthday, Kendall Coyne Schofield scored twice in Game 4 to tie the Sceptres, before Taylor Heise got the win in overtime. The victory sent the Frost to the finals for the second time, and with Ottawa also winning their series against Montréal, it set up the second year of the 3rd and 4th seeded teams meeting for the cup.¹⁰⁴⁰

In Game 1 of the finals, Klára Hymlárová managed to tie Ottawa 1-1 in the third period off an assist from Katy Knoll, but Ottawa won in overtime. Game 2 saw Britta Curl-Salemme tie up the game off an assist from Claire Thompson and Lee Stecklein, and this time the Frost won when Curl-Salemme combined with Thompson and Mellissa Channell-Watkins for the overtime game winning goal. Game 3 brought another 2-1 overtime win, with a final goal that seemed to startle even the players involved, as Hymlárová and Sophie Jaques assisted in a pass that bounced off Knoll's chest, but landed perfectly for her to get it past Ottawa's phenomenal rookie goalie, Gwyneth Phillips.

With the series at 2-1 and a chance to win the cup at home, the Frost were determined to finish in Game 4. This time Kelley Pannek opened the scoring, with an assist from Claire Thompson and Grace Zumwinkle. Ottawa tied it up, however, and for the fourth time in a row Minnesota found themselves in overtime. This time, Katy Knoll and Klára Hymlárová found Liz Schepers for the goal, and the Frost became repeat champions. Gwyneth Phillips, whose stellar goal tending had impressed the crowds, was selected as the Ilana Kloss Playoff MVP, and the entirety of the Ottawa Charge stayed on the ice to cheer her trophy. After a brief moment of surprise, the Minnesota crowd broke out into a chant of "Phillips, Phillips!" as the Charge skated off the ice. Then the party really started. Fans cried and hugged as the team hoisted the Walter Cup for the second time.¹⁰⁴¹

2025-2026 promises to bring enormous changes to the league. Expansion teams were announced for Seattle and Vancouver, and the expansion draft process moved an enormous amount of talent to the newest teams. Minnesota's incredible depth—all four lines made meaningful plays in the playoffs run and a huge number of defenders proved capable scorers as well—shifted precipitously, with Sophie Jaques, Brooke McQuigge, Denisa Krížová, Melissa Channell-Watkins, Michela Cava, and Claire Thompson all headed to Vancouver, and many other players moving teams in the shakeup. Seattle did not steal any Frost players, but they did secure Dakota County's own Natalie Snodgrass, while Maggie Flaherty is off to Montréal.¹⁰⁴² But whatever this next year brings for Minnesota, one thing is certain: it is going to be great for women's hockey. Arthur Farrell's "Dream of the Future" is here, and it's a good one.

Minnesota Professional Players in the PWHL Era, 2024-2025

A partial record of Minnesota women in the PWHL can be found in the *Minnesota Professional Players in the PWHL Era 2024-2025.pdf* document.

¹⁰³⁹ Zgoda, Jerry. "Defender Stecklein finds scoring touch." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 14, 2025, pC6.

¹⁰⁴⁰ Zgoda, Jerry. "Frost leader isn't wasting time." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 20, 2025, pC6.

¹⁰⁴¹ PWHL. "2024-2025 Playoffs Schedule." <https://www.thepwhl.com/en/stats/schedule/2/6/all-months/homeaway?league=1>. Accessed 9/1/2025; "Minnesota repeats as PWHL champs." *St. Cloud Times*, St. Cloud, Minnesota. May 26, 2025, pB1; Albertson-Grove, Josie. "Frost, fans throw title party." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 29, 2025, pA1; "Cheers." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 30, 2025, pA10; This writer also attended Games 4 and 5 and watched the livestream of the three others, and took notes.

¹⁰⁴² Neal, La Velle E. "Amid title jollity, Klee prepares for Frost shift." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 4, 2025, pC1; Zgoda, Jerry. "In PWHL, growth stands in the way of Frost dynasty." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 9, 2025, pC1.

Dakota County Spotlight: Burnsville's Lauren Bench

Former PWHL Minnesota Player and Current Pro Player in the Swedish Leagues

Lauren Bench's cousin first drew her into hockey, though she had no idea at the time that she'd end up a goalie. That came in fifth grade, and while she didn't like it at first, it grew on her as she got better at the role.¹⁰⁴³

In High School, she played for the Burnsville Blaze, and can remember the awe of walking into the Xcel Center for the state tournament in her sophomore year. Even though they didn't make it very far, the roar of the crowd and the overall experience were magical. In her junior year she was team captain and a Division I prospect, with a reputation for "stealing" games the Blaze might not otherwise have won.¹⁰⁴⁴ As a senior, she was Burnsville's Athena Award winner and a semifinalist for Goalie of the Year.¹⁰⁴⁵

She began her college career with several seasons at Bemidji State, where she was an All-WCHA Academic player and Female Scholar Athlete of the Year.¹⁰⁴⁶ In her redshirt sophomore year she broke the Bemidji State record for most consecutive shutout minutes at 165 minutes, 55 seconds, beating legendary Beaver player Zuzana Tomcikova. Bench gave credit to her whole defensive corp.¹⁰⁴⁷ In April of 2020 she announced that she was transferring to the University of Minnesota as a graduate transfer, looking to pursue her masters and continue her hockey career.¹⁰⁴⁸ In her first game with the gophers, she delivered a 4-0 shutout over Ohio State, making 36 saves.¹⁰⁴⁹ She was the Women's Goalie of the Month for November.¹⁰⁵⁰ She returned for another season at the U of M after the NCAA granted an extra season of eligibility after the Covid-19 pandemic.¹⁰⁵¹

After finishing school in 2022, and with the professional landscape in the US in turmoil, Bench decided to "let hockey take me somewhere cool." The opportunity came from the Swedish Women's Hockey League (Svenska Damhockeyligan or SDHL) and the team MoDo Hockey in Örnsköldsvik, Sweden. While living in Sweden was a culture shock at first, she wound up having an enormous amount of fun, touring Europe and making dear friends she stays in touch with. She was briefly recruited by the Montreal Force to play in the PHF in 2023, but when the league collapsed the contract fell through, and instead she signed with PWHL Minnesota for the inaugural season of the Professional Women's Hockey League.¹⁰⁵²

As Minnesota's fourth goalie, behind an exceedingly deep bench, she didn't see ice time in the regular season or playoffs, but was a part of the culture of the team. Walking into the Xcel Energy Center for the first time since State in high school for her first practice was incredibly cool and nostalgic. She was the final player to hoist the Walter Cup after they won the inaugural year, and she came back for the raising of the banner as a former

¹⁰⁴³ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section come from a phone interview with Lauren Bench, June 28, 2024.

¹⁰⁴⁴ Evans, Bryce. "Let the gritty work begin." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 9, 2014, pN4

¹⁰⁴⁵ "...Also named semifinalists...." *St. Cloud Times*. St. Cloud, Minnesota. January 29, 2016, pD2; "Athena Awards." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 20, 2016, pC9.

¹⁰⁴⁶ "Beavers earn all-WCHA honors." *Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. February 24, 2018, p6; "Famestad, Krause named BSU Athletes of the Year." *Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. April 27, 2018, p7.

¹⁰⁴⁷ Monteith, Austin. "Bench Stays perfect." *Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. December 2, 2018, pB1; "Bench sets BSU shutout record." *Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. December 20, 2018, p5.

¹⁰⁴⁸ Monteith, Austin. "BSU Goalie Bench to join Gophers as grad transfer." *Pioneer*. Bemidji, Minnesota. April 11, 2020, p13.

¹⁰⁴⁹ Johnson, Randy. "Goalie stonewalls No. 5 Ohio State in U debut." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 22, 2020, pC3.

¹⁰⁵⁰ "Awards." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. December 4, 2020, pC7.

