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WHERE HOCKEY IS KING: Keweenaw Peninsula embraces skates, sticks and pucks

BY SHAWN WINDSOR
FREE PRESS
STAFF WRITER

Four-foot icicles hung high and dangerous from the outside corners of the old rink, stalactites crystallized during the brutal winters in the most remote region of the state.

Inside the Armory, an antiquated, gun-metal shrine with a quarter-moon-shaped roof that pokes through the white-out horizon in Calumet, young teenage boys swooped around the ice, crashing their 100-pound frames into the boards, scrambling for the elusive puck, moving with a kind of gangly grace.

Marty Bessolo leaned against the glass to watch, his breath visible in the 10-degree chill. His son, Dave, 13, was out in the scrum, gliding away on a recent early Saturday afternoon in Calumet, an old mining town cut in the center of the Keweenaw Peninsula.

Occasionally, one of the teams scored, and a dozen or so mothers and grandmothers, huddled in pairs and threes under blankets on wooden bleachers, let out cheers.

Bessolo, 41, nodded, a subtle acknowledgement from a man who has been around hockey all his life in a place

that is, in many ways, defined by the game.

"What do you do here in the winter otherwise?" said the stoic snowplow driver from Mohawk, a few dozen homes bunched together further up into Keweenaw.

It was the kind of moment played out thousands of times in the snow-drenched reaches of the Upper Peninsula. From Houghton to Copper Harbor, from Eagle River to Ahmeek, somewhere, someone, is lacing up a pair of skates, grabbing a stick and chasing a puck.

It's been this way ever since the Canadians brought their game to the copper mining region more than 100 years ago. The sport suited the harsh winters and mining ethos of the Finnish, Italians and French miners.

"Tough guys looking for something to do," said Bill Sproule, a civil engineering professor at **Michigan Tech** who also teaches a course in hockey history.

Maybe it had something to do with sticks, he said.

The area has been a kind of hockey island since – contrary to downstate stereotypes, hockey doesn't dominate the U.P. In Iron Mountain, for ex-

ample, the home of Tom Izzo and Steve Mariucci, basketball and football rule.

But from Houghton north to the tip of the Keweenaw, it's all hockey. Consider that next year is the 100-year anniversary of the Portage Lakes, the first professional hockey team in the world. The Lakes played in the five-team International Hockey League. The other teams were based in Calumet, Pittsburgh, Sault Ste. Marie, Mich., and Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.

The league lasted three years. A few years later, two more leagues were created. The best team in each played a championship series. The winner got Lord Stanley's Cup. After World War I, a whole new league was formed. It was called the NHL. Hometown hockey history

Not long after, **Michigan Tech's** club-level hockey team became varsity. The Huskies have been the soul of the northern tip of Michigan ever since, even though the team has had one winning season in the past 20 years, in 1992-93. The Huskies are 4-14-4 this season.

Sproule, 55, blames it on academics.

"You have to take engineering and there are no girls

here," he said. "You have to have a pretty fancy recruiter to get around that."

Still, he said, "there is a lot of optimism here."

A young coach, 37-year-old Jamie Russell, took over this season. He came from Cornell. His arrival was like the 200-plus inches of snow that falls every year, leaving the landscape pure and white.

In the early years, the Huskies played at Dee Stadium, a frigid metal structure built in 1928 on the shore of Portage Lake in Houghton. In 1972, they moved to the Student Ice Arena, renamed the MacInnes Student Ice Arena in 1991 named after the late John MacInnes, the coach who won three NCAA championships in the 1960s and 1970s, guided 21 All-Americans and sent several players to the NHL. He retired in 1982.

The Dee exists today.

On weekends, players from 6 to 60 arrive early and late at the old rink. Some sport local business-sponsored jerseys and \$150 sticks and lug equipment bags as large as they are tall. Others saunter in with off-brand skates slung over their shoulders.

The scene is the same at the Armory.

Calumet, once home to 60,000 and great copper wealth, shrunk to 879 people after the mines closed. It survives on memories and hockey.

Last Saturday, trucks wedged between the snow drifts in the Armory parking lot, filling it by early afternoon. The players

and families come from all over the peninsula.

Bessolo's son's team had a two-goal lead when the second period ended. As the scrawny players headed to the basement locker rooms, a garage-sized door lifted at the end of the arena, and an old Zamboni rumbled out to cut and flood the ice.

One of the coaches wandered over to chat with Bessolo. Ray Jervais, 53, a soil sampler for a local engineering company, spends his spare time at the rink with kids. Like most, he grew up playing hockey.

"My mother used to send me the local paper when I was in Vietnam," he said.

Even in the jungle, he had to follow the play on the ice. Go Huskies!

