

PRESERVING, STRENGTHENING AND CELEBRATING MINNESOTA COMMUNITY HOCKEY



IN COLLABORATION WITH



MIKE SNEE
MINNESOTA WILD FOUNDATION



Skate It Forward is a hockey state of mind in Minnesota.

Hockey's unique connection to the community in our state means we gladly give back to the sport however we are able.

It's existed since the game was first played in Minnesota.

It's why we are the State of Hockey.

Minnesotans leave the hockey campsite better than we found it.

We Skate It Forward.





Preserve, strengthen, and celebrate community hockey in Minnesota



MIKE SNEE

- 29-year working career in hockey
- Youth hockey and baseball coach (since 2004)
- Minneapolis Hockey Board Member (2018 – 2025)
- USA Hockey Board Member (2014 – 2023)
- Duluth native – Portman kid!



MIKE SNEE'S ELITE PROSPECTS PAGE



COMMUNITY HOCKEY IN MINNESOTA

“Minnesota’s community hockey model is the best in the country by far. Whether it’s developing as a hockey player or the pride of playing for something bigger than yourself, nowhere else is close to the success of Minnesota.”

- Topher Scott, The Hockey Think Tank

COMMUNITY HOCKEY IN MINNESOTA

- Non-profit community hockey associations
- Vibrant high school hockey
- Statewide culture of not-for-profit ice arenas
 - Can't be emphasized enough!





HOW HEALTHY IS MINNESOTA COMMUNITY HOCKEY

1. Quantity of players
2. Quality of players
3. Financial cost to play
4. Other “costs” to play
5. How meaningful and inspirational?

THE STATE OF HOCKEY!

67,000 Minnesotans play hockey

- 50,000 - Massachusetts
- 45,000 - Michigan
- 45,000 – New York



8U GIRLS

| | <u>2009</u> | <u>2025</u> |
|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| Minnesota | 3,426 | 5,511 (+2,085) |
| Massachusetts | 2,311 | 3,171 (+860) |
| New York | 1,278 | 2,232 (+406) |
| Michigan | 887 | 1,293 (+954) |



8U BOYS

| | <u>2009</u> | <u>2025</u> |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|
| Minnesota | 12,849 | 12,924 (+75) |
| Massachusetts. | 11,172 | 9,252 (-1,920) |
| New York | 9,719 | 9,244 (-475) |
| Michigan | 7,622 | 6,306 (-1,316) |



2025 USA HOCKEY PARTICIPATION

Minnesota

- 1.7% of 8U Americans
- 13% of 8U hockey playing American boys (12,984)
- 20% of 8U hockey playing American girls (5,570)





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NCAA DI WOMEN: 2024-25

| | |
|---------------|-----|
| Minnesota | 204 |
| Massachusetts | 114 |
| New York | 48 |
| Michigan | 42 |

202 of 204 played high school hockey (99%)

- 61 high schools represented



NCAA DI MEN: 2024-25

| | |
|---------------|--------------------------------|
| Minnesota | 247 (Most ever for any state!) |
| Massachusetts | 117 |
| New York | 113 |
| Michigan | 111 |

223 of 247 played high school hockey (90%)

- 68 high schools represented

PWHL: 2024-25

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Minnesota | 18 |
| New York | 7 |
| Michigan | 5 |
| Massachusetts | 3 |

18 of 18 played high school hockey

- 15 high schools represented



NHL: 2024-25

| | |
|---------------|----|
| Minnesota | 61 |
| Michigan | 40 |
| Massachusetts | 36 |
| New York | 29 |

54 of 61 played high school hockey

- 32 high schools represented



2025 NHL DRAFT

17 of 52 Americans drafted were Minnesotan

- 16 played Minnesota community association hockey
 - They played at 14 different Community Hockey Associations
 - Shakopee, Champlin Park, and Spring Lake Park all had a player drafted in the first three rounds!
- 12 played Minnesota High School Hockey
 - 10 different high schools were represented (9 public, 1 private)
- 33% of American players drafted were from Minnesota
 - 10% – New York (5)
 - 10% - Illinois (5)
 - 6% – Michigan (3)
 - 4% – Massachusetts (2)

