

MHJ



**MINNESOTA
HOCKEY JOURNAL**

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**2023 HOCKEY
CAMP GUIDE**

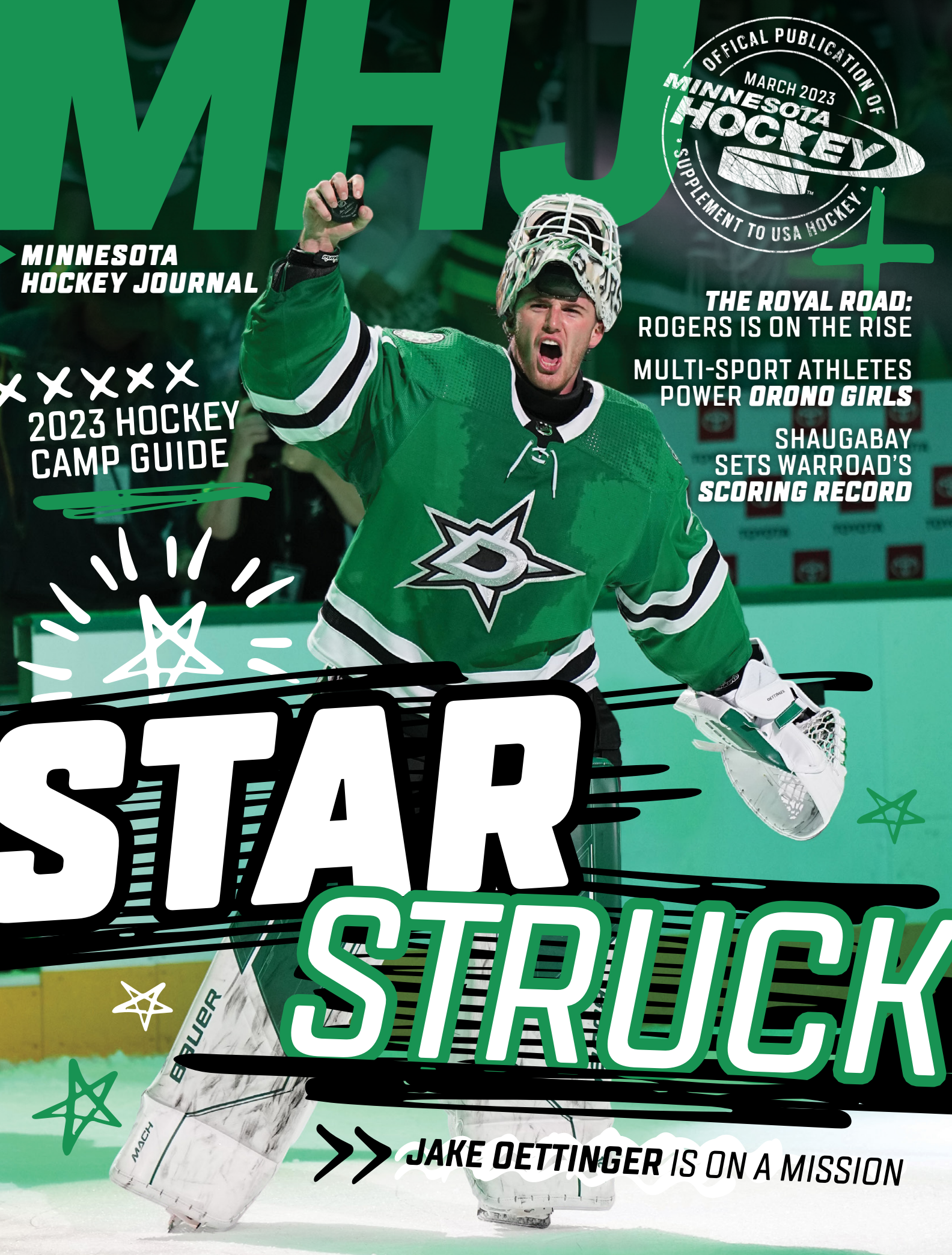
**THE ROYAL ROAD:
ROGERS IS ON THE RISE**

**MULTI-SPORT ATHLETES
POWER *ORONO* GIRLS**

**SHAUGABAY
SETS WARROAD'S
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The purpose of Minnesota Hockey, an affiliate of USA Hockey, is to encourage and improve the standard of youth and other amateur ice hockey, to conduct ice hockey tournaments and to select representative teams to participate in tournaments; to associate with other ice hockey associations; to do any and all acts necessary for creating further interest in youth and other amateur hockey."

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FACEOFF

22

SPORTY SPARTANS

Multi-sport athletes give Orono girls' hockey an edge.

Soccer goalie **Zoe Lopez** has emerged as one of the top hockey goal scorers in the state.

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UNFINISHED BUSINESS

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ON THE COVER:

Jake Oettinger celebrates a playoff win over the Calgary Flames last year.

Photo by Glenn James/NHLI via Getty Images



Goals & Assists



► Skylar Vetter has been named a semifinalist for the 2023 Women's Hockey Goalie of the Year Award.

SKYLAR VETTER
(Minnesota/Lakeville)

TOTAL AMERICAN DIVISION I
WOMEN'S HOCKEY PLAYERS:

675



1 in 3 American D-I Women
Come From Minnesota (222)

PHOTO BOOTH

A League of Their Own

Minnesotans dominate the Division I women's hockey landscape

→ There's no better place on earth to develop Division I women's hockey players. Data from the 2022-23 season shows Minnesota is once again No. 1.



PAETYN LEVIS
(Ohio State/Rogers)

TOP 5 STATES PRODUCING DIVISION I WOMEN'S HOCKEY PLAYERS

MINN.	222
MASS.	106
N.Y.	59
MICH.	44
ILL.	40

222

(THAT'S MORE THAN Mass.,
N.Y., and Ill. combined.)

TAYLOR NELSON
(Bemidji State/Carlton)



TOTAL DIVISION I WOMEN'S HOCKEY PLAYERS:

1,074



1 in 5 Division I Women's Hockey Players Come From Minnesota (21%)

BRIEJA PARENT
(St. Thomas/Forest Lake)



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▶ MINNESOTA'S BEST PLAY HIGH PERFORMANCE

The CCM Minnesota Hockey High Performance Spring Programs and Fall Tier I Leagues provide the best players in Minnesota with an opportunity to compete and train with and against each other. As a part of the USA Hockey Player Development process, the HP Spring Programs provide a series of evaluations, festivals and camps to identify, expose and develop the best players in Minnesota from ages 14-18 with the top players from the 15, 16 and 17 levels advancing to the USA Hockey National Festivals.

The HP Fall Tier I Leagues offer players high performance training, exposure and skill development in combination with intense competition leading up to the Pee wee, Bantam, Girls 15U or High School season. All teams will have the opportunity to compete for the chance to represent Minnesota at the USA Hockey Tier I and II National Championships. For more information, including the most up to date schedule, visit minnesotahockey.org/highperformance.