When the game was over, the lobby, flush with the scent of sweat and rubber flooring and hot chocolate, filled with parents coming in from the snow for the next round. Half the community seem to jam the only warm place in the cavernous building.

It was mid-afternoon, and though games were unspooling around the region, a few hundred people dropped by the Finnish festival on the shores of Portage Lake in downtown Hancock. A line of young men and women, dressed only in bathing suits, snaked back from a hole cut in the ice for a polar bear swim.

A few members of the **Michigan Tech** pep band, looking to cool off before the night's big game against North Dakota, took turns diving into the water, wearing their trademark

yellow-and-black striped overalls.

At the Dee, a local senior hockey club, made of former college players and former European professionals played before a small crowd.

Down the road at Tech, Mark Maroste, an assistant coach who played for MacInnes in the early 1980s, sat in a dark office getting ready to face the No. 1-ranked team in the country.

Naturally, he talked hockey.

"It's a unique pocket in Michigan," he said. "(Hockey) is the topic of a lot of conversations."

By sunset, maybe an hour before the 7 p.m. start, the wind picked up, blowing the tops of drifts, creating a low visibility, eye-stinging white-wash.

Down the hill from the arena, in front of the dorms, students slid around makeshift rinks with duct-taped broom handles and a holeless whiffleball. They call it broom hockey.

At Tech, it's an intramural sport. There were refs, scoreboards and a few fans, most of them girlfriends.

Back at MacInnes, a couple thousand filed into the 3,500-seat box to watch the only Division I sport in town. Tech stayed with North Dakota for the first period.

Chris Conner, a slick, speedy sophomore center from Westland, and one of the country's leading scorers, cut his way through the larger Sioux several times, once hitting the crossbar.

Old-timers lined the glass behind each goal. Young boys pretended to check each other behind the old-timers, sprinting up and down the floor.

Students chanted mockingly, but cleanly – eschewing the popular vulgarities shouted at places like Yost Arena at the University of Michigan.

"We do it with innuendo," said Matt Black, a junior computer engineering student and pep band member. "We walk the line."

This night, so do the Huskies. For a while. Eventually, the Sioux's size and speed are too much, and in the end, they win, 4-0.

Conner, an engineering student, is subdued after the game, but hopeful. The team

is young. The coach is young. And when he hits the town, everyone knows who he is.

"I love the coziness," he said.

A few hours later, the bars were full and the game was dissected and another snowstorm blew in from Lake Superior. A few miles west of Houghton, down the shore of Portage Lake Channel, a light cut through the black horizon.

Oskar, an old Finnish town of a few dozen, mostly slept. It was after midnight.

At the Oskar dome, a half-dozen teenagers played in bitter cold on gray ice.

The small rink was outdoors once. A few years ago, the community sheathed it in metal and particle board and chain-link fencing.

Rock 'n' roll blared down from the wooden rafters. The young men moved with an easy grace, slapping shots into an empty net, pretending to be Gretzky, to be Yzerman.

It was eight degrees.

Eric Jukkala laced up his skates. Early Sunday morning, he walked onto the ice once more.

He graduated from Houghton High School last year. He plans to go to Tech next year.

He's been playing hockey since he could walk.

"What else can you play at 2 a.m.?"

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AScribe Newswire

January 23, 2004 Friday

Microwave Steel: Faster, Cleaner, Cheaper

HOUGHTON, Mich., Jan. 23 [AScribe Newswire] -- The same couch-potato technology that pops your popcorn during a TV commercial can now be used to make steel.

You shouldn't try it at home, however, since it involves heating the raw materials up to 1,000 degrees Celsius, about the same temperature as molten lava.

The feat was accomplished by **Michigan Tech** researcher Jiann-Yang [Jim] Hwang, who wired together the magnetrons from six garden-variety microwaves into one super-heavy-duty oven and added an electric arc furnace. He then put iron oxide and coal inside. In a matter of minutes, the microwave energy reduced the iron ore to iron, and the electric arc furnace smelted the iron and coal into steel.

The process could give the steel industry the same benefits that a microwave gives the typical family, says Hwang, an associate professor of materials science and engineering and director of **Michigan Tech's** Institute of Materials Processing.

It's really cheap, and it's really fast.

"With a blast furnace, most of the heat escapes," Hwang says. "It's like the stove in your home, where most of the heat warms your kitchen. It's inefficient. In our microwave, iron oxides can be heated to 1,000 degrees Celsius in one minute, compared to hours for conventional heating."

Microwave technology could cut production costs by as much as 50 percent, Hwang says. In addition to energy savings, it uses coal, eliminating the need for high-cost coke. And the manufacturing process is simple, cutting the number of steelmaking steps in half.

It's also friendlier to the environment, with significant reductions in greenhouse gases and sulfur dioxide emissions.