¹⁰⁵¹ "Coming back to U." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. June 18, 2021, pC9.

¹⁰⁵² Kennedy, Ian. "Force Adds Netminder Lauren Bench." Women's Hockey Roundtable. June 23, 2023.

<https://thehockeynews.com/womens/pwhl/montreal-force-add-netminder-lauren-bench>. Accessed 8/14/2025; Kennedy, Ian. "Who's on deck for each PWHL team." Women's Hockey Roundtable. December 13, 2023. <https://thehockeynews.com/womens/pwhl/reviewing-the-reserves-who-is-on-deck-for-each-pwhl-team> Accessed 8/14/2025.

player at the start of the most recent season. Throughout her career, she's considered giving back to kids who dream of playing the best part of hockey. She teaches at clinics and camps, and seeing the excitement in their eyes when they know they've improved is endlessly rewarding.

Next season, she'll be back in Sweden, in Stockholm with the Djurgårdens IF team in the SDHL, inspiring kids in a whole new audience.¹⁰⁵³

¹⁰⁵³ Rollins, Laura. "SDHL Offseason Update: Djurgårdens IF." Women's Hockey Roundtable. May 23, 2025.
<https://thehockeynews.com/womens/international/sdhl-offseason-update-djurgardens-if>. Accessed 8/14/2025.

Dakota County Spotlight: Lakeville's Maggie Flaherty

Former Minnesota Frost Player and Current Montréal Victoire Player

Both of Maggie Flaherty's siblings played hockey, so she was thrilled when her mom bought her skates to join mites.¹⁰⁵⁴ She played squirts and pee-wees with the boys, and in eighth grade she was invited to try out for the varsity team at Lakeville North. Brought alone into a room with the coaches to learn whether she had made it, she walked out to see her sister Taylor, a junior on the team, waiting anxiously to hear if she'd made it. They played together for two years at Lakeville North, where coach Buck Kochevar called them "ideal defensemen," with the whole package of strong skating, an aggressive, attacking mindset, and the ability to see the whole ice. "It's tough to beat having the Flaherty sisters," he told the *Star Tribune*. They played as a defensive pair the first year, but in the second year their coach split them to keep a Flaherty almost always on the ice.¹⁰⁵⁵ By the end of her sophomore year, Maggie had been recruited by the University of Minnesota, Duluth, who secured her verbal commitment two years early.¹⁰⁵⁶

In her junior year, she was selected for the US women's U-18 select team, and joined her future teammate Taylor Heise in winning gold at the 2018 IIHF U-18 Worlds.¹⁰⁵⁷ She had an amazing time travelling to Russia and becoming friends with her future college rival and professional teammate. She made the All-Metro second team in 2018.¹⁰⁵⁸ In her first year at UMD, she was a WCHA All-Rookie pick.¹⁰⁵⁹ In a rare moment where another player was able to flatten the dominant defender, Flaherty's Bulldog teammate Ashton Bell tackled her to the ice after Flaherty managed to sneak a shot past her future teammate Lauren Bench for an overtime win in the WCHA quarterfinals in 2020.¹⁰⁶⁰ Clutch, winning goals became a bit of a hallmark of her college hockey career, and one she would bring into her time with the Minnesota Frost.¹⁰⁶¹

Flaherty was selected in the fourth round of the PWHL draft by Minnesota.¹⁰⁶² Talking about the moment, she recognized how special it was to be a part of the first class of women to be able to graduate from college and go straight into a professional draft. She played an excellent season and was thrilled to see so many young fans. At one game against Ottawa, three teams from Lakeville were in the stands holding signs with her name on them, a hometown crowd moment of support she hadn't anticipated. Feeling the love, she scored her very first professional goal. She nailed another storybook perfect goal in Game 3 of the semi-finals against Toronto, when her powerful shot across the ice got Minnesota their first postseason goal and turned the game, and eventually the series around.¹⁰⁶³ Hoisting the cup with friends and heroes—she had grown up admiring Kendall Coyne Schofield, and was thrilled to get to play with her—was huge, especially as it was the first big win she'd been a part of outside of the juniors gold. That she got to do it twice, in her first two professional seasons, was even

¹⁰⁵⁴ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section are from a zoom interview with Maggie Flaherty, January 24, 2025.

¹⁰⁵⁵ Evans, Bryce. "Doubling Down for One More." *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 4, 2015, pN4.

¹⁰⁵⁶ "UMD nets Lakeville North defenseman." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. May 24, 2016, p12.

¹⁰⁵⁷ "The US Under-18 Women's..." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. January 14, 2018, p13.

¹⁰⁵⁸ "All Metro" *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 20, 2018, pC12.

¹⁰⁵⁹ "College Women's Hockey." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. March 1, 2019, p10.

¹⁰⁶⁰ Nowacki, Jon. "Bulldogs bounce Beavers." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 29, 2020, p11.

¹⁰⁶¹ Wellens, Matt. "Flaherty strikes in OT for UMD women." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. October 10, 2021, p9; "UMD senior defenseman Maggie Flaherty..." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. October 13, 2021, p19; Wellens, Matt. "Duel of goalies ends in a draw." *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. February 11, 2023, p15.

¹⁰⁶² Shipley, John. "Minnesota picks Heise first in PWHL draft." For the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*, reprinted by the *Duluth News Tribune*. Duluth, Minnesota. September 19, 2023, p14

¹⁰⁶³ Wolf, Sydney. "Minnesota bounces back in Game 3 against Toronto." *Post-Bulletin*. Rochester, Minnesota. May 14, 2024, pXB2; Blount, Rachel. "Two goals, and just in time." *Minnesota Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. May 14, 2024, pC1.

better. She gives credit to all of her coaches, her family, and the kids who support her. “There’s a slew of people who put faith in you, so you believe it too...then go out and kill it.”

At the time of writing this piece, Flaherty had signed with the Montréal Victoire for the 2025-2026 season.¹⁰⁶⁴ While this magazine was in layout, she became the first and only player in the PWHL to win the first three Walter Cups, scoring a goal in the final game on May 21, 2026, an accomplishment clearly worthy of a last minute edit.

¹⁰⁶⁴ “Victoire sign two, lose one.” *The Hamilton Spectator*. Hamilton, Ontario. June 21, 2025, pS3.

Dakota County Spotlight: Eagan's Natalie Snodgrass

Former Ottawa Charge Player and Current PWHL Seattle Player

In 2016, 17-year-old Natalie Snodgrass “broke Canada’s heart.” While it might sound a bit dramatic, that was the phrasing used in Canadian newspapers when she poked a rebound into the net at 1:47 into overtime in the 2016 IIHF U-18 Womens World Championships, claiming the gold medal for the juniors of Team USA.¹⁰⁶⁵ While her family was there and thrilled for her, she can still remember the Canadian crowd’s boos. Luckily for them, she would one day return to give her heart to Ottawa in the first two season of the PWHL.¹⁰⁶⁶

Born into a big hockey playing family, she started skating at 3, and came up through the youth levels with her father as her coach. She made the Eastview High School varsity team in seventh grade, and was quickly identified as a “natural scorer who finds the net,” and a player to watch.¹⁰⁶⁷ Natalie won U-18 gold for the first time in 2015 before her 2016 game winning goal, and she helped Eastview get to state three times during her high school career. She was named to the 2016 All Metro Team, and was Eastview’s Athena Award winner in 2017.¹⁰⁶⁸ That same year, she stood with Team USA during their strike for better wages, and refused to take a spot offered on the older women’s team.¹⁰⁶⁹

Her older sister had attended the University of Connecticut, and she made the decision to go there as well, and experience life outside of Minnesota for a while. There, she was named Hockey East rookie of the week three times.¹⁰⁷⁰ She also gained a following of young fans who looked up to her as the hockey player they someday wanted to be, much as she herself had done with players like Natalie Darwitz growing up. Darwitz herself had high praise for Snodgrass’ hockey IQ, saying she had “that hockey awareness, that tenacity to go get the puck...I don’t think she realizes the impact she’s having on young girls who want to play hockey. She’s just Natalie being Natalie.”¹⁰⁷¹ As a college student, she played on the U-22 US women’s team and swept Canada in a three-game series.¹⁰⁷² She continued playing in the extra year for UConn after covid in 2021-2022, where she was team captain and focused on spreading Huskies hockey to more young women after her.¹⁰⁷³

The next year, she came back home and joined the Minnesota Whitecaps. She told the *Hartford Courant* at the time that she was loving being home and that “to be able to play in my home state as a professional athlete is amazing, I only hope to grow it further. I hope I can do my part in containing the sustainability of it.”¹⁰⁷⁴ She played in the Premier Hockey Federation’s All-Star Showcase in Toronto in January of 2023.¹⁰⁷⁵ Snodgrass had just signed a 2-year contract one week before the league announced that the Walter Group had acquired their assets and that contracts were being cancelled.