MORE JUICE FROM THE SQUEEZE

45,791 8U male hockey players in the United States in 2014-15

- Minnesota – 6143 (*13% of all 8U male hockey players in the United States in 2014-15*)
- Massachusetts – 5576 (12%)
- New York – 4369 (10%)
- Michigan – 3149 (7%)
- Illinois – 2667 (6%)

Indexing 2025 NHL draft success based on total number of 8U male hockey players in 2014-15

- 254 – Minnesota
- 167 – Illinois
- 100 – New York
- 86 – Michigan
- 33 - Massachusetts

MINNESOTA: OVER-INDEXING

- 1 out of 59 Americans are from Minnesota (1.7%)
 - Minnesota – 5,800,000
 - Massachusetts – 7,000,000
 - Michigan – 10,000,000
 - New York – 19,600,000
 - *United States* – 345,000,000
- 1 out of 9.5 Americans that play hockey. (11%)
- 1 out of 5 American men that play NCAA DI hockey. (21%)
- 1 out of 4.5 American men in the NHL. (22%)
- 1 out of 3 American women playing NCAA DI hockey. (33%)
- 1 out of 2.7 American women in the PWHL. (37%)



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MUCH MORE THAN JUST HOCKEY DEVELOPMENT

Player & Family

- Spent significantly less of their parent's money to play hockey.
- Spent far less time traveling and in hotel rooms.
- Missed fewer days of school.
- Lived at home much longer.
- More able to include other important pursuits of childhood.
 - See Mason West & football

State of Hockey culture

- Local heroes inspiring their neighbors.
- More impactful girls hockey.
- Statewide small-town hockey – only in Minnesota!



From: [REDACTED]

Sent: Friday, February 28, 2025 8:28 AM

To: Snee, Mike <mike.snee@wild.com>

Subject:] [REDACTED] Pilot Program

Good morning, Mike!

Currently I am the head coach for the Girls High School team - and one of our biggest priorities is engaging with the youth and making hockey fun (and affordable) for everyone!

Currently the city is looking at increasing the cost of ice time from top to bottom - which in turn would result in higher costs for our high school families. There is talk that next season prices per player could be raised to \$900 dollars.

The Iron Range is strong in community, and hockey. We have hard working families on the Iron Range and hearing the prices could skyrocket to \$900 is so disheartening and I fear we could lose a lot of players because of this.

[REDACTED]

Girls Hockey Head Coach

218-[REDACTED]



August 1, 2025

Kat Pierce's son played the 2024 season for his local high school team and a competitive travel club, the McKinney North Stars. She said she and her husband spent about \$30,000 on hockey expenses last year alone.

Club and league fees – which cover teams' ice rental – cost about \$9,000. Another \$8,000 went toward airfare, hotels, rental cars, gas, and meals for out-of-town games and tournaments. The rest covered private camps, lessons, training, equipment and team apparel.





Topher Scott 
@HockeyThinkTank



Every Tier 1 organization in Illinois is required to have a "Fact Sheet" that breaks down the costs for the season for families looking to join. I got sent one for a 10u team.

The estimated cost just for the org fee and travel:

Over \$17,000.

For 9-10 year olds.