Industry officials aren't ready to throw their existing technology out the window just yet, but they are taking a close look at the Hwang's invention.

"This could be a promising technology, particularly for helping us reuse byproducts that are currently being discarded," said Mark Conedera, a senior environmental engineer with US Steel Corporation. "We've been supportive of the concept for these value-added uses, and it has significant environmental benefits."

Hwang believes his new technology has the potential to benefit U.S. heavy industry, particularly in the Great Lakes region, where the steel and auto industries are centered.

"A low-cost steelmaking technology would take advantage of U.S. iron and coal resources and could help keep manufacturing jobs in Michigan and throughout the Great Lakes," he said.

Hwang's microwave steelmaking research was supported by a grant from the U.S. Department of Energy.

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Market Wire

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The World's Top Collegiate "Coders" to Face Off at IBM-Sponsored Programming Contest in Prague; Open Source Technologies, Linux and Eclipse, to Be Featured in Worldwide "Battle of the Brains"

Jan. 27, 2004; SOMERS, NY; MARKET WIRE

The world's best and brightest collegiate software programmers will gather in Prague, Czech Republic, March 28 - April 1, 2004, for the 28th Annual World Finals of the ACM (Association for Computing Machinery) International Collegiate Programming Contest (ICPC). IBM's sponsorship of this worldwide "battle of the brains" is part of the company's commitment to develop the next generation of information technology talent.

Seventy-two teams will tackle a semester's worth of computer programming in under five hours, a feat requiring logic, strategy, and mental endurance. Teams of three university students will need to solve eight or more complex, real world programming problems that span various industries. The team that solves the most problems correctly in the least amount of time will emerge as the international champion, earning scholarships, IBM prizes, and bragging rights to the "world's smartest trophy."

This year's contest provides students the opportunity to become familiar with Linux and Eclipse, two open source technologies that are experiencing high profile, widespread success. Linux and Eclipse offer users cost-efficient, accessible, and secure operating systems.

"Through the contest, these students are developing skills they will need in the real world. Open source platforms are being adopted in business, education, and government sectors, areas of the workforce these programmers will enter in the very near future," says Gabby Silberman, Program Director, IBM Centers for Advanced Studies, and Sponsorship Executive.

The ICPC is the largest contest of its kind, and participation has more than quadrupled since IBM began sponsoring the contest in 1997. This year, the regional contests drew tens of thousands of participants at over 1,300 universities from 68 countries.

"The ICPC is the world's most prestigious university competition in the computing sciences and engineering," says Dr. Bill Poucher, ICPC Executive Director and Baylor Professor. "Endorsed by ACM, supported by university commitments, and fueled by IBM's sponsorship, the ICPC challenge has grown this year, extending itself to tens of thousands of top students and faculty mentors worldwide."

As part of IBM's continuing commitment to education, the company will be working closely with team coaches to provide technology and software to universities, as well as learn more about how professors keep their curriculum current in today's rapidly changing environment.

University teams -- from Baltimore to Beijing, and Minneapolis to Moscow -- have advanced as finalists to compete in the ACM ICPC World Finals, sponsored by IBM.

North America

- Brigham Young University (Provo, UT): The Tri-Lams
- California Institute of Technology (Pasadena, CA): Beavers
- Cornell University (Ithaca, NY): Big Red
- Duke University (Durham, NC): arcade
- Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta, Georgia): Georgia Tech Yellow Jackets
- Harvard University (Cambridge, MA): Harvard Lambda
- Illinois Institute of Technology (Chicago, IL): ITT-A
- Queen's University (Ontario, Canada): Queen's BLT
- LeTourneau University (Longview, TX): Single-File Zummzian Zuks
- Massachusetts Institute of Technology (Boston, MA): MIT Beavers
- **Michigan Technological University** (Houghton, MI): mtu blue
- Shippensburg University (Shippensburg, PA): Shippensburg Red
- South Dakota School of Mines and Technology (Rapid City, SD): Hardrockers
- Stanford University (Palo Alto, CA): Stanford Cardinal
- The Johns Hopkins University (Baltimore, MD): 11Guys
- University of British Columbia (British Columbia, Canada): UBC O
- University of Calgary (Alberta, Canada): Digital Dinos
- University of Central Florida (Orlando, Florida): UCF Knights
- University of Illinois (Urbana-Champaign, IL): Overflow
- University of Michigan-- Ann Arbor (Ann Arbor, MI): Mighty Hackers
- University of Minnesota, Twin Cities (Minneapolis, MN): ActiveSynergisticLeverage.NET
- University of Texas at Austin (Austin, TX): Bevo Pivot
- University of Waterloo (Waterloo, Ontario, Canada): Waterloo
- University of Wisconsin (Madison, WI): What Badgers Eat
- Virginia Tech (Blacksburg, VA): Virginia Tech