¹⁰⁶⁵ Potrecz, Bill. “OT heartbreak for Canada.” *The Standard*. St. Catherines, Ontario. January 16, 2016, p21.

¹⁰⁶⁶ Otherwise unsourced stories in this section are from a phone interview with Natalie Snodgrass. July 10, 2024.

¹⁰⁶⁷ Among others: “20 Metro Players to watch.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. November 11, 2014, pC8; “Prep Athletes of the Week.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 10, 2015, pC8.

¹⁰⁶⁸ LaVaque, David. “On top of the world and the metro too.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 16, 2016, pC8; “Athena Awards.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. April 20, 2017, pC9.

¹⁰⁶⁹ Amore, Dom. “Snodgrass passes it forward.” *Hartford Courant*. Hartford, Connecticut. February 26, 2019, pC1; “Hockey rebuffed as replacements stand in support of women’s boycott.” *The Guardian*. March 25, 2017.

<https://www.theguardian.com/sport/2017/mar/25/usa-hockey-world-championships-dispute-boycott>. Accessed 8/31/2025.

¹⁰⁷⁰ Altavilla, John. “Huskies Ready for Postseason.” *Hartford Courant*. Hartford, Connecticut. February 23, 2018, pC5.

¹⁰⁷¹ Amore, Dom. “Snodgrass passes it forward.” *Hartford Courant*. Hartford, Connecticut. February 26, 2019, pC1.

¹⁰⁷² “US Women’s hockey teams sweep Canada.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. August 16, 2019, pC6.

¹⁰⁷³ More, Dom. “Look good, play good.” *Hartford Courant*. Hartford, Connecticut. Oct 29, 2021, pC1.

¹⁰⁷⁴ Amore, Don. “CT Whale right at home in new digs.” *Hartford Courant*. Hartford, Connecticut. December 11, 2022, pD3.

¹⁰⁷⁵ “All Star Whitecaps.” *Minneapolis Star Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. January 30, 2023, pC4.

Having planned her life in Minnesota, the news was overwhelming and confusing. When she signed with PWHL Ottawa, knowing where she was headed was positive but nerve-racking. Fortunately, when she got to Canada, she discovered that Ottawa was wonderful. The feedback from fans and the community was amazing, and she discovered she was really loving her time and her team. After a strong first season, Ottawa resigned Natalie Snodgrass to a one-year extension for the 2024-2025 season. She stayed with the Ottawa roster into their first postseason run, and over her career there made 44 appearances in regular season games. In June of 2025 she was signed to a one-year standard player agreement with the new PWHL Seattle, and will be starting the next phase of her career helping to grow another new professional franchise.¹⁰⁷⁶ A whole new city of girls is about to get an excellent Minnesota grown role model.

¹⁰⁷⁶ "Seattle signs Snodgrass for inaugural season." *The Province*. Vancouver, British Columbia. June 19, 2025, pA30.

Overtime: A Dream of the Future

Roughly 125 years of women's ice hockey in Minnesota took us from clever Clarice Kraft speeding across the outdoor ice of Northrop in her long wool skirt, to force of nature Maggie Flaherty earning her third championship ring across two countries worth of professional arenas. The gear and a few of the rules may have changed, but the love of the game remains the same.

Right now, more 13,000 girls are playing hockey in Minnesota.¹⁰⁷⁷ Every single one of them is a part—however small or grand it may someday be—of the history of women's sport. Through a few of our local Dakota county coaches and coordinators, we were given the opportunity to hear from some of these young women about their sport, in their own words. This is what they had to say:

I love hockey because I can be me on the ice. I get to be with my friends. I get to make friends with girls who I probably would have never talked to. I get to challenge myself every day and every season. It has taught me accountability, leadership, and cooperation. Hockey has motivated me to be a better student because I never want to be benched for bad grades. – Mylee, Age 12

I love hockey because I feel like I get to create tight knit bonds due to the fact that hockey is such a team sport. I originally started hockey when I was around 4 just to try, and I absolutely fell in love with the sport. When I'm on the ice, I get to be myself. I want to be an inspiration to younger girls who want to join male dominated sports, and show them that girls are just as if not stronger than guys. I want to prove that with dedication, a girl can accomplish anything. Hockey is such a big part of my life and has actually helped me in school, and will continue to help me develop even more essential life skills. – Hannah, Age 13

I love hockey because you can never stop learning new skills and improving your abilities. You also get to learn from more coaches and teammates throughout your life. You also make a lot of new friends. – Elise, Age 10

I love hockey because it's given me the opportunity to be on the ice with girls from other schools, and I know no matter which team I'm on, I'll have friends from previous seasons. – Tatum, Age 13

I love hockey because when I'm on the ice I feel free, and I can be myself. I started hockey when I was 6. I'm glad that I tried it, otherwise I wouldn't have met all my friends. I love hockey because I like working as a team. I like seeing how much we improved over the years. I came to realize how important it is to practice. – Eliana, Age 11

I love hockey because it's fun and you get a little surprise every game between the players and the goalies. Why play hockey is because it's fun and as a goalie, it's fun to get shots and catch the puck. Hockey means a sport where I can just be myself. why I chose Hockey out of all the other sports is because my teammates are nice and understanding. – Izabell, Age 9

I love hockey because it is fun to play and I get to be with my friends. – Hannah, Age 10

¹⁰⁷⁷ Hatten, Mick. "Why Minnesota's youth hockey model keeps numbers rising..." *The Rink Live*. November 5, 2023. <https://www.therinklives.com/youth/why-minnesotas-youth-hockey-model-keeps-numbers-rising-and-growing-the-gap-with-other-states> Accessed 12/5/2024.

