

Past Player/Current Coach Profile:

How old were you when you started skating? Why did you start?

I was probably 2 or 3 when I started skating on the outdoor rinks in Mahtomedi. For the first few years of skating, that is where we hung out all day. I started because I have two older brothers and I was just trying to keep up with them.



When did you know you were hooked on hockey?

I really enjoyed all sports growing up. Obviously it was a little different then—very few kids skated in the summer. Kids put their hockey bags in the garage in March and grabbed them in October for tryouts. I don't think I realized until about 8th or 9th grade that I had a passion for the game and really started to commit to the game.

What was your favorite local rink?

My favorite local rink was the State Fairground Coliseum. I have a lot of good memories from that rink.

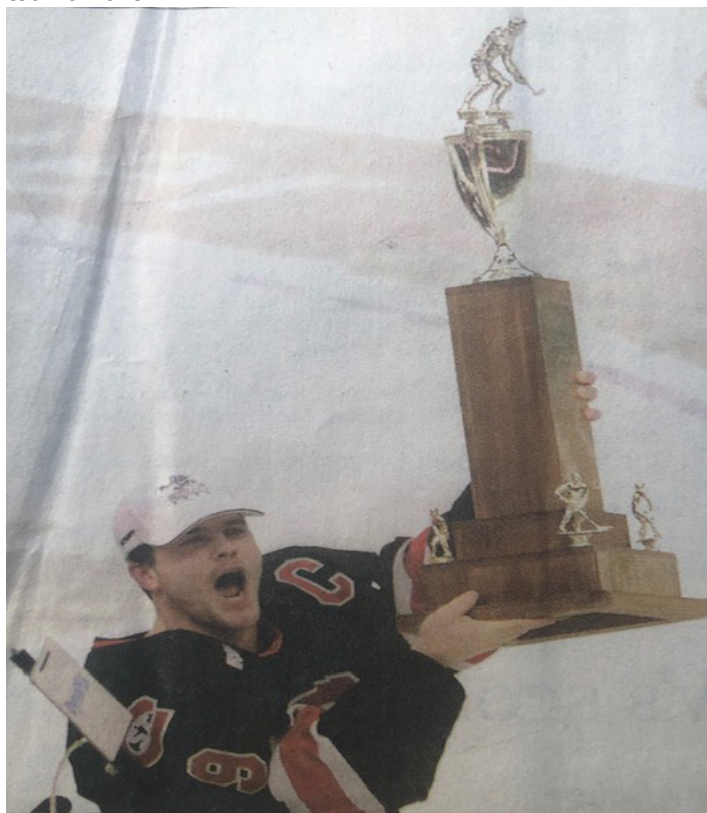
Did you rink rat a lot growing up? Favorite place to do so?

We would go to the outdoor rinks in Mahtomedi, and my mom would pack us a lunch and we would skate all day long. My favorite memories when I was a mite or squirt was when I would get to scrimmage with kids of all ages from high school, bantam, peewees, and squirts. Everyone threw their

sticks in the middle and teams were sorted out by throwing sticks to one side of the other. The game would be about 20 against 20. I just remember trying the whole day to touch the puck, and usually towards the end of the day when a bunch of people left a high school kid would finally give me the puck and I had it for about 3 seconds. I thought I had really made it.

What do you remember about playing in Selects? What was your favorite part?

Selects was only one of two tournaments to play in growing up. It was relatively new, and it was THE premier tournament in the spring. All the best players from around the state would play, and I just remember that was my first real eye-opening experience that there are a lot of really good players around the state. My favorite part of the tournament was playing on the big sheet at SCSU. The team I was on, I honestly don't think we ever won the tournament, but I still keep in touch with a couple of friends I met playing in that tournament.





Q & A with Brandon Sampair

What do you think is the best thing for today's players to view Selects?

I think the best thing for today's players to view the Selects tournament is that number one it's an honor to be selected for this tournament. That honor sometimes gets lost with all the tournaments that kids do these days, but Selects was one of the first and longest-running tournaments with premier players. Just look at the alumni from Selects: Stanley Cup champions, college national champions, high school champions litter the pages. I don't know of another tournament for Minnesota kids with a history like that.

How cool is it to be coaching in the Selects tournament after playing in it when you were younger?

Again,
It was an honor for me to come back and coach in this tournament. I coached the 2005 East Selects team for 5 tournaments and helped the 2006 East teams for 4 years. I now am coaching the 2010 East Selects, and my favorite part is when I have only coached a kid for one tournament, but that kid sees me at a rink years later and we end up chatting about a Selects tournament from 3 or 5 years prior. That, to me, is the coolest thing about this tournament. The kids may not remember if they won or lost, but they can tell you exactly who was on the team and how fun the hotel was.

How many guys you grew up playing with and or against do you still have contact with?

That pretty much describes all my friends. I saw an old

Selects picture the other day, and there are 5 guys from that team that I still keep in touch with to this day. Hockey is really neat that way. or a long time growing up—and it is true to this day—kids (and parents) try to size each other up and figure out who's the best. That's why I loved the Selects tournament—all the best players playing against one another. As you get older as a player, you learn to appreciate the friendships more and appreciate the different strengths different players brought to each team.

What is your overall favorite hockey memory?

My favorite hockey memories are playing in the Class A tournament my freshman year with Mahtomedi, the Class AA

tournament my senior year with Hill Murray, and winning the WCHA Final Five my senior year in college. Mostly though, and as cliché as it sounds, my memories are of the teammates

and the friendships I made throughout my years playing.

Any advice for young players?

Believe in yourself and be a good teammate. You will be remembered long after your playing days if you were a good teammate more than if you were simply a good player. Being a good teammate requires zero talent.

Anything you'd like to add?

To all the Selects players: Enjoy your weekend, have fun, and remember to try not to get too tired in the pool before your games.

