



Candidate Statement: Quinton Krueger

Candidate for President, Stillwater Area Hockey Association

The Problem: Transparency, Trust, and Sustained Player Development

If you have ever felt that your voice is not being heard, that the outcome was decided before tryouts began, or that your child's development is being left to chance, then you are not alone. These are the predictable results of an association that has operated without a disciplined plan for player development, coaching, and team building. Boards exist for a reason. A great board does not need to be full of hockey experts. It needs to be disciplined, transparent, and accountable, and it needs to put the right hockey infrastructure in place so that the program runs on a system, not on personalities or luck. That is where SAHA has fallen short. Stillwater has the talent, the community, the numbers, the families, and a solid foundation. What we lack is a plan, genuine transparency, and leadership willing to modernize this association. In youth hockey, the clock is unforgiving. Your son or daughter has less than ten years in this game before high school. Every season without a plan is a season your child does not get back, and every dollar spent on hockey is a dollar that deserves a better return.

Ask yourself:

- Did your player receive a progress report this year or a list of expectations and skills for each level they compete?
- Have you had different coaches at every level of hockey or the same group of instruction all the way through?
- Is there a development plan for your child, or are you just hoping for the best?
- Do players that make C or B teams feel like there is ever a chance to be on the A or AA team?
- Are our coaches growing, learning in the off season, teaching others and being mentored to be better?

If you answer no to most of those questions, you already understand the problem. So, what separates good programs from exceptional ones? It is not talent. Edina, Minnetonka, and Moorhead do not have better players than we do. What they have is a process they built, committed to, and ran everything through. Their families are less stressed and more satisfied not because their teams win more, but because everyone knows what to expect and trusts what is being built. Winning is not their goal. It is their byproduct. That distinction matters, and it is exactly what SAHA is missing. I am running for President because every family in this association deserves a plan, a process they can trust, and a leader willing to be held accountable for results.

Who I Am: Grassroots Grit

So why am I qualified to be SAHA President? The problems are not mysteries to me. I have spent over thirty years inside hockey as a player, coach, evaluator, consultant, and administrator. I have seen what works, built programs that deliver it, and I know exactly what SAHA is missing. I believe in an earned, not given mindset, and it defines everything I do.

The Hockey Professional. I grew up playing in Osseo and Mahtomedi, where I learned to skate under Minnesota hockey legends Dick Vraa and Jack Blatherwick, volunteer coaches who gave back tirelessly and developed an entire generation of players long before “player development” became a buzzword. I continued at Hill-Murray and Shattuck-St. Mary’s Prep, earned two U.S. National Team selections, and played Division I hockey at Michigan Tech. I hold a USA Hockey Level 5 certification and have coached every level from learn-to-skate through U18 AAA in the T1EHL. I have held organizational leadership roles, conducted tryouts across District 2 and did player evaluations for USA Hockey, USHL, and college teams.

The Executive Leader. I hold degrees from Michigan Tech, Northwestern, the Wharton School at Penn, and the Kellogg School of Management, and teach part time at several of these institutions. I have served as a Federal Government executive, built and scaled technology companies as an entrepreneur, and today lead AI and data strategy for a Fortune 500, having managed 500+ people and budgets exceeding \$200M. Public service, entrepreneurship, and corporate leadership have taught me the same lesson: vision without execution is noise. SAHA needs someone who can turn plans into results.

The SAHA Parent. I am a parent of three Stillwater athletes: Catherine (12), Cordelia (9), and Christian (7). I do not watch this association from the outside and theorize about what could be better. I sit in the same bleachers you do and pay the same registration fees. I currently coach SAHA Mites, and I am in the trenches with you every week. This season, my staff and I personally secured \$2,500 in corporate sponsorships for a single mite team because our youngest players lacked resources, from adequate ice time to increasingly oversized rosters. Nobody asked us to do that. It needed to be done for the kids.

I said above that a great board needs to be disciplined, transparent, and accountable, and this is exactly how I will lead SAHA.

The Vision: Constructing A New Era of Pony Hockey

Ask yourself how many coaches in this association remain after their kids age out. Ask how many board members do the same. The answer tells you whose interests are being served. As President, I will transition SAHA from a year-to-year mentality to an organization with strategic purpose, built to serve every player, coach, and family in this community.

- **Coaching Excellence:** Not every coach has to be a parent, and not every coach needs a hockey resume. We will recruit, train, and retain dedicated volunteer coaches who are committed to a level, not just passing through. A director-of-coaching structure will ensure cross-level coaching meetings, written season plans, and player development tracking from team to team and year to year. Experienced coaches will mentor new ones. The development philosophy will remain consistent long after any single coach leaves the program. That is how you build institutional knowledge.
- **Transparent Tryout Evaluations:** Too many families feel outcomes are decided before tryouts begin. That ends. Selection criteria will be published in advance, evaluations will be objective, and the process will be open to scrutiny. Every player earns their spot every year. Your sons and daughters deserve that level of respect. When families trust the process, they stay in the program, and the level of the organization rises.
- **Structured Development per USA Hockey ADM:** Practices will be purposeful, structured, and age-appropriate, with written plans, not just showing up and running scrimmages. Coaches will receive feedback and evaluations for game management and how they run the bench. Everyone should always be learning. If we are going to ask families to commit their time and money, they deserve to see their kids in structured development every time they step on the ice. We will also conduct a transparent audit of all ice contracts to ensure Stillwater families are getting the ice time they paid for.
- **A Unified Pony Identity:** Walk into any opposing association's rink and look at their youngest players' jerseys, then look at ours. Identity starts with the sweater a six-year-old pulls over their head, and right now we are behind every peer association in that department. We will upgrade branding and equipment standards starting with our mites through bantams. We will create mentorship loops where bantam and high school players invest time in our youngest skaters, because a program is a community, not a collection of age groups operating in isolation from year to year.
- **Fiscal Accountability and Sponsorships:** Every family in this association deserves a clear return on the dollars and hours they invest in this program. I will benchmark SAHA's registration fees against peer associations to ensure every family is receiving the value they deserve from skaters to goalies, and we will publish the results. We will build a corporate sponsorship engine that reduces the financial burden on families while directly funding ice time, better instruction, and coaching resources. I proved it can be done at the mite level this season. We will scale it across every level of SAHA.

Picture a mite or squirt looking up during practice and seeing a bantam on the ice helping them with crossovers; that bantam learned the same drill five years earlier. Coaches at every level run from the same development plan, talk to each other monthly, and have been with the program for years. That is what a program looks like, and that is what we are building.

A Call to Action

I was a coach before I had children and I will be a coach long after my kids are done playing. It is who I am. My best memory in hockey is not a national team selection or a Shattuck locker room. It is winning a local tournament on a Squirt B1 team with my neighborhood friends. We made lifelong friends, had great coaches, and most importantly, we all had fun. That experience should be the standard for every kid who puts on a Stillwater jersey. I respect those who built this hockey association. But respect does not require silence when improvement is overdue. We are stewards of this program. Our job is to build it, improve it, and hand it off stronger than we found it to the next generation of Stillwater families. If you want a President who will grind, demand accountability, and restore trust; I am asking for your vote. If you have felt unheard, wanted more support, or wondered whether anyone in leadership shares your frustration, find me at the rink, call me, or send me an email. I welcome the hard questions. Break the cycle and modernize our approach to hockey or keep things the same.

“Let’s stop chasing other programs and start building the right one for Stillwater that everyone else tries to copy.”

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