Hockey means working hard with my team and when no one is watching. Hockey means showing up every day, on days I want to and days I don't. Hockey is the time I spend on the ice and the time I spend off the ice working on my stickhandling and shooting. There is nothing that teaches me hard work as much as playing hockey. Hockey is a team game and not a selfish game. I have made my best friends playing hockey. The memories I've made playing hockey with teammates are my favorite memories! – Claire, Age 10

I love hockey because I can play with friends, and relatives can come watch and cheer you on. I play hockey because it's fun and festive. Hockey means a lot to me, especially when family and friends are watching. Hockey is the one sport where you can fight for a puck and if you work hard you get good results. – Eve, Age 8

Playing hockey in Minnesota makes winter my favorite season. I made lots of hockey friends even on my new team, and like to skate at my park with the neighbor boys too. Hockey also taught me leadership and how to be a good person – Annie, Age 10

I like hockey because it is fun and I like to play games against people. I like to score goals and be a leader. – Kate, Age 8

I play hockey because one day I went to my brother's school (I was only 4) and I saw a flyer that said Try Hockey for Free! So I decided to try and here I am still playing almost 6 years later. – Stella, Age 9

Appendix I: Hockey Then and Now

The game of hockey has changed over the years in a few big ways. Here’s a very simplified run-down of some of the differences between the 7-woman game played in the earliest years in Minnesota, and the 6-woman game played now:

Then – 1899	Now – 2024
(Simplified from <i>Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game</i> . ¹⁰⁷⁸ The book contains rules for a few different leagues and where there are numerical specifics, we’ve picked the New York league, the only American league included.)	(Heavily simplified from the 2023-2024 Professional Women’s Hockey League rules. ¹⁰⁷⁹ While the NHL rules are probably more familiar and slightly different, we’re here for the women’s game.)
Players - 1899	2024 - Players
There were 7 players to a side, consisting of: <i>Goal:</i> The goal-keeper or minder primarily defended the goal. They were <i>not</i> allowed lie, kneel, or sit upon the ice. <i>Cover-Point:</i> Defensive skater. They were primarily tasked with covering the opposing player who was in possession of the puck. <i>Point:</i> Defensive skater. They were primarily tasked with covering the opposite side of the ice from the Cover Point and trying to intercept passes. <i>Rover:</i> Offensive skater. Used their judgment to determine their forward position on a drive. <i>Left Wing:</i> Offensive skater. Stayed to the left side of the ice on a drive. <i>Right Wing:</i> Offensive skater. Stayed to the right side of the ice on a drive. <i>Center:</i> Offensive skater. Stayed to the center of the ice on a drive. One player is designated the captain and may speak for the team to the referee as invited. No change of players. If there was an injury, you could sub a reserve in if one was available, or the other side could drop a player to equalize, depending on the league.	A game-day team is composed of 19 skaters and two goalkeepers,¹⁰⁸⁰ with up to 6 players on the ice at any given time. These consist of: <i>Goalkeeper:</i> Defends the goal. Only one may be on the ice at a time. They are <i>expected</i> to lie, kneel, sit, and do the splits on the ice in defense of their goal. A goalkeeper may be pulled to add an additional skater to the ice. <i>Skaters:</i> Typically split into 3 Forwards and 2 Defenders, the 5 skaters in play at any given time, (or 6 if the goalie is pulled), will be some combination of players who shoot and players who defend, based on the specific strategy of the team. This has become simultaneously highly specialized and broadly generalized, as it shifts as lines come on and off the ice from moment to moment. A predetermined group of forwards who go out together is called a line, and defenders are typically pairs. One player is designated the captain and may speak for the team to the referee as invited. Players swap out almost constantly from the eligible players on the bench, and injury substitutions happen that way as well. There are special provisions if both goalies are injured.

¹⁰⁷⁸ Farrell, Arthur. *Hockey: Canada’s Royal Winter Game*. Montreal. C. R. Corneil, Printer. 1899.

¹⁰⁷⁹ Professional Women’s Hockey League Official Rules 2023–2024. <https://www.thepwhl.com/wp-content/uploads/sites/2/2024/01/PWHL-Rulebook-Final-v-Jan-2024.pdf> Accessed 9/12/2024.

¹⁰⁸⁰ The PWHL allows teams to have 21 skaters and 2 goalkeepers on their active roster, but 19 skaters and 2 goalkeepers are designated eligible each game. They also have reserve players who can be called up.

Rink and Gear - 1899

The rink must be at least 112' long by 58' wide.

It could be a designated rink, but could also just be an area of lake ice designated by clearing out snow, as there are no markings on the ice.

The goal is made of two posts, 4' in height, driven into the ice 6' apart, and at least 5' from the end of the ice. A goal is scored when a puck goes between the goal posts from the front, underneath an imaginary line that stretches from the two post tops. If a goal post breaks, play is stopped until it can be replaced. (By the 1920s a goal frame had been established.)¹⁰⁸¹

Sticks must be made of wood, with no harder substances attached, and cannot be more than 3" wide at any point, for all players. Some leagues specified a 13" limit to the length of the blade.

Farrell quotes F.S. Stocking of Quebec, a noted goal-keeper of the day, that sticks are not particularly useful for actually blocking shots, but are used for clearing the puck after a shot is blocked.¹⁰⁸² (By the 1910s Goalies sticks have started to shift.)¹⁰⁸³

Pucks must be made of vulcanized rubber and are 1" thick and 3" in diameter.

2024 - Rink and Gear

The rink is significantly bigger—200' long by 85' wide and has rounded corners 23' in radius. It is surrounded by boards, safety glass, and safety netting to protect spectators.

The rink has a series of regulation lines, circles, and markers that are used to determine positions for face-offs and other issues of play.

The goal frame—posts and crossbar—still forms a 4' tall by 6' wide target, but are more formal in shape and must be painted red. They are secured to the ice by flexible pegs. A highly specified white nylon cord net is attached to the goal frame and completely covers the back of the net. When the net gets knocked out of place, they move it back.

Sticks are mostly made of composite and may be taped to improve puck handling. For skaters, they are still no wider than 3" in the blade, and all of the other measurements are now heavily regulated.

Goalie sticks are noticeably different, with a 3.5" maximum width that runs up the shaft, and a safety knob on the end. They're a part of the goalie's shot stopping arsenal.

Other than the quality of the rubber, the puck hasn't changed since 1899. Thank goodness.

¹⁰⁸¹ "Ice Hockey." *The 1922 Gopher*. University of Minnesota. Spring 1921, p376. The photo on this page shows the team posing around a goal frame made of chicken wire and blankets.

¹⁰⁸² Farrell, Arthur. *Hockey: Canada's Royal Winter Game*. Montreal. C. R. Corneil, Printer. 1899, p88.

¹⁰⁸³ "Senior Girls Lose to 'Sophs' on Ice." *The Minneapolis Journal*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 26, 1917, p6. In the photo of Elizabeth Lagaard, Winifred Bailey, and Sarah Paper jokingly forming a kick line, Paper's stick is noticeably wider going up the shaft, though not on par with goalie sticks today.

Clothing was not usually specified, and Farrell lamented the number of men who played in shorts and didn't properly protect their knees. Farrell recommended pants with padding at the knees.¹⁰⁸⁴ (By the 1910s, leg pads were in use in some cases.)¹⁰⁸⁵

Players were not permitted to wear clothes that aided in goal keeping in the men's leagues, although in the early women's leagues full advantage was taken of the long skirts of the day, even sewing lead weights into the hems to improve their puck stopping ability.¹⁰⁸⁶ Shorter hockey kits for women were available by the early 1900s but not always worn.

Game Format - 1899

The game consisted of two halves of 20 minutes each, exclusive of stoppages, with an intermission of 10 minutes between, and goals swapped after each half.

All players play for the entirety of the game (40 minutes).

A tie at the end of normal time resulted in a 10-minute overtime. At the end of that overtime, teams had to arrange to hold a rematch prior to the next scheduled game.

Gear is highly regulated and specialized, with differing uniforms for home and away games. Protective equipment includes gloves, specific pads, helmets, and face masks. Mouthguards and neck and throat protectors are highly recommended but not required.

Goalie gear is heavily specialized and may only be worn by the two designated goalies. Goalie pads and gloves are designed to assist in stopping the puck.

2024 - Game Format

The game consists of three 20-minute periods separated by two 18-minute intermissions. The goals are swapped each period.

Players come on and off the ice and ice time in a game is not guaranteed. (Approximately 23 minutes in a 60-minute game was average for top players in the PWHL in 2024)¹⁰⁸⁷

During the regular season, a tie at the end of normal time results in a 5-minute overtime with 3 skaters and 1 goalie (or 4 skaters). At the end of that overtime, if the game is still tied, play proceeds to a shootout. In the playoffs, teams instead take a 15-minute intermission and then play an additional 20-minute period, repeating as necessary, until a goal is scored.