▶ FUTURES DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM LAUNCHES THIS SPRING

Minnesota Hockey's Futures Development Program aims to aid players, coaches, and families across the state who are searching for an offseason development-based offering that would be open to all players with 2010 and 2011 birth years.

This program is available to age-eligible players across the state on a first-come, first serve basis and will be run through the athletes' respective home Districts.

"After years of research and development, we are thrilled to bring the Futures Development Program to life," said Minnesota Hockey's Vice President of Hockey



Operations, Jeremy Reed. "The program will provide access to any player and will feature top of the line coaching, regardless of a player's ability, experience or home district. The Futures Development Program will combine the best curriculum of USA Hockey, coupled with instruction from a variety of qualified, trained, and dedicated coaches."

Visit minnesotahockey.org/futuresdevelopment for more information.

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Game Changer

New outdoor refrigeration system gives DinoMights a boost

→ It was a long time coming, but **Scott Harman** could finally soak in the moment. The DinoMights' new refrigerated rink, a yearslong project filled with stops and starts, was complete.

"It's a total game changer," said Harman, executive director of the Twin Cities youth development program. "It probably increases the kids' ice time by 40-50%, so that's going to be big."

The ceremonial ribbon cutting was held on Feb. 5 at the new and improved Billy Lindsay Rink, with the Lindsay family in attendance, on the Midtown Greenway in South Minneapolis. The renovation will greatly improve the ice quality and extend the outdoor season.

"It's huge—just huge," said **Julie Pleshe**, volunteer coach of the DinoMights' Penguins team. "This gives the kids so much more ice time. There's something really special about playing outside that makes you feel closer to the sport, in a spiritual way almost. It has just been really fun watching them in that environment."

More Than Hockey

But the benefits of the Billy Lindsay Rink extend far beyond the ice, Harman says. DinoMights is planning to leverage the outdoor ice sheet with drop-in tutoring, so kids can skate for an hour or two after school and get their homework done.

After all, DinoMights, which has been around since 1995, is not just a hockey club. It's about supporting youth development of physical, social, academic and spiritual excellence.

That's why Pleshe got involved with DinoMights in the first place.

"This program is a lot more than hockey," said Pleshe. "You learn how to fail and you learn how to try hard and how to be humble and take constructive criticism and feedback. You learn how to be a team player and you learn life lessons."



▶ The DinoMights Peewees, along with the Lindsay family, cut the ribbon on the newly refrigerated Billy Lindsay Rink.

Twin Cities Team Effort

Pleshe, who works at Tradition Companies, jumped at the chance to support DinoMights when she learned of the company's longtime partnership of the program. Tradition helps out financially, skates with the kids, helps secure equipment, and more.

Tradition Mortgage President **Erik Hendrikson** is a Burnsville and Gustavus hockey alum. He was hooked on DinoMights after seeing the organization's academic impact.

DinoMights is proud to boast a 100% graduation rate three years in a row.

"Talk about a difference maker," said Hendrikson, who has brought his daughters' hockey teams to skate with DinoMights. "They're making these kids the biggest and best version of themselves. For me it's like, wow, how can you not want to support that?"

Pleshe is savoring every moment with the DinoMights in her first season.

"I love speaking Spanish. I love working with kids. I've always had a huge passion for hockey and then just giving back is really important to me," said Pleshe, who played club hockey at the University of Wisconsin Lacrosse. "I feel like we're the Mighty Ducks. I love every one of these kids and they give it everything they have."

The growth and success of DinoMights makes it easy for the Twin Cities community to rally around them, but Harman doesn't take anything for granted.

"I can't thank our supporters enough," Harman said. "From the Lindsay family in honoring their grandpa Billy Lindsay's legacy, everyone at Tradition, the Minnesota Wild—they embrace our mission deeply and see the value of what we're doing. I really hope

DinoMights can continue to make an impact on the larger hockey and sports world, and this rink will be a part of that." **MHJ**

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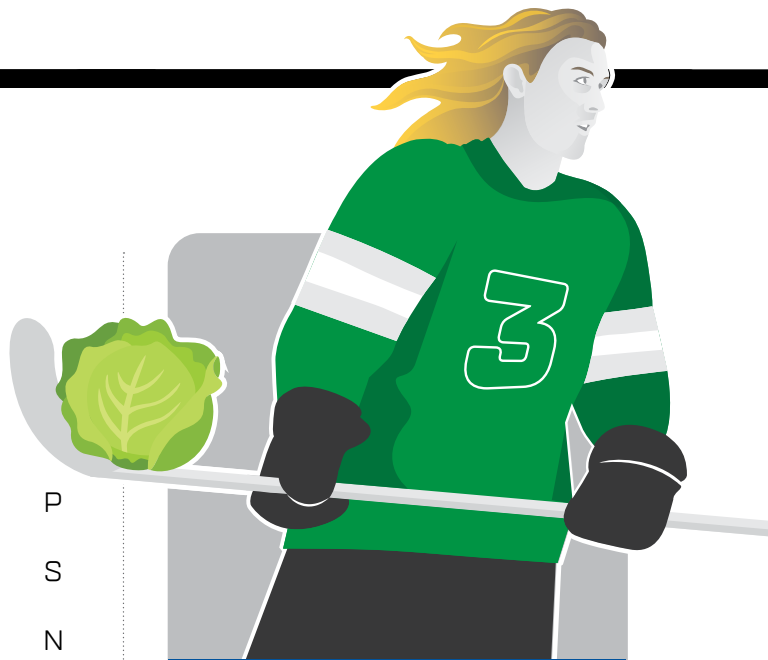
HOCKEY WORD FIND

Find and circle the 10 words in the group below. Words can be found horizontally, vertically, diagonally and backwards.

X E C H E E R I N G S P
 L C A N A N N E V T T S
 M O E E A N T V I M U N
 S O V L F L A G X D D O
 H N Y E N N Y L K E E I
 L G S I R Z N R C N N P
 C O S I L T E R H T T M
 L L S H S M I Y W S S A
 E D O D E A T M A N L H
 S T R E H E R O E S B C

