



# Tri-City Storm Booster Club

Website: [www.stormboosterclub.com](http://www.stormboosterclub.com)

E-Mail: [info@stormboosterclub.com](mailto:info@stormboosterclub.com)

Vol. 9, No. 1

PO Box 2101, Kearney, NE 68848

September 2009

## September General Meeting

**Tuesday, Sept. 22, 2009 - 6:30 p.m.**

(Note the earlier time than last year)

**VEC – 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor VIP Room**

Special guests will be the four returning players from last year

**Anthony DeCenzo - Josh Berge**

**Radoslov Illo - Rick Pinkston**

## Storm Staff

We have an all-new staff working with the players this year. We have already met the head coach, Drew Schneck, the goalie coach, Pokey Reddick, and the equipment manager, Jason Peck. Now it is time to meet our two assistant coaches and the trainer.



### **Ryan Bencurik**

Ryan is from Darien, Illinois, a suburb of Chicago. A defenseman, Ryan started his USHL career with the Omaha Lancers during the 1993-94 season. Then he spent two seasons with the

Des Moines Musketeers, and, finally a season with the Lincoln Stars. From there Ryan moved on to play for the UNO Mavericks for three years. Then he played professionally for the Wichita Thunder in the CHA.

Ryan's next step was to become a coach. He came to Lincoln to coach the Lincoln Jr. Stars in 2004. The following year he joined the Lincoln Stars as Assistant Coach. He was in that position when he was hired in July to be an Assistant Coach for the Tri-City Storm.



### **Eric Fink**

Eric Fink comes from Sack Rapids, Minnesota, which is near St. Cloud. He played his junior hockey in the late 1990's in the Minnesota Junior Hockey League with the South Suburban Steers in South St. Paul, MN.

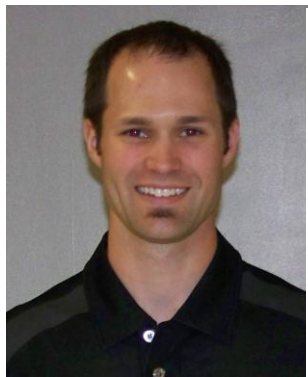
In the summer of 2002 that team was reorganized as the Twin Cities Northern Lights. Since Eric was known to the new owners from his former playing days, he was part of the reorganization team. The following summer he was named head coach and remained for three seasons.

In 2006 Eric moved on to be the assistant coach of the Southern Minnesota Express, an NAHL in Owatonna, MN. The following season he was assistant coach at Augsburg College, in Minneapolis. In 2008 Eric returned (cont. on p.2)

(Fink, Cont.)

to Owatonna, but now as assistant coach of the Owatonna Express. The Southern Minnesota Express had moved their franchise to the Detroit area and the Owatonna Express, also in the NAHL, replaced them.

When the Assistant Coach position with the Storm opened up, Eric applied and was successful in being hired in July.



### **Craig Brandenburger**

Craig is the new trainer for the Storm. He is a native of North Dakota where he lived on the North Dakota / South Dakota border south of Fargo. In fact, Craig says, the South

Dakota border is the road in front of his father's house.

Craig earned his bachelor's degree from the University of Minnesota. at Morris. Morris is located in west central Minnesota roughly half way between Minneapolis and Fargo, ND. From there he went on to earn a graduate degree from the U of South Dakota as a sports trainer. Craig had no hockey experience before landing a job with the Sioux City Musketeers. But he does now because he has spent the last five seasons as their trainer.

Then Craig's job ended and the store where his wife worked closed. It was a sign that the time had come to move. In three weeks this summer he got the job here, they sold their house in Sioux City (before it went on the market), moved to Kearney, and Craig's wife started her new job at the Gap. Is this a sign that Kearney is where they are supposed to be?

Craig works full time with Storm. The team maintains their connection with New West Sports Medicine but he will not be scheduled to work there. As the Booster Club member in charge of treats, Cindy Rademacher will be working with Craig in selecting the types of treats the Booster Club will be sending along with the players to their away games.



### **Jason Peck**

This is Jason Peck, the Equipment Manager this season. Being camera shy, there was no picture available last month when he was spotlighted.

## **Team USA**

USA Hockey started their National Team Development Program in 1996 at Ann Arbor, Michigan. Their objective is to develop high caliber players for US National Teams which compete internationally.

There are two squads, an Under-17 team and an Under-18 team. Beginning with the 1997-98 season the U-17 team has been competing in the NAHL. The U-18 team played a full schedule in the USHL during the 1998-99 and 1999-2000 seasons. but has not been in a league since then. This season both teams are joining the USHL as Team USA. Between the two teams – U-17 and U18 – they will play a full 60-game season. The U-17 squad will play 34 games; the U-18 squad will play 26.