¹⁰⁸⁴ Farrell, Arthur. *Hockey: Canada's Royal Winter Game*. Montreal. C. R. Corneil, Printer. 1899, p47.

¹⁰⁸⁵ "As the Tribune Camera Man Saw the University Co-eds Play Hockey." *The Minneapolis Tribune*. Minneapolis, Minnesota. February 25, 1917, p41, and "Ice Hockey." *The 1918 Gopher*. The University of Minnesota. Spring 1917, P467. In the full version of the photo from the yearbook, Eleanor Schwerin on the far right can be seen wearing full leg pads. She's the only person wearing them, but was a Left Wing for the team in the game the photo was taken during, so it's unclear if the pads were personal preference or if she had stepped in as goalie at some point.

¹⁰⁸⁶ Avery, Joanna and Julie Stevens. *Too Many Men on the Ice: Women's Hockey in North America*. Polestar, Victoria, BC. 1997. p57-59.

¹⁰⁸⁷ Kennedy, Ian. "Poulin, Larocque, Fast leading PWHL in time on ice." February 13, 2024.

<https://thehockeynews.com/womens/pwhl/poulin-larocque-fast-leading-pwhl-in-time-on-ice>. Accessed 8/5/2025.

Rules of Play - 1899

The puck might be stopped, but not carried nor knocked on, by any part of the body.

The puck was “faced” by being placed between the sticks of two opponents, and the referee then calling play. This was done at the start of each period at center ice.

In the event of a rule infringement, the captain of the opposite team could have the puck faced again at the place where it was last played. If the puck left the ice at a sideline, or a foul occurred behind the goal line, the puck was faced at a spot perpendicular to the line in question, either 3 yards from the sideline or 5 yards from the goal line.

Once the puck is touched by a team, no player on the same team who was nearer to the opponent’s goal line than the puck was allowed touch the puck or prevent another player from touching the puck, until the puck was touched by an opponent. A player had to always be on their own side of the puck (in other words: no forward passing).

No player was allowed to raise their stick above the shoulder.

Charging from behind, tripping, collaring, kicking, or cross-checking was not allowed, and the referee gets to remove a player from the ice for any amount of time at the discretion of the referee, if they suspect the player broke the rule intentionally.

2024 – Some Rules of Play

Skaters may stop the puck and knock it down with their hands, but may not close a hand on the puck or pass the puck to a teammate with their hand.

The puck is “faced-off” by a referee dropping the puck between two players who are facing each other in the direction of their opponent’s goals at approximately one stick length apart. This is done at the start of each period at center ice.

The location of the face-off after a penalty, the puck leaving the ice, or another incident is determined by a variety of things, like when the penalty is assessed, and happens at a set of designated locations marked on the ice, typically in at points forward and to the left or right of the offending team’s goal, but occasionally at center ice.

The middle of the rink is split by lines into a neutral zone around center ice, and two attacking zones closer to each goal. Players’ skates may not precede the puck into the attacking zone in front of their opponent’s goal. Forward passing, however, is encouraged. The puck may not be sent down the ice, crossing both the center line and the opposing goal line, without being touched. This incurs an icing penalty, and results in a face-off at one of the end zone dots.

Players are expected to be in control of their sticks, and the puck may not be struck by a stick held above the shoulders. A stick which causes injury while above the level of an opponent’s shoulders is also subject to specific penalties.

Most of the old infractions still apply, with dozens of additions like hooking, head-butting, and fighting. Penalties are now heavily formalized and time in the penalty box or penalty shots are determined by a number of factors including the type of penalty, prior penalties, and potential overlapping penalties.

As no substitutions for anything other than injury were allowed, this always left the offending team short-handed.

Checking was permitted, but frowned on by players like Arthur Farrell, who loathed these “football tactics” infiltrating hockey.¹⁰⁸⁸

Officials - 1899

Referee: One for the game. Their decision was final on all disputes of play.

Umpires: One for each goal, stationed behind the goal. They determined when a goal had occurred and had final say over goals.

Timekeeper: Tracked the game time, excluding stoppages.

When a player is in the penalty box, the offending team may not replace them on the ice, and must play short-handed. The PWHL has a jailbreak goal system, where scoring short-handed instantly ends the penalty even if the time has not elapsed.

Checking is permitted in the PWHL, but only when there is a clear intention to play or gain possession of the puck.

2024 - Officials

Referees: Two for the game. They assess penalties and drop the puck for the start of each period.

Linespersons: Two for the game. They track and rule on off-sides and icing, and drop the puck for all other face-offs.

Official Scorer: They track the rosters and record all details of goals throughout the game.

Real Time Scorers: Responsible for electronically reporting the score in real time.

Game Timekeeper: Tracks the game time, excluding stoppages, and resets the clock as needed.

Penalty Timekeeper: Tracks the penalty time specifically.

Video Review Staff and Video Goal Judge: Review all goals to determine legality for every game. Handle coordinating video reviews with the on-ice staff.

¹⁰⁸⁸ Farrell, Arthur. *Hockey: Canada's Royal Winter Game*. Montreal. C. R. Corneil, Printer. 1899, P80.

Appendix II: Minnesota Women's Ice Hockey Timeline

- 1892:** The earliest mention of women's hockey, found so far, in a Minnesota published newspaper, with a reference to Lady Isobel Stanley breaking her arm playing ice hockey.
- 1901:** The earliest, contemporary mention of Minnesota girls playing ice hockey, found so far, broadly explaining the game's local popularity in Wanger Township, MN.
- 1906:** Irene Walker and Lillian Griffin, both students in Two Harbors, hold the first practice of their girl's ice hockey team on February 6, organized at their high school.
- 1909:** The formation of a girls' ice hockey team at West High School under the direction of one of Cleve Bennewitz sister's—likely Avis—is announced in Minneapolis. On February 20, the girls take on the boys of the Lake Shore juniors' team and beat them 5-3.
- 1911:** A petition circulates to start women's ice hockey at the University of Minnesota, reported in the *Duluth Herald*.
- 1915:** The women of the Women's Athletic Association of the University of Minnesota formally file to begin an ice hockey program on January 18. Dr. Anna Norris refuses, but relents by February 11, and instructional ice hockey for coeds begins.
- 1916:** J.R. Batchelor organizes a girl's grade school ice hockey league in Duluth, which persists through at least 1919.
- 1917:** The first intramural Women's Ice Hockey Tournament is held at the University of Minnesota February 23-27, with the Sophomore squad, under the leadership of Winifred Bailey, emerging victorious in overtime. The Intramural Sports Committee sponsors the trophy, which is awarded in formally organized women's ice hockey tournaments until the 1930s, with the sport persisting at the University until at least 1935.
- 1921:** Duluth forms a "Girl's" (unmarried women's) Industrial Hockey League, with teams formed by women working at local businesses, that persists through to at least 1930.
- 1922:** Eveleth forms a girl's team with the intention to compete with Duluth's industrial league teams. Multiple girls' and women's teams also form in St. Paul and Minneapolis, with games into the late 20s.
- 1930:** Carleton College has a women's ice hockey team.
- 1933:** Two Harbors forms the "first ever organized here" girl's hockey team (27 years after Walker and Griffin's Two Harbors team).
Eveleth forms a full girl's ice hockey league with games through at least 1939.
- 1940:** Crookston, MN has a girl's hockey team under the coaching of Walt Gerzin.
Girls playing hockey on rinks in Minneapolis is such a "problem" that a girl's "snow hockey" league is formed to get them off the ice, with 11 teams forming that first year.
- 1942:** Halsey Hall reports on 14-year-old Joyce Ellersich of Eveleth in her hunt for a boys' team that will let her play, after newspapers report that her dominance on the ice scares the local teams off.
- 1951:** Bonnie Shea begins playing boys hockey in Duluth, which she will play for eight years before being banned by the principal of East High School after being recruited by the coach.
- 1956:** Halsey Hall calls 12-year-old Judy Westby of Minneapolis "the first girl hockey player to cause a protested game" and while the game is allowed to stand, Judy receives a personal ban after her

team beat a boys' team who protested on the ground that the league rules said "boys' sextet." She vows to play boys' football instead.

