

## Rugby Amateur Hockey Association ICEHAWK HISTORY

Determination, commitment and a vision prompted Rugby hockey enthusiasts in the early 1980's to get the puck sliding for a hockey program that has blossomed into the success it is today.

A hockey program in the Rugby School District was not financially feasible, but that did not deter the hockey boosters. Today the Rugby Amateur Hockey Association is an affiliate of the North Dakota Amateur Hockey Association and USA Hockey.

The development of the 30-year-old hockey program is to be respected. The humble beginnings included using three outdoor rinks, with a dozen or so parents committed to provide the sport not only for their own children but any interested youth in the community.

The first rink with wood side-boards, lights and a warming house was located at the then-Optimist Park, now the Eagles Park.

In 1988 Rugby's dream of having its own indoor arena came true. Local lending institutions shared a loan for \$90,000 and the association raised \$50,000, for a total price tag of \$140,000.

Very little of the labor for the project was hired. Community contractors donated their time and labor to construct the current building. Volunteer work is still an important part of the association today through volunteers who work to improve and make repairs to the arena as well as coaches, zammers, kitchen workers, volunteer and game personnel.

A big breakthrough for the association came in 1993 when independent contributor, Al Wentz, provided a refrigeration system to produce artificial ice, allowing a longer skating season. This resulted in Rugby being able to host state tournaments and for the players to compete at home with the NDAHA League.

Starting with the 2010-2011 season, a co-op was formed and approved between Rugby High School and Bottineau High School for High School age players to compete in the North Dakota High School West Region Hockey League. Prior to that, Rugby High School players had played for many years in the North Dakota Junior Gold League. Rugby hockey teams have produced many good players over the years. The IceHawks have won State Championships and had high finishes at the PeeWee, Bantam and Junior Gold Levels.

Along with hockey teams for youth 3 years of age through high school, there is an adult team for the men, and women as well as public skating for the community to enjoy. The ice is available for rental to groups upon request.

Indeed, the entire community can be proud of the countless time, money and support people in the community, and many more who are no longer here, committed to seeing hockey become an established part of Rugby. It has provided another positive activity for many Rugby and area youth and adults during the long winter season. It has given an economic boost to businesses by hosting many tournaments and games which bring in many people from out of the area. And it has displayed how a community can come together and create something positive.

2010 – 2011 Board Members

Jay McClintock	-	President/NDAHA Community Rep
Sandy Hageness	-	Secretary/Registrar
John Teigen		Treasurer
Steve Brossart	-	Board Member
Ben Kuhnhenh	-	Board Member
Keri Lunde	-	Board Member
Chad Armstrong	-	Board Member (Rolette Rep)
Stacey Atkinson	-	Bookkeeper (Non-Board Member)

Arena Name - Al Wentz Arena

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