TOURNEY TIME

- XCEL
- CHAMPIONS
- NANNE
- OVERTIME
- CHEERING
- HAIR
- MSHSL
- HEROES
- TV
- STUDENTS



A DANGLER'S DICTIONARY

Flow/ Lettuce

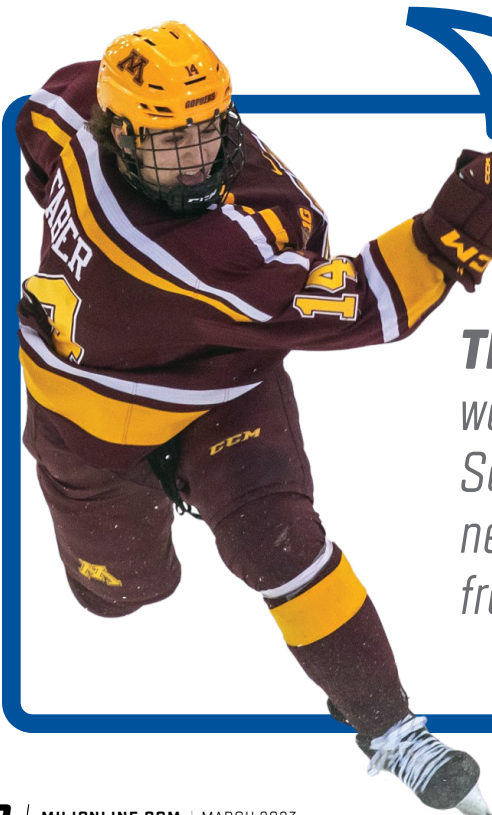
[noun]

def. // A term for hair, usually long and flowing, popular among hockey players

MINNESOTA MUSINGS

“My Bantam AA second year in Maple Grove, we won the State Championship. That was probably the best memory. We were a team that was always so successful in Squirts and Peewees, but Bantams is a whole new level. The whole team came up all the way from Squirts and we all grew and learned.”

– **Brock Faber**, Maple Grove





Streaming at Full Strength

► The Minnetonka Skippers review a controlled entry live on Spiideo Perform during practice.

MADE IN MINNESOTA | By Elizabeth Boger

How Spiideo’s technology has helped MNHockey.TV reach thousands of fans

→ A lifelong hockey fan and former Brainerd Amateur Hockey Association president, Shawn Sundquist knew he needed to find a way to broaden access to the game and provide a high-quality streaming service.

Especially during State Tournament time, there wasn’t necessarily a single, quality place to stream games.

That all changed several years ago when he started streaming games through MNHockey.TV, a channel through his company YouthSportsPLUS.

“Each year gets stronger and stronger,” Sundquist said. “We broadcast all of the youth State Tournament games, and a majority of the Regional games, all on behalf of Minnesota Hockey.”

Those games have been well-received and have had very strong viewership, thanks to Sundquist’s mission of finding the best possible technology.

“During the pandemic, I was researching how to do exactly what we’re doing today,” Sundquist said. “One thing led to another, and we stumbled upon Spiideo as an option. The decision was made that we needed to partner up with somebody that had a desire to grow in youth sports in particular.”

Spiideo’s world-class, cloud-based technology uses fixed cameras, which allows MNHockey.TV to remotely schedule and broadcast games. The fully automated solution also utilizes an industry-leading Custom Area Autofollow, which records the entire sheet of ice and follows the action as it unfolds on the ice.

YouthSportsPLUS has nearly 30 play-by-play announcers on staff, though they don’t necessarily need to travel to a rink to broadcast games. They can do play-by-play either onsite or through an app.

Showcasing Minnesota Hockey

So far this season, YouthSportsPLUS has streamed more than 20,000 youth hockey broadcasts through MNHockey.TV, plus 1,600 boys and girls high school games, and has become Minnesota Hockey’s official live streaming partner.

“We’re certainly not doing it alone,” Sundquist said. “We’ve partnered with very respected governing bodies like Minnesota Hockey, the Minnesota Hockey Coaches Association, and the Michigan Amateur Hockey Association. We also stream select sections in all sports and have relationships with various regions.”

YouthSportsPLUS is striving to get as many teams as possible to join its network, with the goal of providing an environment where there’s a single place to go for fans, players and coaches.

“We see this as a good way to keep community-based hockey in Minnesota—to give these players the opportunity not only for grandpa and grandma and aunts and uncles to view their games, but also to give them coaching tools,” Sundquist said.

Those coaching tools include video analysis tools for coaches and players all in the same system. Spiideo’s intuitive interface also allows collaboration with coaching staffs and the ability to build personalized highlight reels.

It is used by both youth and NHL teams alike.

“We’re passionate about Minnesota hockey—its culture, its tradition, the players and the families,” Sundquist said. “I’ve met my very best friends in hockey across the state, and with our own association. I truly believe that there’s a movement and I truly believe that we’re good at it. We’re really good at live streaming, using Spiideo’s technology, the artificial intelligence and the ability to showcase these players both as individuals and as teams.” **MHJ**



MHJ 2023 CAMP GUIDE

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SKILLS THIS
SEASON IN
THE STATE OF
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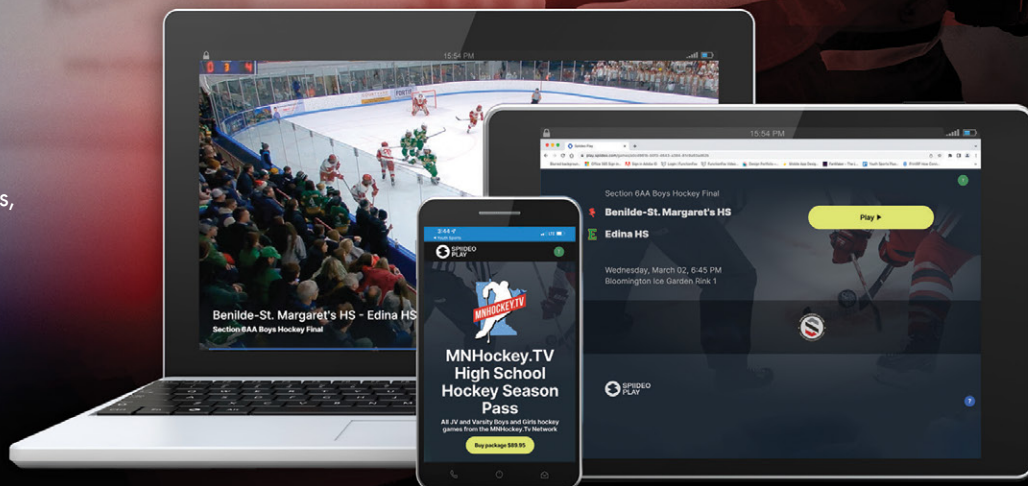
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At MNHockey.Tv and YouthSportsPLUS we are proud to be from the state of hockey and connected to our communities. We're growing hockey by providing the best live streaming service and experience possible. Our passion is evident in what we offer and how we give back to the community. See for yourself and enjoy the action!

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THE ROAD TO RESPECTABILITY

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By JOHN SCHAIDLER with MURRAY WILLIAMSON
FOREWORD by LOU NANNE

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The history of US amateur hockey is full of unique and colorful characters, but in the decades leading up to Team USA's 1980 "Miracle on Ice," one man threads through it all. Only Murray Williamson scored a hat trick against a team of collegiate all-stars led by superstar John Mayasich; played alongside and coached the legendary Herb Brooks; fired Minnesota hockey icon John Mariucci; and became the first US hockey coach to go behind the Iron Curtain to watch the mighty Soviets train.