- 1960:** International Falls starts a formal girl's park league and claims to have "the nation's first organized girl's hockey program."
- 1965:** Contemporaries remember Louis Schmitz starting girl's hockey in Farmington, which is plausible informally, though direct evidence has not yet been found.
- 1970:** Formally organized, documented girl's hockey under the auspices of Farmington Youth Hockey and Louis Schmitz begins.
- 1971:** Intracity girls' hockey begins in Mounds View under the auspices of Lake Region Hockey in early January.
- 1971-1972:** Burnsville, Farmington, Lakeville, and White Bear Lake all start or continue girls' programs and form the Twin Cities' Girls Hockey league.
- 1972-1973:** The intercity league in the metro expands to include Anoka, Burnsville, Elk River, Farmington, Lakeville, New Brighton (Lake Region), and White Bear Lake.
Bloomington, Cottage Grove, and Minnetonka also form teams which play in invitational tournaments with teams from the metro league.
At least Austin, Brooklyn Park, Como Park, Edina, Rosemount, St. Paul Park, and West St. Paul all form intracity leagues.
- 1973-1974:** The Minnesota Girls Hockey Association is founded under the auspices of the Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA, precursor to MN Hockey).
Lucille Korsman of Farmington is the first woman elected to the MAHA board.
Girl's programs are formed or continue in at least Albert Lea, Anoka, Burnsville, Cottage Grove, Duluth, East Grand Forks, Edina, Elk River, Farmington, Lake Region, Lakeville, New Hope, Northfield, Phalen, West St. Paul, and White Bear Lake.
Sue Ring-Jarvi starts the club team at the University of Minnesota.
Finney Johnston is banned from the boys' team at West Junior High in Richfield and goes on to play for the girls' programs in Cottage Grove and later Burnsville.
The first sanctioned youth girls' State Hockey tournament is held, with the White Bear Lake peewees, Lake Region bantams, and Lake Region midgets taking the first state titles for their respective levels.
- 1974-1975:** Albert Lea, Anoka, Burnsville, Coon Rapids, East Grand Forks, Edina, Elk River, Farmington, Fergus Falls, Lake Region, Lakeville, New Hope, North St. Paul, Northfield, Phalen, Richfield, Wayzata, West St. Paul, and White Bear Lake all form or maintain programs.
The Phalen peewees, Elk River bantams, and Burnsville midgets all win their respective state titles.
The Burnsville midgets, Burnsville peewees (second place), and Lake Region midgets (second place) all attend the first National Invitational Girl's Hockey Tournament in Romulus, MI, with the Burnsville teams each finishing second in the nation in their respective age brackets.
- 1975-1976:** Most Minnesota city leagues either start, continue to have a girls' program, or are openly inviting girls to participate in their boys' programs.
State Championships were won by the Burnsville peewees, the Burnsville bantams, and the Lake Region midgets.

Burnsville again attended the National Invitational Girl's Hockey Tournament, with the peewee girls again finishing second in the nation.

1976-1977: The city leagues continue to have girls' teams or welcome girls into their boys' programs, though girls' teams at the peewee level become limited.

Robin Boeser, who had played for the Burnsville girls' teams from 1972 on, becomes the first girl in the state selected for the boys' varsity squad at Prior Lake High School in her junior year.

State titles are won by the Elk River midgets and the St. Paul-Phalen bantams, with no tournament at the peewee level.

Burnsville's Marlys Broberg predicts that there will be girl's high school varsity hockey by 1982.

1977-1978: MAHA formally appoints Lucille Korsman as vice president in charge of girl's hockey for the state, to support the 1000 women and girls playing on 60 teams from 26 cities registered with MAHA that year.

The Amateur Hockey Association of the United States (AHAUS, precursor to USA Hockey) appoints Cary Gray of Massachusetts as the first coordinator for women's hockey.

Women's teams, frequently led by the women who had aged out of the youth leagues in the early 1970s, noticeably proliferate. The Minnesota Women's Hockey League is formed.

State titles are won by the Burnsville midgets and the Wayzata bantams.

Dr. Bob May recruits girls from many of the teams at the State Tournament to form the Minnesota Checkers, who place second in the nation at the 1978 National Invitational Girl's Hockey Tournament. The Checkers last into the mid 1980s.

1979: A massive shift drops the number of girls and women's teams in the state precipitously, though boys hockey also sees a major decline. Some leagues in the east metro transition to girls' ringette. Some girls' teams, like Farmington, convert into women's teams.

The Checkers win their first National Invitational Girl's Hockey Tournament, and travel to Finland and Russia where they represent Minnesota on an international stage. Governor Quie declares December 12-19, 1979 "International Hockey Tournament Week" in Minnesota in the Checker's honor.

1980-1982: The Minnesota Checkers win three more National titles, before ending their streak with a second-place finish in 1983.

1983: The Minnesota Women's Hockey League holds their first All Stars Game.

1985: Susan Farniok becomes the second woman to appear on a boys' high school varsity team in the state playing goalie for Delano.

1986 The newly renamed Minnesota Women's Hockey Association (formerly League) officially becomes AHAUSA affiliated after starting the process in 1983 under the guidance of Lynn Olson.

Ringette leagues are dominant in the east metro and an exchange tournament with leagues in Manitoba is established.

1987: The Minnesota Thoroughbreds, another all-star travel team like the Minnesota Checkers, is formed. They will last until the early 2000s.

April 20-26, 1987 The first Women's Worlds Hockey Tournament is held in North York, Toronto, Ontario. Five Minnesota women—Deb Ahrens, Lori Bivans, Mary Brown, Laura Halldorson, and Cindy Thompson—play for Team USA. The team takes Bronze in the tournament.

Ringette becomes a staple of the new Star of the North games established by Governor Perpich.

- 1988:** Bloomington becomes the first Minnesota city to hold the AHAUS Girls'/Women's National Ice Hockey Championships, with Minnesota teams competing at every level, including a club team from the University of Minnesota, Duluth.
- 1989:** Lynn Olson is the first woman ever elected to the board of the AHAUS (Later USA Hockey).
- 1990:** First sanctioned IIHF Women's World Hockey Championship is held with Minnesota players Jeanine Sobeck, Shawna Davidson, and Kelley Owen playing for Team USA. Team USA takes the silver. Jenny Hanley of Edina becomes the first girl to play in a boys' varsity state section final, but just misses making the state tournament.
- 1991:** Parents from five districts in the east metro, mostly in Dakota County, file a sex discrimination complaint with the State Department of Education in an attempt to make Ringette a varsity girls sport. The DoE affirms that the districts are in violation of Title IX. News of the suit creates a renewed push from the Minnesota Women's Hockey Association for hockey to become a varsity sport. South St. Paul, North St. Paul, Mendota Heights, and South Washington County vote to authorize girls' high school varsity ringette, and the first game is held between Park High School of Cottage Grove and Henry Sibley High School on December 3.
Jenny Hanley of Edina becomes the first women in the United States to play on a men's college varsity team when she joins the Division III Hamline University Pipers for the 1991-1992 season, playing and winning her first game on November 15.
AHAUS becomes USA Hockey.
- 1992:** Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
Minnesota hosts for the second time the Girl's and Women's National Tournament in Duluth.
- 1993:** Burnsville decides to survey their students before deciding on a girls' ice sport to add to bring the district into Title IX compliance, and in a 225 hockey-101 ringette-61 other-56 speed skating vote, the girls of Burnsville choose ice hockey. On March 18, 1993, the district board unanimously voted to make Burnsville High School the first school in Minnesota with girls' varsity hockey.
- 1993-1994:** Burnsville High School is joined by Anoka/Champlin Park, Elk River, Benilde-St. Margaret's, the Blake School, Blaine/Coon Rapids, St. Paul United and Wayzata for the first season of girls' high school varsity hockey.
Ringette continues in other districts, and the third Ringette World Championship is held in March of 1994 in South St. Paul and Rosemount.
Farmington's Amber Hegland becomes the first girl on a boys' high school varsity team to play in the boys' state hockey tournament.
Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
Rep. Phyllis Kahn's Gender Equity in Indoor Ice Arenas bill passes, requiring women's teams to be equitably scheduled at arenas.
- 1994-1995:** After a number of districts authorize hockey, the Minnesota State High School League formally sanctions high school varsity hockey, making Minnesota the first state in the country with sanctioned girls' varsity hockey.
The first state tournament is held on February 24-25, 1995. Apple Valley beats South St. Paul for the title, with Henry Sibley and Stillwater coming in third and fourth.
The Mighty Ducks law passes, appropriating \$2.8 million to help build 60-70 ice rinks around the state and ease ice time concerns for the girls.

