

USA Disabled Hockey Report  
Minnesota District  
January 2010

Minnesota Disabled Hockey:

*Marketing:* During the last 6 months, Minnesota Disabled Hockey has made great attempts to get our name out to as many media organizations as possible. As a result, we have been privileged to participate in the following marketing initiatives:

- a. **Disabled Hockey Night at the Minnesota Wild:** During a September 2009 pre-season game, the Minnesota Wild honored disabled hockey for the first ever Disabled Hockey Night. Athletes from three separate disciplines (sled, special and stand up amputee) participated that night, from selling programs, opening announcements, skating between periods, and for the first time ever, a sled hockey player planted the WILD flag at center ice prior to the start of the game. It was a ground breaking event for everyone involved, and we hope to recreate them event again next year during a regular season game.
- b. **Fox Sports Net:** Fox Sports interviewed players and family members during our night at the Wild, and aired the program a month later during a regular season game.
- c. **Life to the Max:** WCCO CBS television was also at the game that night and taped a program on disabled hockey in Minnesota. Their program aired in the Twin Cities in mid December.
- d. **Fox News Duluth:** In the second of a two part story, Fox News Duluth followed up on a Special Hockey player who skated during periods at the Wild game. They are assisting us with expanding the program and we hope to have a team in Moorhead and Duluth by this time next year.

*Fundraising:*

- a. Minnesota Disabled Hockey was the proud recipient of a \$10,000 donation from the Prairie Island Indian Community. The donation has gone to defray travel costs for teams this year along with purchasing new jersey's and socks for the Adult Sled team. To show our appreciation, both special and sled hockey will be scrimmaging near the Treasure Island Casino in Red Wing, Mn (the sled team will play the adult sled team from Chicago). Special Hockey will play first, then the adult sled team. Afterwards all are invited to return to the casino for a night of entertainment and team fun. This event is taking place on February 20<sup>th</sup>, 2010.
- b. HockeyFinder.com: This is a new organization in Minnesota who has chosen Disabled Hockey as a recipient of their fundraising efforts. They will be holding a golf tournament in 2010 with all proceeds going towards Minnesota Disabled Hockey.

*Disabled Hockey Festival 2010:*

Plans continue as our festival group has met twice now. We are finalizing hotel information and will be ready to market this event at the Disabled Festival in Laurel, Maryland. Our goal is to have one sled accessible rink by the time the festival is held in Minnesota.

Minnesota Sled Hockey:

*Adult team*

- a. Midwest Sled League: The adult team is part of the inaugural season of the Midwest Sled Hockey League. They will be participating in 4 tournaments this year as part of the league; St. Louis, San Antonio, Minnesota and Chicago, finalizing their season at the Disabled Festival in Laurel, Maryland.

- b. Name change: The adult team has made a name change this year with the addition of new uniforms. They are now known as the Minnesota Northern, with a new logo, etc.
- c. Recruiting: They currently have 9 players and are actively recruiting through several visits to disability services, vets organizations and rehab centers.
- d. Development: In January, the coaches of the USA Sled Hockey Paralympics team will travel to Minnesota to put on the first ever high performance Sled and Coaches Clinic. This will give our players and coaches across the state to tap into the amazing expertise of USA Sled Coaches (Paralympics and Jr. National) to teach them new skills both on the ice and in the classroom.

*Youth program*

- a. New development: A new program has been initiated in the Fargo/Moorhead area. It is primarily a youth program at this time and plans are being made to scrimmage with the metro area team during the season. In addition, a camp was the St. Cloud this past fall and our youth team will be traveling to Duluth to scrimmage their youth program in order to produce more interest for the sport across the state.
- b. Development: The youth team will play games against the Wisconsin youth team during the same weekend as the Adult Midwest Tourney being held in Richfield, MN in February 2010. In addition, clinics have been held throughout the state to spark interest and introduce sled hockey to different parts of the state.
- c. Fundraising: Minnesota Sled Hockey was the recipient of the Lakeville Hockey Association/Minnesota Twins golf tournament this past summer.

Minnesota Special Hockey:

- a. Development: Minnesota Special Hockey has expanded with 2 new teams this year. The first is the Border breakers, playing out of International Falls, MN, and the second are the Wildcats playing out of Rogers, Minnesota. Both are out of Metro teams and have healthy rosters for their first year. Going into next season, we hope to expand to Rochester, Duluth and Moorhead, MN.
- b. Fundraising: Special Hockey has been the recipient of several fundraising efforts this year. Section 108 raised over \$10,000, private donations have brought in over \$3,000, and ice donations from local arenas and associations have donated over \$5,000 in ice time. In addition, the Minnesota Wild designated Special Hockey as their "Protect the Net" recipient during a game in February, where the association receives \$10 for every saved goal during a designated game.
- c. Disabled Festival: Minnesota Special Hockey will be sending it's first full team to the USA Hockey Disabled Festival this year, with a roster of 12 players.

USA Wounded Warriors: Minnesota

The current Wounded Warriors program has been an amazing success in the Washington DC area. Minnesota is overwhelmed to have been chosen as the site to create the second team of this program. We are currently working with the UDA program, our local vets and interested military personnel. We are hoping to have 2 clinics during this season and a complete schedule by the 2010-2011 hockey season.

This continues to be an exciting time for Disabled Hockey in the State of Minnesota. We continue to work hard to get our name and mission across the state to recruit players and begin program so that that everyone, regardless of their ability, had a chance to get their passion on the ice. With the amazing support of our sponsors, and most importantly Minnesota Hockey, we are expanding our programs and raising awareness that in the State of Hockey, everyone is a participant, an athlete...a hockey player!

We have a lot of work ahead of us as we expand all of our programs in the next few years, and thank the support of everyone from Minnesota to USA Hockey for helping us to establish and flourish in our upcoming endeavors

Respectfully submitted;

Antonia O'Brien  
USA Disabled Hockey Representative  
Minnesota District

Links:

Life to the Max: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ISkHWwgo480>

Fox Sports: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KooRxJ7j6yg>

Fox Sports Duluth: <http://www.fox21online.com/news/disabled-hockey-everyone-can-play>