This is the story, warts and all, of a national hockey team that won Olympic gold in 1960 only to hit rock bottom with a humiliating 17-2 loss to Sweden at the world championships a mere three years later, a defeat so embarrassing it prompted President John F. Kennedy to quip, "Who are we sending over there, girls?"

Drawn from Williamson's personal journals, contemporaneous writings, and countless interviews, *The Road to Respectability* offers rare and unfiltered access to many of amateur hockey's key turning points, momentous decisions, and needless blunders. With characteristic wit and candor, Williamson highlights the invaluable contributions of the largely unheralded men whose selfless dedication, passion, and seemingly endless grunt work laid the foundation for future players to go toe to toe with the best hockey teams on the planet.

Ready to Rock

→ Minnesota State assistant coach **Paul Kirtland's** keys to preparation



JOINING THE COACHING STAFF OF THE MINNESOTA STATE MAVERICKS PRIOR TO THE 2021-22 SEASON,

Paul Kirtland knew he was walking into a very prepared hockey program. So it's no surprise the Mavs have been one of the most successful teams in college hockey.

"I think preparation is everything, because it's such a broad term," Kirtland said. "You can talk about it in a big-picture sense, or you can talk about it in a really small-picture sense in terms of preparation for your rep in a drill. Or you can talk about it in a sense of preparation for the upcoming season. I just think it's huge. We (as a team) talk about it all the time."

Kirtland works to make sure the Mavericks players are doing what they have to do to be prepared, whether it's for practice, a weekend series or even life. Here are a few tips from the former Ohio State player.

TAKE CARE OF WHAT'S IN FRONT OF YOU

The expectation at Minnesota State is for players to be fully focused on hockey when they're at the rink. That doesn't mean ignoring other things in life; it means taking care of them outside of the arena.

"Take care of your 'dailies,'" Kirtland said. "Coach Hastings says that quite a bit. It means knowing what's expected of you and being able to go do your job. That includes

*"Coach talks about a three-legged stool, taking care of things **academically, socially and athletically.** You've got to be **balanced** in all three to sit in that chair."*

taking care of your school work and social life. So when we're at the rink, we're just talking about hockey. If all those things are taken care of, you can be focused on what you're doing to get better. You're not prepared to get better if you're thinking about the test that you haven't studied for."

Life balance is important, Kirtland added.

"Coach talks about a three-legged stool, taking care of things academically, socially and athletically," he said. "You've got to be balanced in all three to sit in that chair. If one's out of whack, you're not going to be able to sit down."



▶ Developing healthy habits including sleep and nutrition will lead to improved performance on the ice and in the classroom.



► Every player's pre-game routine is unique. Experiment with different approaches to help best prepare you for the opening faceoff.

LISTEN TO YOUR BODY

Getting rest or a good night's sleep is vital to preparation. While a college program has the advantage of employing strength coaches and athletic trainers, players should try to develop these good habits as soon as they can.

"I think rest is probably the biggest thing," he said. "The phrase that comes to mind is: 'Rest is a weapon.' It's not sleeping all day, but you're well-rested so your energy levels are good for what you're going to need in a practice or a game."

Nutrition is also key.

"Nutrition, staying hydrated—get the things you need for optimal performance," he said. "Stay away from the fast food, and get some quality vegetables and protein in you."

BE OBSERVANT

Pay attention to the little things happening around you, even if it's what a coach is saying to another player. You just might learn something.

"Really be observant and watch and listen to what's going on," Kirtland said. "Because you can pick up little things that can help you in the long run."

If you're not sure how to do a drill, go to the back of the line, make sure you're listening to instructions and watching teammates.

"Know the drill you're doing, and do it right," he said. "Then finish the drill, get back in line, get a sip of water and watch

the next group while you're waiting. Do what you need to get ready so you have a purpose to what you're doing and you're not getting caught going through the motions."

FIND A ROUTINE

No two players are going to prepare the same way. However, getting to the rink early and having a pre-practice or pre-game routine can help any player prepare for what's ahead. It might be stretching or rolling out muscles. It might be goal-tenders juggling tennis balls. It might be riding the stationary bike or simply relaxing and concentrating on breathing.

It's physical preparation that can help mental preparation.

"I think those routines are the biggest things you can do," Kirtland said. "Figure out your routine but also ask if what you're doing is helping you get prepared. Do something to get your mind and body ready. Go visualize or meditate. Or see yourself in different situations that you're going to encounter in a game. I think all that stuff's great."

"At the end of the day, everybody's different. So my advice for younger kids is if you find a useful exercise and you feel you're getting something out of it, and it's beneficial, keep going with it. If you feel your energy level isn't where you want it to be or you're not alert for the start of practice, figure out ways to change that. **MHJ**



Armstrong Cooper



HOME ICE:

New Hope Ice Arena

PRESIDENT:

Brian Thul

DISTRICT:

3

**2022-23
REGISTRATION
NUMBERS:**

397

NICKNAME:

Wings

WHY THEY'RE AWESOME

Every time kids from the Armstrong Cooper Youth Hockey Association show up for practice at New Hope Ice Arena, they can't help but feel a little starstruck.

After all, they're skating on the same ice where Gordon Bombay and Charlie Conway led the Ducks to the championship game.

The association's home ice served as a filming location for parts of "The Mighty Ducks" movie and inspires players to live up to many of the film's lessons.

Just as the Ducks bonded together, the Armstrong Cooper Wings are fostering that same culture of teamwork, friendship and an open door to anyone who wants to play.

"They form a pretty tight-knit bond, as do our parents. There's no doubt about that," said Brian Thul, president of the Armstrong Cooper Youth Hockey Association. "We're big enough that we have the resources to take care of our families, but we're small enough that we know each other on a personal relationship level."

WELCOMING NEW FACES

There are nearly 400 kids registered this season, largely thanks to word of mouth and strong recruitment efforts.

"I think our biggest recruitment tool is our players getting their friends to come and join them," said Jennifer Berndt, marketing and communications director for the Armstrong Cooper Youth Hockey Association. "Especially in the past few years, we've had kids that have never played hockey start at the Pee wee or Bantam level."

For those new to the game, Armstrong Cooper's Learn to Skate program is a great place to start.

"I really believe that helped lessen the stress involved with starting hockey," Thul said. "It gives them four sessions to get used to the game and the equipment, so they're not just thrown into practice."

The association provides equipment to kids for their first three years, which also helps ease barriers.

"That's another way I think we try to prepare our younger families," Berndt said. "We help them understand everything from equipment to what all this means—the community. When they build that community, I think that's when they see the real value."

OPENING NEW DOORS

Despite successful recruitment and player retention through the years, Thul always has the same question on his mind.

"How do we open the game to more families that are not from traditional hockey families or traditional hockey culture?" he asked.

Thul knows that's a daunting question—and he doesn't have an answer right now—but he knows he wants to help be a part of the solution.