- 1995-1996:** Augsburg College offers collegiate women's varsity ice hockey for the first time in the state, though club teams have existed at most schools, including Augsburg, since the 1970s. Jill Pohtilla is named head coach.
- Minnesota plays host for the third time for the Girl's and Women's National Tournament, in Bloomington.
- The women's Three Nations Cup begins, between Canada, the US and Finland, as a preview of future Olympic hockey. Canada wins, with the US taking second.
- 1997-1998:** Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships, but manages to take the gold in the Three Nations Cup.
- The University of Minnesota makes women's ice hockey a varsity sport. Laura Halldorson is selected as head coach. They play their first game on November 11, 1997, beating Augsburg 8-0.
- Women's Ice Hockey is a competition sport for the first time at the 1998 Olympic Winter Games in Nagano, Japan. The United States brings home the gold, with St. Paul's Alana Blahoski and Edina's Jenny Schmidgall-Potter on the medal winning team.
- Alana Blahoski becomes the first Minnesota woman to sign a letter of intent to play professional women's hockey, but the startup league fails to find funding.
- 1999:** Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
- 2000:** The Minnesota Women's Hockey Association becomes the Women's Hockey Association of Minnesota (WHAM).
- Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA) becomes Minnesota Hockey, though both names will continue to appear for several years.
- The University of Minnesota wins the American Women's College Hockey Alliance National Championship, the last of three held prior to the NCAA sanctioning the sport. Augsburg takes second place in the Division III tournament.
- Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
- 2001:** The IIHF Women's World Championships are held in Minnesota. Team USA takes silver for the seventh time in their seventh meet up with Canada in the finals. St. Paul's Alana Blahoski, Eagan's Natalie Darwitz, Edina's Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, Brooklyn Park's Krissy Wendell-Pohl, Roseville's Winny Brodt-Brown, and Apple Valley's Annamarie Holmes play in their home state for Team USA.
- Minnesota hosts the Girl's and Women's National Tournament for the fourth time, in Blaine at the Schwan Super Rink.
- The University of Minnesota-Duluth wins the first women's ice hockey NCAA National Championship. Over the next sixteen years UMD and the U of MN will combine to win nationals 11 times (UMD: 2001, 2002, 2003, 2008, 2010; U of MN: 2004, 2005, 2012, 2013, 2015, 2016).
- 2002:** In the Salt Lake City Winter Olympics, Team USA comes home with the silver after losing to Canada. Eagan's Natalie Darwitz, Edina's Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, and Brooklyn Park's Krissy Wendell-Pohl are the Minnesotans on the team.
- Ridder Arena, the first facility dedicated to women's hockey, opens at the University of Minnesota. The first game on the ice is U of MN v. St. Cloud State on October 19, 2002, which the U wins 8-0.
- 2004:** The professional Minnesota Whitecaps are founded as a member of the Western Women's Hockey League.
- Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.

- 2005:** In their ninth meet-up in nine finals for the IIHF Women's World Championships, the USA finally wins, taking home the Gold. Eagan's Natalie Darwitz, Edina's Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, Brooklyn Park's Krissy Wendell-Pohl, and Loretto's Megan Van Beuskom are the Minnesotans on the team.
- 2006:** In the Torino Winter Olympics, Team USA comes home with the silver once again, after losing to Canada once again. Natalie Darwitz, Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, and Krissy Wendell-Pohl again make the team from Minnesota.
- 2007:** Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
- 2008:** In their eleventh meet-up in eleven IIHF Women's World Championships finals, the USA takes home the gold for the second ever time, with Eagan's Natalie Darwitz, Edina's Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, Warroad's Gigi Marvin, and Orono's Rachael Drazan the Minnesotan delegation on the team. The IIHF begins to offer world tournaments at the junior level of women's hockey for the first time.
- 2009:** 12 straight IIHF Women's World Championship final appearances, 9 silver medals and 2 prior golds, Team USA takes gold for the third time, with the help of Minnesotans Natalie Darwitz, Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, Gigi Marvin, and Megan Van Beuskom.
- 2010:** The Minnesota Whitecaps win the Clarkson cup in the Western Women's Hockey League. For the first time in international competition, Sweden upsets the US for a spot in the finals of the 2010 Vancouver Winter Olympics. Team USA beats Finland for the bronze, with Minnesotans Natalie Darwitz, Jenny Schmidgall-Potter, and Gigi Marvin on the squad.
- 2011:** After the WWHL was folded into the Canadian Women's Hockey League, the Minnesota Whitecaps become an independent team and take on college hockey teams in exhibition games for several years.
Team USA wins their 3rd straight, 4th overall gold beating Canada for the 13th time in the IIHF Women's World Championship. St. Cloud's Anne Schleper joins veterans Gigi Marvin and Jenny Schmidgall-Potter as the Minnesotans on the team.
Wisconsin born, but Minnesota claimed Karyn Bye-Dietz is the second US women to be inducted into the IIHF Hockey Hall of Fame.
- 2012:** Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
- 2013:** Team USA comes back for the gold in the 2013 IIHF Women's World Championship with Gigi Marvin, Anne Schleper, Roseville's Lee Stecklein, and Roseau's Sarah Erickson.
- 2014:** In Sochi, at the Winter Olympic Games, the final, once again between the US and Canada, goes into overtime for the first time in Olympics history. Team USA and Minnesotans Gigi Marvin, Anne Schleper, and Lee Stecklein wind up with the silver medal.
- 2015:** Team USA beats Canada for the gold medal in the IIHF Women's Worlds, with Anne Schleper, Lee Stecklein, Vadnais' Heights Hannah Brandt, St. Paul's Stephanie Anderson, and Plymouth's Dani Cameranesi on the team.
- 2016:** The USA beats Canada for the gold medal in the IIHF Women's Worlds, with just Lee Stecklein representing Minnesota on the team.
- 2017:** After a contract dispute, Team USA takes gold over Canada again in the IIHF Women's Worlds. Gigi Marvin, Lee Stecklein, Hannah Brandt, Plymouth's Kelly Pannek, and Andover's Maddie Rooney play from Minnesota.

