

Disabled Hockey Section Report  
April 2011

**USA Hockey Disabled Section:**

*2011 Disabled Festival:*

The USA Disabled Hockey festival was held on April 1-3 at the Schwans Super Rink in Blaine, MN. We were host to 41 teams from across the country and the first to hold the USA Sled National Championships. It was a tremendous amount of effort from an incredible committee and the participants and their families all commented on what a great event it was.

**Sled hockey:**

The MN Sled Hockey Association had another successful year that culminated with two teams playing in the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual USA Hockey Disabled Festival in April. Our numbers remain steady at about 50 skaters overall but due to different levels of commitment, we're beginning to investigate further categorizing our participants into competitive and non competitive (or participatory) teams/groups in order to allow those who are interested the opportunity to spend more time focusing on hockey techniques and strategy.

The adult team (The Minnesota Northern) competed in the Midwest Sled Hockey League for the 2<sup>nd</sup> consecutive season competing against Chicago, St Louis and San Antonio in addition to the Phoenix and Colorado teams who joined the league for the 2010/2011 season. Although their record doesn't show it, the Northern improved significantly. Through the addition of new players with previous hockey experience along with increased commitments from everyone, the Northern took great strides in their competitiveness this year. Their improvement became evident during the Disabled Festival where they took 1<sup>st</sup> place in their division.

The Youth team's season this year consisted in playing the Wisconsin Sled Hockey youth team twice in January, 7 able bodied teams throughout the season: (Apple Valley (2 teams), Armstrong, Cottage Grove, Edina, Orono, Shakopee), and finishing with the Disabled Festival. Although going 0-4 during the festival, the youth became increasingly competitive as the tournament went on, with their last game being a 1 goal loss. The enthusiasm after the tournament was so great that the youth parents are already talking about participating in the festival in 2012.

We are thankful to have had over a dozen able bodied youth teams volunteer during the season and would like to give a special Thank You to the Minnetonka U14 girls team who adopted us this year and raised over \$800 for the MN Sled Hockey Association. Thank You Minnetonka Girls!

### **Special Hockey:**

Our season wrapped up with getting all of our teams together for picture taking a some quick games. We had a great turnout and the pictures turned out great. We will use these for advertising, fundraising and promoting our program.

After the airing of Susie Miller receiving the 11 Who Kare award, we received about 20 emails from new players interested in playing on our teams. Each season we average about 10 new ones, so we could have easily 30 new players next year. One area of the metro we don't have "covered" is the south metro (Burnsville/Lakeville). Some of these new players are from this area so we hope to start a team in that area next season, the Bandits. Start up of a new team is expensive, with jerseys, ice time, helping with equipment purchases and advertising the program.

We organized a game in Alexandria, MN. This was done to help promote the program and start a new team there next year. About 20 players played in the games and enjoyed staying in the hotel with all the other families. Alexandria will be starting a new team next year, the Muskies. Right now they have about 8 players and a group of very dedicated volunteers to get the program underway. We hope this team will do some traveling to the metro area to play our other teams and the local teams here go there to play.

The USA Disabled Festival was a huge success for our teams. We spread our teams a little thin on the ice, but a few of our players doubled up on teams and it worked out well. Everyone had a great time and appreciated being able to be part of a tournament. Because of this success, next year we will have more players interested in traveling to the USA Disabled Festival. This will have added costs to our program, but is a great opportunity for our players.

We will have a couple of events this summer, the traditional Saints baseball game, the Section 108 Golf tournament and some open skates. We have tried to create summer clinics with our players, but found out that the commitment was not there. Last year we advertised open skating times at local arenas and got a coach or team representative there to greet anyone that showed up. We had some success with this and will do it again this summer.

### **Minnesota Warriors:**

The Minnesota Warriors are now have 20 registered skaters. 2 goalies and one inactive player. We will be losing two players to deployment the first week of May. Since January we have averaged a growth of 3.5 players a month. There is a centralized focus now on building our sled team.

MNWH had their first game April 1, 2011 at the Disabled Hockey Festival. The second game was played on home ice in Vadnais Heights. This game was the first ever face off between the two Warrior teams. There were approx 300 fans in the stands for this event.

MNWH is actively seeking grants, sponsorships and donations to pay for gear, sleds and ice time. The USOC grant will be finished on June 30, 2011. MNWH received a grant for \$5000 from RBC Hockey. This check will be disbursed before June 1, 2011.

Stand up-amputee Hockey: No report from this program at this time.

**New initiatives:**



*Minnesota Warriors program*

The Warriors have grown from a concept to an ice team. At the last practice on 12/29/10 there were 6 skaters and they were able to have a 3-on-3 scrimmage at practice. There are 2 Marines, 2 Army and 2 National Guards men on the team all of which do have a disability status from the VA.

The team has a home at the Vadnais Heights Sports Complex. This Complex has an adapted arena with zero depth benches for the sled players. A custom locker room with accessible showers. Ice is donated to

the team as well. The gear that is used by the Warriors came from a grant from the US Paralympic Organization and Hat Trick Hockey Anoka has provided the gear at cost for the team. District 10 has provided custom gear bags for the players (40 total). The Warriors are filing for a 501 c 3 the second week of January then will turn the focus to media coverage and recruitment.

Respectfully submitted;  
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Minnesota District