"We're not any farther ahead than the rest of Minnesota on that," Thul said. "I think there are a lot of kids in our communities that would love to play the game, but we are not quite able to get them through the door, or get them to stay if they do come through our door. I know there are a lot of people within Minnesota Hockey working on this, too."

In the meantime, Armstrong Cooper is making sure to welcome everyone with open arms.

"We've always believed that we want Armstrong Cooper to be a place where families feel welcomed, they feel taken care of, and they feel like no matter how good their child is at hockey, we're going to do our best for them," Thul said. "I think that has served us pretty well. We're certainly not perfect, but we're doing our best."

BUILDING CHARACTER

When Armstrong Cooper took a good look at its culture a few years back, it developed an acronym for its nickname. WINGS stands for: Work Hard, Integrity, No Excuses, Gratitude and Success for All.



► Armstrong Cooper has a history of developing Olympians: Paul Jensen and Steve Jensen (1976); Dave Jensen (1984); Travis Richards (1994); Jordan Leopold (2006); and Kelly Pannek (2018, 2022).

"I think that was a good way for us to ground our coaches in a common belief system, and we continue to work on that every day," Thul said. "We want kids to learn the life skills that sports are supposed to teach—from dealing with conflict, to being part of a team, to the discipline required to train and participate in athletics."

The association wants its members to thrive in the classroom, too, through the Skaters Keep Achieving Through Education program.

S.K.A.T.E. was started in the Armstrong Hockey Association in 1993 by hockey moms Merilee Reilly and Lynn Leopold, Jordan Leopold's mother. It's available to every youth hockey organization under Minnesota Hockey.

"They felt that they really needed to emphasize not only the sport of hockey, but continue to keep top of mind that these kids are first and foremost students," Berndt said.

The program encourages students to maintain a minimum GPA throughout the season, and set aside time to study. Students are rewarded at the end of the season with a celebration and certificates.

CARING COMMUNITY

Armstrong Cooper knows it wouldn't be where it is today without a strong foundation.

"Community-based hockey is about giving more than you take, and we couldn't do without our membership," Thul said. "Whether it's a team manager, a volunteer, a coach or the people running the concession stands—you don't run a youth organization the size of ours without hundreds of people doing way more than what's expected of them and doing it because they love it, not because they have to do it."

Armstrong Cooper serves kids from five different areas—including Golden Valley, Crystal, Plymouth, Robbinsdale and New Hope—and feels fortunate to have a strong support system.

"The Minnesota advantage in developing hockey players is truly community-based, and the city of New Hope is a wonderful partner," Thul said. "They go above and beyond to make sure that they're doing their part so we have a home, and we are deeply appreciative of that."

"It doesn't get done in Minnesota the way it does without cities stepping up and taking care of their families and kids." **MHJ**

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To be able to have the chance to play with my best friends and have fun and hopefully be able to make it to State—it's very exciting and special."



by ELIZABETH BOGER

UNFINISHED BUSINESS

Jayson Shaugabay solidifies his place in Warroad hockey history as the program's all-time leading scorer

FOR AS LONG AS HE CAN REMEMBER, JAYSON SHAUGABAY ADMIRERED WARROAD'S RICH HOCKEY LEGACY.

He was on skates by the time he was a year and a half, and grew up with role models like T.J. Oshie and Brock Nelson.

On Jan. 7, in a game against Fergus Falls, Shaugabay himself joined the ranks of Hockeytown USA's greats when he became the highest-scoring Warroad High School boys' player on record. T.J. Oshie previously held the record at 241 points, followed by Brock Nelson and Grant Slukynsky at 199 points.

"It's something I never thought I would be able to do," Shaugabay said. "It's definitely a special feeling."

Shaugabay became aware he had a chance to beat Oshie last summer. He started the season with the USHL's Green Bay Gamblers, but soon decided to return home to finish his high school career.

Not only was Shaugabay on track to shatter school records and vie for another trip to the State Tournament—he knew how special it would be to stick with his teammates and honor his community's legacy.

"I'll remember these days for the rest of my life," Shaugabay said. "To be able to have the chance to play with my best friends and have fun and hopefully be able to make it to State—it's very exciting and special."

BREAKING THE RECORD

Shaugabay started playing varsity during his freshman season, racking up 30 goals and 72 points. He added 24 goals and 54 points during his sophomore season, and 27 goals and 82 points as a junior. Shaugabay finished the 2022-23 regular season with 80 points before beginning postseason play.

Head coach Jay Hardwick isn't surprised. "It's huge for our program and huge for Jayson," Hardwick said. "When you break a record and it's held by T.J. Oshie, I think it adds a little bit more to it, especially when you see what T.J.'s gone on to do after high school. Our whole team is very happy for him. Jayson is just one of those players who doesn't want it to be all about him. He wants it to be about the team. He's pretty humble."

Though Shaugabay is glad to break the record, he feels even more fulfilled knowing he can be a role model for younger players.

"Honestly, I don't really care too much about that record stuff," Shaugabay said. "But to be able to look at it and be like, 'wow, I have more points than Brock Nelson and T.J. Oshie.' Those are some big names. For kids to be able to look up to me and my teammates and for them to see us as role models, that's pretty special."

Oshie, who went to win a Stanley Cup with the Washington Capitals in 2018, was thrilled to learn that Shaugabay had surpassed his scoring mark.

"It's important for the town of Warroad to have another good player for the young play-



ers to emulate and watch, to look up to and follow," Oshie told the *Grand Forks Herald*. "Maybe they're not trying to follow in my footsteps anymore. Jayson is their hero. When I was younger, the guys I watched were the ones before me, not necessarily the NHL guys."

NO REGRETS

Instead of moving up early and playing in the USHL, Shaugabay—just like Oshie—decided he wanted to come back home and play with his teammates.

"I think it was important to him, with all of his friends here and all these guys that he's grown up playing hockey with ever since he was a little kid," Hardwick said. "Our team had a really good year last year. We were runner-up, and I think he just wanted to come back and kind of be a leader and be that guy for the team."

The chance to compete in one last State Tournament was a big draw.

"Playing in the State Tournament is the most fun I think I've ever had playing hockey," Shaugabay said. "They haven't gone our way all the times I've been able to go, but it's still just so fun being there and playing. Obviously, the chance to compete there was a big reason I decided to play."

"Maybe they're not trying to follow in my footsteps anymore. Jayson is their hero. When I was younger, the guys I watched were the ones before me, not necessarily the NHL guys."

—T.J. OSHIE



But there's so much behind it that's more than hockey."

Moving up early might sound promising, but Shaugabay knows he won't regret finishing his high school playing career.

"T.J. and then Brock Nelson, too, they set a great example in Warroad because both of those guys stayed and played through high school," Hardwick said. "They see that they can stay in Warroad and can play through high school and can still be successful. You don't have to hurry up and jump to the next level. It's kind of the culture here where it's OK to stay in Warroad and play hockey and you're not going to fall behind."