6:19 AM · Jun 2, 2025 · **76.4K** Views



Read 44 replies



Minnesota Hockey Districts



Tier 1 Elite League





A NATIONAL HISTORIC LANDMARK BUILT IN 1883
THE FREIGHT HOUSE
 RESTAURANT SUNDECK EVENT CENTER LIVE MUSIC

| | | |
|------|---------------|-------|
| HOME | 0:00 | GUEST |
| 3 | PERIOD 3 | 05 |
| PLYR | PENALTY | PLYR |
| : | 0 | : |
| : | SHOTS ON GOAL | 0 |
| : | : | : |


LAKE ELMO BANK
 A TRADITION OF SERVICE

9:09



Quantum Fiber
 ORCHIN + ORCHIN
 SPECIALISTS IN ORTHODONTICS
 Technology • Experience = Your Best
 Stillwater Family Dental
 Supporting Youth Activities
 651-351-0890
 Gossip Nails
 LOST A MITTEN? CHOPPERMILL.COM
 BUILDTEC CONTRACTING COMPANY LLC
 651-439-0000
 ROOFING SIDING GUTTERS
 MODERN PRIVATE CONFERENCE



COMMUNITY HOCKEY IN MINNESOTA

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“When you walk into an ice rink in Minnesota, they’re show pieces; they are prideful aspects of the community. If you lose the community rink, you lose the community model, because a for-profit model doesn’t cater to the community; it caters to profit.”

- Ryan Ossenmacher / President, Michigan HS Hockey Coaches Assoc.

Northfield's hockey rink is outdated. A \$25 million replacement is likely on the way.

After years of debate over the cost, construction of the new ice arena could start in May, pending City Council approval.

By Eva Herscowitz

The Minnesota Star Tribune

APRIL 28, 2025 AT 6:00AM



Seeking hockey rinks, street repairs and more, cities make case for new sales taxes

St. Paul, Edina, Bloomington and other cities angling for local sales taxes tread a fine line between education and advocacy.

By Josie Albertson-Grove

AUGUST 26, 2023 AT 3:00PM



Willmar City Council gives the green light to outdoor skating rink/pavilion

December 23, 2024

The City of Willmar is moving forward with an outdoor ice rink and pavilion outside The Willmar Civic Center. City Administrator Leslie Valiant says they have a base price of 1.4 million dollars, and will pay for the facility using leftover funds from other Invest in Willmar projects.





NISSWA CITY PARK FUNDRAISING UPDATE

PHASE 2

Included in Phase 2 are a proposed hockey rink with a roof and refrigeration system, skating rink, warming house, maintenance garage, and plaza. Estimated cost for Phase 2 is \$8,565,00.



Worthington approves \$5M for new hockey arena, but supporters say they face a 'tall task' to get on the ice

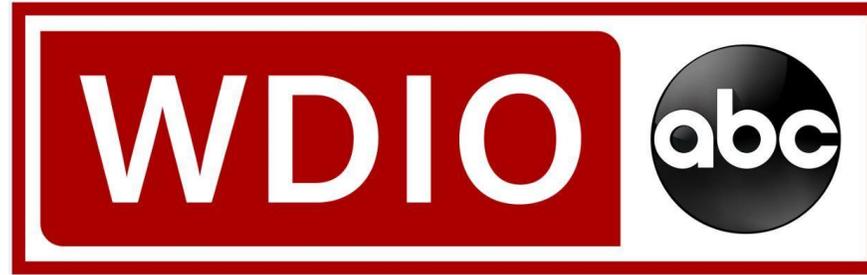
The cost of new arena is projected at \$21 million.

By Jp Lawrence

The Minnesota Star Tribune

MAY 1, 2025 AT 9:00AM





Grand Rapids will soon have arena ice outside at Miners Pavilion

October 4, 2024

A first for the Northland, and it's in Grand Rapids. This year, there will be arena ice outdoors, at Miners Pavilion. The pavilion was built in 2016, and is right next to Yanmar Arena.

Grand Rapids Youth Hockey has been working diligently on this. Ryan Dekich, a hockey parent and board member, told us, "The community has really stepped up. And the hockey families have been here, putting in the time to make this facility what it is."



ESTD 1876 Delano, MN

SPIRIT PARK PROJECT 2024-2025

In 2022, the City of Delano, Delano Public Schools, and Delano Hockey (Delano Area Sports Arena and Delano Area Youth Hockey Association) established a [memorandum of understanding](#) regarding the development of a new ice skating facility.