The U-18 team will attend the Fall Classic in Sioux City where they will meet the Storm at 4 p.m. on Thursday. When the Storm travels to Ann Arbor on the weekend of Nov. 20-21 they will play the U-17 team on Friday night and the U-18 team the next night. On Dec. 5 the U-18 team will come here to Kearney. The U-17 team will visit here for a March 19 game.

### **The Ice Cube**

Teams USA play their home games at the Ice Cube arena in Ann Arbor. This arena has a full schedule of programs for youth, adult leagues and figure skating. It is home to a hockey club and two high school teams as well as the U-17 and U-18 teams.

The facility has three sheets of ice. There are no descriptions of them, they are only referred to as

(cont. on p. 3, bottom)

# *Some Storm History before Kearney*

## *An Example of Interconnections in the World of Hockey*

The Wakota Arena in South St. Paul, MN, was one of the first indoor ice rinks built in Minnesota. It was completed in 1962 as one sheet of ice with a roof and four walls.

Originally financed by a private group of investors, it was later purchased by South St. Paul. Over the years it has been enlarged twice, once to add concession and lobby space with an upstairs viewing area; then to add a second sheet of ice and office space.

For a while the St. Paul Vulcans played their home games in Wakota Arena. As early as 1967 a group of local leaders had recognized that there was a gap in hockey playing experience between high school and college and for players not going on to college.

The result was the organizing of the Canadian-American Hockey League which evolved into the Midwest Junior Hockey League (MJHL). One of the new teams in this new league in 1973 was the St. Paul Vulcans. The Vulcans played their home games at the U of Minn. Area first and then moved over to Wakota.

When they moved again, to the Augsburg College arena in Minneapolis, Wakota became the home of the South Suburban Steers in the

Minnesota Junior Hockey League. Later the Steers were sold, reorganized, and moved to the Bloomington Ice Gardens in 2002 to play as the Northern Lights with Eric Fink as their coach.

Meanwhile, in the late 1970's the Midwest Junior Hockey League was having financial problems. The USHL, which at that time was a men's senior league, was also having financial problems. The two leagues agreed to merge in the 1977-78 season. By the following year the USHL was entirely a junior league. Over the years the Vulcans developed a relationship with the University of Minnesota to the point they became known as the "Gophers Hockey farm team."

In 1995 in an attempt to broaden their fan base, the St. Paul Vulcans changed their name to the Twin Cities Vulcans. At some point they left the Augsburg arena to use the Columbia Arena in Fridley. Finally in their last year they used the Bloomington Ice Gardens – that same place that would be used by the Northern Lights three years later. And in 2004-8 the former Vulcans team returned to the Ice Gardens to hold their tryout camps after departing in 2000 "from the Twin Cities to a 'hidden hockey hot bed' in Kearney Nebraska to become the Tri-City Storm."

(quote from [vintagegmhockey.com/St.PaulVulcans](http://vintagegmhockey.com/St.PaulVulcans))



**The Ice Cube at Ann Arbor, Michigan**

(Team USA. Cont.)

"Olympic", "Stadium", and "Varsity." Olympic is self explanatory, but what sizes are the other two?

Scheduling use of the ice is called "Ice for Sale" with a yard sign on their website. And just to let you know you are never too old and to set another goal for adult leagues here at the Viaero Event Center, they are currently advertising for a goalie for the Golden Master Hockey League for players 50 and older.



Tri-City Storm Booster Club  
 P O Box 2101  
 Kearney NE 68868



**Global warming may endanger the future of polar hockey**



**Don't Forget To Renew Your Membership**

Otherwise this is your last issue of the newsletter.

## *Storm Alumni*

### *Brian Kilburg*

Both the AHL and an East Coast league were interested in Brian Kilburg at the end of Mankato's hockey season last spring, but he opted to stay in school and complete his degree in economics. Now he has signed with the Ontario Reign. That's Ontario, California, not Ontario, Canada.

The Reign coach, Karl Taylor says the 6'3" defenseman has "all the physical skills. He loves to hit, he's a very aggressive player. He plays hard and takes pride in what he does." Storm fans will probably say that description fits the way he played here also.

The Ontario Reign is affiliated with the Manchester Monarchs in the AHL and with the NHL Los Angeles Kings.

### *Bobby Robins*

Bobby Robins spent the past season in Ireland playing for the Belfast Giants. In May he and a teammate, who is also from the US, signed with the Rodovre Mighty Bulls. This team is located in a suburb of Copenhagen, Denmark. Then at the end of August both players plus another US/North American player were released due to "continuing financial problems." Where to next?

## *Birthdays*



Two defensemen have birthdays coming up.

Adam Hout will be 20 on September 29<sup>th</sup>.

Rick Pinkston turns 19 on October 4<sup>th</sup>.

### **Storm Booster Club**

Official Booster Club of the Tri-City Storm

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P O Box 2101, Kearney, NE 68848

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