Shaugabay, who is committed to Minnesota Duluth, is happy with his decision to soak up every minute with his community.

"I don't think you'll regret staying home and playing with your teammates," Shaugabay said. "Yeah, if you're moving up, it might be better hockey out there, but you don't get to come home to your dog or your family. You don't get to go hang out with your best friends that you grew up with every night."

"I love this community. I love how close everybody is. Being around my friends and coaches is everything. We're all just really close and I think that's with everyone around here. There's a deep passion and love for the game." **MHJ**



SPORTSPAR



► Celia Dahl (left and far right) and Zoe Lopez (middle) not only play multiple sports, but different positions within each sport. They are two of the top hockey players in the state.

SPORTS

SPARTANS

by HEATHER RULE

Multi-sport athletes power Orono girls' hockey



LARRY OLIMB WAS A STANDOUT HOCKEY PLAYER FOR WARROAD IN THE 1980s, PLUS HE PLAYED FOOTBALL AND BASEBALL.

“We had separate seasons,” Olimb said. “And now every season is 12 months. It’s a challenge. I think the benefit for the kids is learning to see things different ways.”

Olimb is in his first season behind the Orono girls’ hockey bench, where the roster is full of multi-sport athletes. Playing more than one sport isn’t as easy as it used to be, said Olimb, who was the 1988 Mr. Hockey winner and a Hobey Baker Finalist with the Golden Gophers.

Olimb took over at Orono after the program had its best year in program history with a 26-4 record and first State Tournament appearance last season. It’s no coincidence that the Spartans’ roster—one of the most talented teams in the state—is filled with multi-sport athletes.



SPORTY SPARTANS



Whereas just being in one sport, it doesn't help you maximize all the capabilities of yourself as an athlete. **And being able to go and unlock that potential by playing a different sport or even another, two sports, it's a big step from just playing the same sport year-round.**

—ZOE LOPEZ

BICKETT'S BACK

The Spartans were happy to have one of their best blue-liners back on the ice this season in junior defenseman Grace Bickett. She missed her sophomore season after tearing her right ACL, LCL and meniscus at the first soccer scrimmage in the fall, keeping her out for 10 months.

She still attended soccer and hockey practices and games.

"It was definitely a different role than I would have imagined," Bickett said. "But it helped me work on my leadership skills and my attitude off the ice and become a good leader off the ice."

Bickett chose to be a soccer manager this fall. Hockey is her main sport that she hopes to play at a higher level after high school.

► Senior Celia Dahl is a defender in soccer, attacker in lacrosse, and one of the top goaltenders in the state of Minnesota. Dahl will play college hockey and lacrosse at Endicott College.

She also hopes to join the golf team in the spring. With so many different sports, Bickett said she got good at using her feet, and that coordination transferred over to hockey. Being a forward in soccer also helped Bickett anticipate plays and become a more well-rounded defenseman on the ice.

LOPEZ LEADS

Sophomore hockey and soccer teammate Zoe Lopez—who's also on the track and field team—knows the many benefits of multiple sports.

Lopez says she's in shape year-round, so her agility and strength don't fall off.

"I'm able to compete where I left off, or even keep getting better," Lopez said.

Lopez is one of the leading scorers for Orono girls' hockey, but she really stepped up for the soccer team this fall when they needed someone

I've always thought taking a break from a sport, not just two weeks off, but taking a few months off, just gives the kids that fire and passion and excitement to come back. And I think that's important."

—LARRY OLIMB, Head Coach
1988 Mr. Hockey (Warroad)



► Soccer helped develop hockey team captain Grace Bickett into a dynamic, shutdown defenseman.

to play goalie, so she switched from the forward position to the net.

Lopez sees the transferrable skills between the sports. She uses her voice a lot as a soccer goalie and has to have good vision of the field. It's something that carries over to hockey when she's not shy about letting her teammates on the ice know where she is.

DAHL'S DECISION

Senior Celia Dahl, a three-year Spartans hockey goaltender, is committed to Endicott College (Division III) to play hockey and lacrosse in Massachusetts.

Dahl remembers hearing how she would eventually have to choose one sport, but she disagreed.

"I knew that I wanted to play hockey," Dahl said. "And then knowing that I wasn't going to be able to play Division I, I decided that, if I have the opportunity, that I wanted to play both hockey and lacrosse."

Playing different sports has allowed her leadership skills, athleticism and sports IQ to flourish as well. Dahl rewrote the Orono hockey record books with her stellar performance in net.

"I think being a goalie in hockey, it helps me understand, because goalie is a hard position. So I think knowing how goalies work, it helps me understand the goalies on my soccer team and my lacrosse team as well," Dahl said.

UNLOCKING FULL POTENTIAL

Olimb and his athletes agree that playing multiple sports helps to prevent injuries, avoid burnout and develop various skills.

"I've always thought taking a break from a sport, not just two weeks off, but taking a few months off, just gives the kids that fire and passion and excitement to come back," Olimb said. "And I think that's important."

Lopez said she's learned a lot of things outside of the sport itself, like leadership skills and how to be a good teammate.

"Whereas just being in one sport, it doesn't help you maximize all the capabilities of yourself as an athlete," Lopez said. "And being able to go and unlock that potential by playing a different sport or even another, two sports, it's a big step from just playing the same sport year-round." **MHJ**

► Sophomore Zoe Lopez was one of the leading goal scorers in the state this winter. But in the fall, she plays goalkeeper for the soccer team.





ROGERS ROYALTY

How Rogers built a perennial powerhouse in two decades BY JESSI PIERCE

CHASE CHESLOCK INTENSELY REMEMBERS WATCHING THE 2022 MINNESOTA STATE HIGH SCHOOL BOYS HOCKEY TOURNAMENT AT HOME AND IN THE STANDS.

Cheslock and Rogers had fallen to the eventual Class AA runners-up Maple Grove, 4-2, in the Section 5AA Championship. The squad was just shy of making the program's first-ever trip to the Xcel Energy Center in March.

"I remember that game," Cheslock said. "I think about it every day. And then I also think about that champion-

ship game (between Maple Grove and Andover) at the X. I was there. And I was really stoked but at the same time, it hit home differently.

"It could have been us."

Cheslock and company were determined to reverse that feeling this year. But more importantly, Rogers is solidifying itself as a contender—a perennial powerhouse two decades in the making.

"Last year, we went undefeated in conference and won the conference championship beating Andover," said coach Dave Brown, now in his fourth year at the helm. "And I think sitting on our couches last March, watching those two slug it out for the state championship was a humbling and motivating night for our program.

"Our kids know it's not going to be easy. I think they came into the season thinking that we were a little better than that. We

thought we were a little better than we actually are. And that's going to require effort and drive to really propel ourselves. And we'll see when the light shines brightest if we play our best game."