New state-of-the-art Hermantown hockey arena

August 12, 2025

Two years ago, Hermantown residents voted to raise sales taxes by half of a percent. The result is a new \$24 million state-of-the-art hockey arena that is nearing completion.



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90

DUHAIME
21

26
GUSTAVSSON
32

25
BROWN
24

LUCARELLO
20

97
KAPRIZOV

7

7

7

COMMUNITY HOCKEY – REASON FOR CONCERN

“A thousand moments that I had just taken for granted. Mostly because I had assumed that there would be a thousand more.”

- Seen at a Winery on the North Shore



COMMUNITY HOCKEY – REASON FOR CONCERN

- Youth Hockey is a lucrative business!
 - MOST youth hockey in the United States is a business
 - 67,000 hockey players = 67,000 potential hockey customers
 - General movement towards youth athletics as a business
- Poorly informed parents
 - Incorrect perception of Community Hockey's overwhelming success
- **NEW:** CHL (major junior) eligibility
- **EVEN NEWER:** Nationwide USAH Tier I League



BOYS LEAVING COMMUNITY HOCKEY – MORE & YOUNGER

- **34** – 2018
- **35** – 2019
- *24* – 2020 (COVID)
- *29* – 2021 (COVID)
- **45** – 2022
- **65** – 2023
- **101** – 2024

**DOES NOT count junior hockey*

DECREASING HIGH SCHOOL HOCKEY PROGRAMS

Boys

- 157 – 2010
- 140 – 2025

Girls

- 123 - 2017
- 111 - 2025



Why Bloomington Kennedy, St. Paul Johnson won't be the last Minnesota high school hockey teams to expire

By Chip Scoggins; Minnesota Star Tribune
February 28, 2025

----- Forwarded message -----

From Thomasm@gmail.com

Date: Thu, May 18, 2023 at 2:34 PM

Subject: 2010 Des Moines Jr. Buccaneer's - Tier 1 AAA Team

My name is **NAME** and if you're on this email, I've most likely coached your son at one point or another at MN Made, Association or in Tournament. I'm reaching out to see if you would have any interest in learning more about Tier 1 hockey (winter season).

MN primarily plays community based hockey but just about everywhere else in the US plays Tier 1 (at least at high levels). The biggest difference is visibility and scouting as they age. This is the first year that US Hockey is hosting the 2010 age group (U13) for a national championship tournament.

Des Moines is adding a U13 team this upcoming season and there are a few spots available. I've offered to reach out to parents to answer questions and see if there is any interest in signing with the Bucs. Tier 1 is US Hockey sanctioned so you would not be eligible to play for your local association as you cannot be double rostered. Those of you that still play at MN Made could potentially do both as they are sanctioned by AAU (not sure what their attendance policy is though).