- 2018:** In the 2018 PyeongChang Olympics, Team USA won gold in a shootout with Canada, with Minnesotan goalie Maddie Rooney making the save. Gigi Marvin, Lee Stecklein, Hannah Brandt, Dani Cameranesi, Sidney Morin, and Kelly Pannek also served on the squad.
- 2019:** The Minnesota Whitecaps join the National Women's Hockey League officially and win the Isobel Cup in their first season.
For the first time ever, the IIHF Women's World final has no Canada, as Finland and the US compete for the gold. Team USA, with Minnesotans Lee Stecklein, Hannah Brandt, Dani Cameranesi, Kelly Pannek, Emma Polusny, and Sydney Brodt, takes home the gold for the fifth straight championship. The Canadian Women's Hockey League suddenly folds, and numerous professional women's players opt to form the Professional Women Hockey Players Association to push for a sustainable model for professional women's hockey.
- 2020:** The National Women's Hockey League rebrands as the Premier Hockey Federation, with the Minnesota Whitecaps continuing in the league.
- 2021:** Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
- 2022:** In both the 2022 Beijing Winter Olympics and the 2022 IIHF Women's World Championships, held in a single year for the first time, Team USA once again takes silver to Canada, with Lee Stecklein, Hannah Brandt, Kelley Pannek, Maddie Rooney, and Grace Zumwinkle on both squads. Dani Cameranesi played only in the Olympics and Rory Guilday and Taylor Heise both served on the IIHF squad.
- 2023:** The Walter Group acquires assets of the Premier Hockey Federation, folding that league, and the PWHPA enters into a collective bargaining agreement with what will become the newly formed Professional Women's Hockey League.
After two years of losses to Canada following the Covid-19 pandemic, Team USA captures the gold in the IIHF Women's Worlds. Lee Stecklein, Kelly Pannek, Rory Guilday, Taylor Heise, and Gabbie Hughes all appear on Team USA
- 2024:** In the inaugural season of the Professional Women's Hockey League, PWHL Minnesota wins the first ever Walter Cup in the championship series against PWHL Boston.
Team USA takes silver in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
- 2025:** In the second season of the PWHL, the newly named Minnesota Frost take the Walter Cup for the second time in the championship series against the Ottawa Charge.
Team USA, with Lee Stecklein, Kelly Pannek, Grace Zumwinkle, and Taylor Heise, beats Canada for the Gold in the IIHF Women's World Championships.
The first ever World Para Ice Hockey Women's World Championship is held in Dolny Kubin, Slovakia. Bemidji's Chloe Kirkpatrick was the sole Minnesotan on Team USA, who wins the gold in a 7-1 victory over Canada.
- 2026:** Team USA, with Minnesotans Lee Stecklein, Rory Guilday, Kelly Pannek, Grace Zumwinkle, and Taylor Heise, wins gold in a nail-biting overtime 2-1 win over Canada in the 2026 Milano-Cortina Olympics.
Lakeville's Maggie Flaherty becomes the first woman in the PWHL to win three consecutive Walter Cups, scoring a goal in the final game for the Montréal Victoire.

Appendix III: Women's Hockey Histories

Over the course of the last year and a half, this project grew from what was originally supposed to be a single social media post, into a one to three page e-newsletter, into a regular 30 page *Over the Years*, and finally into the magazine you hold in your hands and an upcoming exhibit that will open at the Lawshe Memorial Museum and later, in portion, travel the state.

It felt important to direct you to other projects, some of which are completed and others that are pending. Some of these projects can offer deeper dives into information there wasn't space to cover here, or incredible first-person accounts from women who lived through this history. Some are American, some Canadian, some Minnesotan, some not. But all are great places to go further and learn more if your interest is peaked.

History Books and Memoirs

Can You Keep Up? Fifty Years of Organizing, Playing, and Coaching Women's Hockey in Minnesota by Sue Ring-Jarvi. Itasca Books, April 2025.

Hockey: Canada's Royal Winter Game by Arthur Farrell. C. R. Corneil, 1899.

Available to read for free from the Library and Archive Canada at https://central.bac-lac.gc.ca/.item?id=hockey_canadas_royal_wi&op=pdf&app=Library

As Fast As Her: Dream Big, Break Barriers, Achieve Success by Kendall Coyne Schofield and Estelle Laure. Zondervan, 2022.

Pink Power: The First Women's World Hockey Champions by Lorna Schultz Nicholson. Lorimer, 2008.

Breaking the Ice: My Journey to Olympic Hockey, the Ivy League, and Beyond by Angela Ruggiero. Drummond Publishing Group, 2006.

Crashing the Net: The U.S. Women's Olympic Ice Hockey Team and the Road to Gold by Mary Turco. Harper Perennial, 1999.

Too Many Men on the Ice: Women's Hockey in North America by Joanna Avery and Julie Stevens. Polestar Book Publishers, 1997.

On the Edge: Women Making Hockey History by Elizabeth Etue and Megan K. Williams. Second Story Press, 1996.

Proud Past, Bright Future: One Hundred Years of Canadian Women's Hockey by Brian MacFarlane. Stoddart Publishing, 1994.

Ice in Their Veins by Ian Kennedy. Tidewater Press, 2024.

Kids/Youth Books

Rosie the Hockey Player: The History of Women's Hockey by Jenna M. Prestidge and Emma Gauhl. 2025.

Rosie the Hockey Player is a cute, seven book, illustrated fictional series self-published by the author who wanted a hockey childrens' book with a female main character for her daughters. Book seven has Rosie and her grandmother, who played in the 90s, sitting down to talk about the history of the game. Targeted at the 3 to 10-year-old range.

Hockey Girl: The story of a girl who wanted to play ice hockey by Sharon Rosenblatt Kramer and Zoey Kramer, illustrated by Caterina Baldi. Independently published, January 13, 2025.

This very sweet picture book was written by a young player, with her grandmother, and explains hockey basics in a very kid friendly way! Targeted at the 7 to 14-year-old range.

Breaking the Ice: The True Story of the First Woman to Play in the National Hockey League by Angie Bullaro and C.F. Payne. Simon and Schuster, 2020.

A picture book about the life of Manon Rhéaume, the first female NHL player. Targeted at the 4 to 8-year-old range.

Bea Mullins Takes a Shot by Emily Deibert. Random House, 2025.

This book is a fictional middle-grade novel about a girl who joins her after-school girls hockey team and experiences her first crush, team financial challenges, and fierce friendships. Incredibly cute and targeted at the 8 to 12-year-old range.

Hockey Wars by Sam Lawrence and Ben Jackson. Indie Publishing Group, 2018.

A fifteen book series about the kids in a small town whose team becomes split by gender in fourth grade, and the strain it puts on their friendships and ice time. Targeted at the 6 to 10-year-old range.

Film Projects

Girl Tough. Film in progress.

While still in progress, former Minnesota Checkers' player Kim Scherek and researcher Leslie Bates are actively shopping a script about the Minnesota Checkers 1979 Nationals win. The film will be a wonderful addition to the history of women's hockey in the state. If you are interested, you can follow them on Facebook at <https://www.facebook.com/TheCheckersMovie/>.

Final Note: Tape to Tape

Dakota County Historical Society would like to take a moment and boldly declare that while Minnesota is the “State of Hockey,” and Eveleth might be the “Capitol City of American Hockey,” Dakota County is certainly the “Premier County of Women’s Hockey.”

Think we’re wrong? We might be. And we’d love to challenge folks to prove it.

(Inviting you to tell more women’s hockey stories just didn’t feel as *hockey* as offering to fight you over the title we definitely didn’t just make up.)

So much of women’s hockey history is still hiding in fragments and notes. The hundreds of inches of space local papers like *The Dakota County Tribune*, dedicated to the women in their communities, means there is a lot of potential for more to be sitting in microfiche cabinets and collections of smaller historical societies all over the state.

Chasing down every loose puck was impossible for the scope of a single project, but we’d love to see more of this story told, are happy to share the resources and leads we’ve found, and would be thrilled to hear about yours and add them into our files for future researchers to utilize.

Additionally, if you are a woman who played or coached, we’d also still love to hear from you and add your story to our research files. Please feel free to contact lisa.imbryk@co.dakota.mn.us if you’d like to share—even if your story is just a small one!