UP AND COMING

The city of Rogers is home to just over 13,000 people. With its proximity to nearby suburban schools like Elk River, the community did not have its own high school until 2003.

Along with it came the hockey program. Long known as a basketball area, Rogers formerly competed in the Mississippi 8 Conference before joining the Northwest Suburban Conference in 2019-20.

On-ice success has ebbed and flowed. Current Washington Capitals defenseman Nick Jensen is a product of Rogers, who previously held the



That Bantam State Tournament was probably some of the most fun I've had playing hockey. **One of the most electric atmospheres."**

—SAM RANALLO

► Co-captains Sam Ranallo (front) and Chase Cheslock (back) celebrate a huge goal during a 3-1 victory at Lakeville South this season.



ROGERS ROYALTY



NICK JENSEN:

- ▶ Rogers High School (2006-2008)
- ▶ St. Cloud State (2010-2013)
- ▶ Detroit Red Wings (2016-2019)
- ▶ Washington Capitals (2019-present)



MATT HELLICKSON:

- ▶ Rogers High School (2012-2014)
- ▶ U.S. NTDP (2014-2016)
- ▶ Notre Dame (2017-2021)
- ▶ Toronto Marlies (2021-present)



▶ The Royals' core group of seniors made it to the Bantam AA State Tournament together in 2019-20.

“Our community banks on us. I represent a small town with a small-town feel. You know everyone that goes to the rink, and they're always cheering me on, and they're always at the games.”

—CHASE CHESLOCK

school's all-time points record (125) until this year's co-captain Sam Ranallo surpassed him on Nov. 29.

And there's Matt Hellickson, a four-year starter at Notre Dame who is currently playing in the American Hockey League with the Toronto Marlies, affiliate to the Maple Leafs.

“I knew of Nick Jensen a little bit, but he's older than me,” Ranallo said. “For me, Matt Hellickson was the one guy I really looked up to. He was able to go and play at Notre Dame and I just always thought that was pretty cool.”

Cheslock, co-captain alongside Ranallo, said Hellickson was his go-to Rogers role model, too.

“Matt Hellickson was definitely the guy I looked up to the most,” added Cheslock, who is committed to the University of St. Thomas. “I wanted to be just like No. 12.”

Whether it was Jensen in the early 2000s, or Hellickson in the mid-2000s, it's standouts like them who helped contribute to the growth of Rogers hockey from the ground up.

BUILDING THE BASE

Last season there were 191 boys and girls registered in Rogers at 8U compared to 137 in 2012-13.

One big benchmark for the association was a first-time appearance for the Bantam AA squad at the 2019-20 Minnesota Hockey State Tournament.

“That Bantam State Tournament was probably some of the most fun I've had playing hockey,” recalled Ranallo. “One of the most electric atmospheres. Now we're really trying to get there to the big State. We're going to do whatever it takes.”

Brown says that Bantam AA team is a big reason Rogers has been surging the past few

years. Many of the players from that 2019-20 State Tournament team are now seniors on this year's varsity squad, including Ranallo and Cheslock.

“My first year, there was a handful of players on the Bantam AA team that could have made the varsity team as freshmen,” Brown said. “And we decided to keep that group together to learn how to win together. To grow

together. To play roles together. I think that's completely propelled this program into being a premier powerhouse.”

Cheslock says it serves as a good reminder how important success at every level can be for a program.

“You see it growing up, all the kids that are playing in their own Bantam AA State Tournament, and the chances are that they're going to bring their high school team to the State Tournament,” said Cheslock.

THE NEXT GENERATION

Like Jensen and Hellickson before them, Ranallo and Cheslock recognize that their success not only reflects upon them, but the future of hockey in their small town.

The wins, the losses, the excitement—it's for the community of Rogers as a whole.

“Our community banks on us. I represent a small town with a small-town feel,” explained Cheslock. “You know everyone that goes to the rink, and they're always cheering me on, and they're always at the games. So to make an impact and get to State for them, it'd be a reward for all the hard work they put into bringing their kids to games and cheering us on. I think it'd be something extraordinary.” **MHJ**

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STARS S'TRUCK



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Lakeville's Jake Oettinger is savoring the spotlight and inspiring young Minnesota goaltenders

It was Jake Oettinger's homecoming game at Xcel Energy Center a few days before the calendar turned to 2023, and the Lakeville native couldn't have been more excited.

The Dallas Stars netminder had 40 friends and family members

coming to the game, dropped a boatload of money on tickets and wanted to put on a show.

But first things first, Oettinger, the budding star and well on his way even at the young age of 24 to becoming one of the best Minnesota-born goaltenders in NHL history, wanted to show his teammates just how he walked

▶ Oettinger, or "Otter" as he is affectionately known, sports his new mask for the 2022-23 season featuring a golfing otter and the USA Hockey crest.

into the arena during his freshman year at Lakeville North for the boys' state hockey tournament.

"I was telling all the guys, 'We were walking in through that walkway and this is where the Expo is,'" Oettinger said, laughing. "I'm telling them all about the tourney and stuff and

they're probably like, 'Who cares?' But if you're from here, obviously you know how cool that whole weekend is."

Oettinger was only 15 years old in 2014, but he backstopped the Panthers all the way to the state championship before their title hopes ended at the hands of Edina. The next year, in 2015, Oettinger went on to play for the U.S. National Team Development Program in Michigan, but he rooted on Lakeville North from afar and the school ended up beating Duluth East for a state championship.

"They cut the dead weight (in goal) and won state," Oettinger, with a big chuckle, joked. "No, but that was amazing. Just to see those guys get it done was really cool."

Oettinger grew up with the Poehling brothers, and Nick Poehling had a goal and three assists in the state final with brother Jack adding the eventual winning goal and two assists and brother Ryan chipping in the opening goal during the Panthers' 4-1 victory.

"To have played with (the Poehlings) growing up and then get the chance to play the state tournament with them was special," Oettinger said. "Those were the guys who I watched every state tournament with growing up (as a fan). I remember the first year my dad let me go without any parents and stuff and going to the expo in between the sessions and all that stuff, it's that stuff that makes it so special. I hope that tourney stays the way it is because it's one of the coolest things about being from Minnesota."

CHANGING THE NARRATIVE

Even though Oettinger will be in a playoff push this coming March with a team that has been one of the best in the Central Division all season in large part because of him, Oettinger will be keeping one eye on the Minnesota state high school tournament.

And he hopes young Minnesota goalies begin to look at him as somebody to aspire to be like.

According to quantohockey.com, there have only been 13 Minnesota-born goalies that have played more than 10 NHL games and 23 in total to have played an NHL game. Oettinger is one of eight Minnesotans to play more than 100 NHL games. With 59 career wins through Jan. 10,



"He was the one that really believed in me and picked me out of nowhere as a young kid who could play with some potential."

-Oettinger on goalie coach Kevin Reiter

Oettinger already ranks sixth in NHL history among Minnesota-born goalies.