Africa and The Middle East

- University of Cape Town (Cape Town, South Africa): The Teddyborg
- Cairo University Faculty of Computers and Information (Cairo, Egypt): Computers Cairo Univ-1

Asia

- Amirkabir University of Technology (Tehran, Iran): seKallePuk
- Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology (Dhaka, Bangladesh): Phoenix
- Donghua University (Shanghai, China): GreyGhost
- Institute of Technology and Management (Gurgaon, India): Infinite Loop
- Indian Institute of Technology (Bombay, India): JNANIS
- Fudan University (Shanghai, China): Powdery Snow
- Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (Daejeon, South Korea): unKnown
- Nanyang Technological University (Singapore): NTU Team
- National Taiwan University (Taipei, Taiwan): Light

- Shanghai Jiao.Tong University (Shanghai, China): Terrific
- Sharif University of Technology (Tehran, Iran): The Stupendos
- Seoul National University (Seoul, Korea): chocopie
- Tokyo Institute of Technology (Tokyo, Japan): vertices
- Tsinghua University (Beijing, China): Sunny
- The University of Hong Kong (Hong Kong, China): HKU-CE
- Yonsei University (Seoul, South Korea): Haeya
- ZhongShan University (Guangdong, China): Promehteus

Europe

- Albert Einstein University Ulm (Ulm, Germany): Ulm
- Belarusian State University (Minsk, Belarus): BSU-Pelmeni
- Bucharest University (Bucharest, Romania): UNIBUC
- Charles University Prague (Prague, Czech Republic): Charles University
- Izhevsk State Technical University (Izhevsk, Russia): IzhevskSTU
- KTH-- Royal Institute of Technology (Stockholm, Sweden): Three-headed monkey
- Kyrgyz-Russian Slavic University (Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan): KRSU Team
- Jagiellonian University, Krakow (Krakow, Poland): Jagiellonian University
- Moscow State University (Moscow, Russia): RoVD
- Nizhny Novgorod State University (Nizhny Novgorod, Russia): NNSU
- Norwegian University of Science and Technology (Norway): dev/duff
- Novosibirsk State University (Novosibirsk, Russia): Novosibirsk SU
- Perm State University (Perm, Russia): PSU
- Petrozavodsk State University (Petrozavodsk, Russia): Trinity
- St Petersburg Institute of Fine Mechanics and Optics (St. Petersburg, Russia): SPb IFMO
- St. Petersburg State University (St. Petersburg, Russia): SPb SU
- Sofia University (Sofia Bulgaria): FMI Clan
- University of Politecnica de Catalunya (Barcelona, Spain): Barcelona Tamarros
- University of Tartu (Tartu, Estonia): Tartu Jun
- Warsaw University (Warsaw, Poland): New Eagles

Latin America

- ITESM, Campus Monterrey (Monterrey, Mexico): The Deadly Coding Squad
- Universidad de las Americas, Puebla (Puebla, Mexico): Los Novatos reloaded
- Universidade Estadual de Campina (Sao Paulo, Brazil): IC-Unicamp
- Universidade Federal de Pernambuco (Pernambuco, Brazil): UFPE-AM/PM
- Universidad de Palermo (Palermo, Argentina): Quiyepa
- Universidad Simon Bolivar (Mexico City, Mexico): T-se7en

South Pacific

- University of New South Wales (New South Wales, Australia): UNSW-G
- University of Otago (Dunedin, New Zealand): The Pumpkin Lemma

About IBM

IBM is the world's largest information technology company, with 85 years of leadership in helping businesses innovate. IBM software offers the widest range of e-business infrastructure software for all types of computing platforms, allowing customers to take full advantage of the new era of e-business. The fastest way to get more information about IBM software is through the IBM home page at <http://www.software.ibm.com>.

About Linux*

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About Eclipse

Eclipse is an open platform for tool integration built by an open community of tool providers, operating under an open source paradigm, with a common public license that provides royalty-free source code and worldwide redistribution rights. The eclipse platform provides tool developers with ultimate flexibility and control over their software technology. Visit www.eclipse.org to discover more!

About ACM

The Association for Computing Machinery (ACM) is a major force in advancing the skills of information technology professionals and students. ACM serves its global membership of 75,000 by delivering cutting edge technical information and transferring ideas from theory to practice. ACM hosts the computing industry's leading Portal to Computing Literature. With its journals and magazines, special interest groups, conferences, workshops, electronic forums, Career Resource Centre and Professional Development Centre, ACM is a primary resource to the information technology field. For more information, see www.acm.org.

Editor's Note: For more information on the ACM Programming Contest and the complete World Finals roster, visit the contest Web sites at <http://acmicpc.org> or <http://www.software.ibm.com/acm>.

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