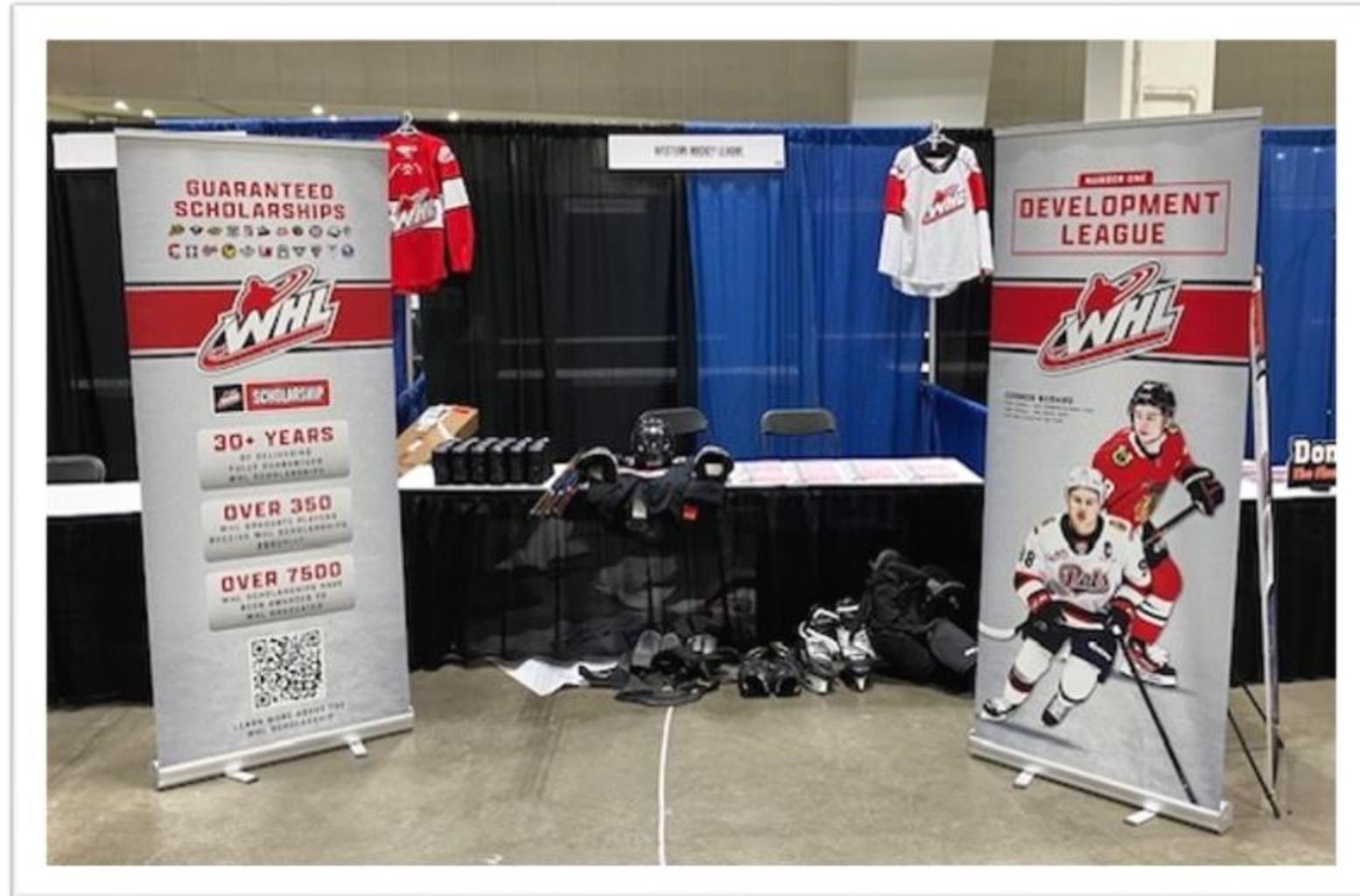
“We tried to keep them. But for some reason kids from Minnesota want to go back and play a lower level of hockey. To me, playing at a lower level, if you’re a serious hockey player, does not make sense. You don’t get better playing at lower levels. But for some reason, the culture in Minnesota, they think it’s more important to play in front of a big crowd and their girlfriends.”

- Tier I junior coach





COMMUNITY HOCKEY – REASON FOR CONCERN



“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness.”

- Charles Dickens





A Minnesota Wild Foundation initiative supporting community hockey

Introduced on Hockey Day Minnesota 2025



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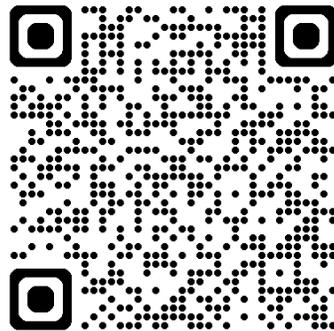
- Compel more Minnesota girls and boys to play hockey.
- Reinforce the importance of community-owned ice facilities.
- Inform, educate and celebrate about community hockey success.

***Philanthropic. We must raise money.**



Thank you!

Skate It Forward on Hockey Day Minnesota



A Minnesota Wild Foundation initiative supporting community hockey