Frank Brimsek, born in Eveleth in 1915, leads the way with 252 wins in 514 games. Jon Casey, born in Grand Rapids in 1962, ranks second with 170 wins in 425 games.

Oettinger doesn't understand why Minnesota has developed so many NHL skaters yet not goalies.

"It's a weird thing just considering how many players we have," Oettinger said. "Hopefully, me and then Charlie (Lindgren of the Washington Capitals) could maybe change the narrative a little bit. And I know when I'm done playing hockey, I'm going to be coaching my (butt) off to try to get as many Minnesota kids in the NHL. So hopefully I can change that and maybe be a starting point to hopefully a lot of Minnesota goalies."

Oettinger, who played three years at Boston University and was drafted by the Stars in the



▶ Oettinger starred for Team USA in a 4-3 shootout victory against Canada in the 2018 World Juniors outdoor game in Buffalo.



first round in 2017, never played on any big travel teams as a youngster and “when I was 13 you probably wouldn’t have thought this kid maybe could play college even.”

But with the national team, he worked with goalie coach Kevin Reiter.

“He was the one that really believed in me and picked me out of nowhere as a young kid who could play with some potential,” Oettinger said. “And if it wasn’t for that, I don’t think I’d be where I am right now. There’s so many guys that have helped me along the way and obviously my family, first and foremost.”

In general, Oettinger thinks there will be more American goalies coming up the pipeline.

Through mid-February, 19 American goalies played an NHL game with Oettinger and Winnipeg’s Connor Hellebuyck, who is from Michigan, having huge seasons.

Oettinger was 23-7-9 for the division-leading Stars with a

2.20 goals-against average and .926 save percentage, while Hellebuyck, who won the Vezina Trophy in 2020, was 26-16-1 with a 2.39 goals-against average and .926 save percentage.

“And I think between me and Spencer (Knight) and Joe Woll and Jeremy Swayman, that’s three 98s and a (2001),” Oettinger said. “That’s pretty impressive, and hopefully the goal is obviously to continue that...So hopefully we can take over for goalies in NHL.”

WINNING WAYS

Oettinger was able to spend the holiday break in December with his family in Minnesota, and then they were able to watch him make 23 saves in a 4-1 win over his home state Wild.

Heading into the game, Oettinger said, “I think I’d be lying if I didn’t say this is probably the game I want to win the most in the whole season. But you can’t let that take away from just playing the game like I always do. And obvi-

ously that’s a lot easier said than done, it’s human nature. You want to play well in front of your family and your friends. So it’s pretty cool that I get to play here in the NHL in front of them and hopefully I can do it for a long time.”

With a win two days later on New Year’s Eve, Oettinger earned his 40th regular-season victory of 2022—the most among all NHL goaltenders—and became the fifth netminder in NHL history to record as many wins in a calendar year before age 25, joining Terry Sawchuk (44 in 1951 with Detroit), Jonathan Quick (40 in 2009 with Los Angeles), Mike Liut (40 in 1980 with St. Louis) and Roger Crozier (40 in 1965 with Detroit).

In his 100th career NHL game on Dec. 19, 2022, Oettinger improved to 54-27-11 (2.44 GAA, .915 SV% and 4 shutouts) with a 27-save performance in Dallas’ 2-1 victory over Columbus. Only one goaltender in franchise history recorded more wins in their first 100 games as a member of

► Forty friends and family members came to Xcel Energy Center on Dec. 29 to see Oettinger and the Stars take on the Wild. Before turning pro, Oettinger played three seasons at Boston University to continue his development.



the Stars/North Stars franchise: Ed Belfour (60-21-16).

“It’s a really fun group of guys and it’s a great locker room,” Oettinger said. “We have great leadership with (Joe Pavelski, Ryan Suter, Jamie Benn). All those guys, they show us how it’s done every night. And we have a great group of young guys, too.”

In that meeting against Minnesota, Oettinger outdueled future Hall of Famer Marc-Andre Fleury, although the veteran goalie deserved better. The Wild were outshot 43-24, and Fleury was tremendous, Oettinger said.

Oettinger idolized Fleury as a kid, and his favorite game he has played as a pro came in Feb. 2022 in Chicago when he and Fleury each had shutouts before Oettinger won the 1-0 game against the Blackhawks in a shootout. After the 34-save performance, Oettinger asked for a signed stick from Fleury.

This has become Oettinger’s thing.

When Alex Ovechkin beat him from his left circle office, Oettinger sent teammate Alex Radulov over to Washington’s room to get the stick Ovechkin scored on him with.

“Once he breaks the NHL goal scoring record, that’ll be pretty cool to have,” said Oettinger, who also has autographed sticks from Pavelski, Jonathan Quick, Braden Holtby and Andrei Vasilevskiy. “I have quite the collection.”

Fleury has become as big a fan of Oettinger.

“He’s awesome,” the Wild goalie said. “A big guy that still moves around well. He’s calm. He covers a lot of the net and plays well around his post. A young goalie. I think we’ll see him for many years and there will be lots of wins.”

SAVORING THE MOMENTS

In December, the day before the Stars beat the Wild, Suter set up a fun outdoor practice in St. Paul for the Stars. It got the team back

to their roots of playing outdoor hockey, especially Oettinger, who had a blast.

“I think everyone in here is pretty much like a 10-year-old kid anyway, so we all loved it and it was a great change of pace,” Oettinger said.

He now hopes to continue his tremendous season and lead the Stars to something special.

Who knows, maybe he could even play some playoff games against the Wild in the rink where he led Lakeville North to a state title game.

“I don’t know how long I’ll be able to play for the NHL in front of them, so I’m going to enjoy it while I can,” Oettinger said. “It’s been a great year, but we’re still a ton of season left and I’m just trying to get better every day and do my best. But it’s a dream come true to be where I am right now and, obviously, when

I come here it comes full circle and I really realize how special it is and how many people I have out there support me and stuff.

“And if it wasn’t for them and the people that believed in me when I was little, I wouldn’t be here.” **MHJ**

▶ Oettinger robs New York Islanders captain and fellow Minnesotan Anders Lee (Edina).



“He’s awesome. A big guy that still moves around well. He’s calm. He covers a lot of net and plays well around the post. A young goalie. I think we’ll see him for many years and there will be lots of wins.”

—Marc Andre Fleury

Michael Russo writes for The Athletic. He’s in his 18th season covering the Wild and 28th covering the National Hockey League. He has three podcasts: Worst Seats in the House on talknorth.com and The Athletic Hockey Show on Wednesdays and Straight From The Source for The Athletic. All three podcasts can be heard wherever you get your podcasts. Russo can be heard weekly on KFAN (100.3-FM) and seen throughout the hockey season on Bally Sports North and the NHL Network. Follow Russo on Twitter and Instagram at @RussoHockey. To subscribe to The Athletic at a discount, go to theathletic.com/straightfromthesource.



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