



# 70 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE

The Men's League of the Western Collegiate Hockey Association celebrated seven decades of history during the 2020-21 season.

The league is announcing an All-Decade Team and a Coach and Player of the Decade for the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, 1990s, 2000s and 2010s. All current and former WCHA member institutions were asked to submit nominees for consideration and nearly 200 current and former players and coaches were nominated. The honorees will be selected by a panel of current and former WCHA staff and media members who covered the league.

Home to a record 37 national championships, 16 Hobey Baker Award winners, 408 All-Americans, more than 450 National Hockey League players and 217 Olympians through 2018, the WCHA has been one of the most successful and decorated leagues in intercollegiate hockey.

This year's celebration is the second event of its kind in league history. During the 2001-02 season, the WCHA recognized the Top 50 Players in 50 Years with a season-long campaign that culminated at that season's Final Five.

## Player of the Decade



**1950s**  
**John Mayasich**  
F, Minnesota



**1960s**  
**Keith Christiansen**  
F, Minnesota  
Duluth



**1970s**  
**Mark Johnson**  
F, Wisconsin



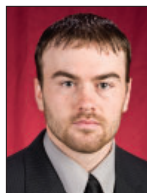
**1980s**  
**Tony Hrkac**  
F, North Dakota



**1990s**  
**Mike Crowley**  
D, Minnesota



**2000s**  
**Jordan Leopold**  
D, Minnesota



**2010s**  
**Jack Connolly**  
F, Minnesota  
Duluth

## Coach of the Decade



**1950s**  
**Vic Heyliger**  
Michigan



**1960s**  
**Murray Armstrong**  
Denver



**1970s**  
**Herb Brooks**  
Minnesota



**1980s**  
**Gino Gasparini**  
North Dakota



**1990s**  
**Dean Blais**  
North Dakota



**2000s**  
**Don Lucia**  
Minnesota



**2010s**  
**Mike Hastings**  
Minnesota State

## All-Decade Teams

### 1950s

Name	Pos.	School	Years
John Mayasich	F	Minnesota	1951-55
Ben Cherski	F	North Dakota	1951-55
John Matchefts	F	Michigan	1951-53
Ken Yackel	D	Minnesota	1952-56
Bill Steenson	D	North Dakota	1956-59
Jack McCartan	G	Minnesota	1955-58

### 1960s

Name	Pos.	School	Years
Keith Christiansen	F	Minnesota Duluth	1963-67
Bill Masterton	F	Denver	1958-61
Red Berenson	F	Michigan	1959-62
Keith Magnuson	D	Denver	1966-69
Lou Nanne	D	Minnesota	1960-63
Tony Esposito	G	Michigan Tech	1964-67

### 1970s

Name	Pos.	School	Years
Mark Johnson	F	Wisconsin	1976-79
Tom Ross	F	Michigan State	1972-76
Mike Zuke	F	Michigan Tech	1972-76
Curt Giles	D	Minnesota Duluth	1975-79
Craig Norwich	D	Wisconsin	1974-77
Ron Grahame	G	Denver	1969-73

### 1980s

Name	Pos.	School	Years
Tony Hrkac	F	North Dakota	1984-85, 86-87
Pat Micheletti	F	Minnesota	1982-86
Bill Watson	F	Minnesota Duluth	1982-85
Tom Kurvers	D	Minnesota Duluth	1980-84
Chris Chelios	D	Wisconsin	1981-83
Robb Stauber	G	Minnesota	1986-89

### 1990s

Name	Pos.	School	Years
Greg Johnson	F	North Dakota	1989-93
Brian Bonin	F	Minnesota	1992-96
Brian Swanson	F	Colorado College	1995-99
Mike Crowley	D	Minnesota	1994-97
Nick Naumenko	D	North Dakota	1992-96
Karl Goehring	G	North Dakota	1997-2001

### 2000s

Name	Pos.	School	Years
Peter Sejna	F	Colorado College	2000-03
John Pohl	F	Minnesota	1998-2002
Brett Sterling	F	Colorado College	2002-06
Jordan Leopold	D	Minnesota	1998-2002
Matt Carle	D	Denver	2003-06
Brian Elliott	G	Wisconsin	2003-07

### 2010s

Name	Pos.	School	Years
Jack Connolly	F	Minnesota Duluth	2008-12
Marc Michaelis	F	Minnesota State	2016-20
Matt Leitner	F	Minnesota State	2011-15
Justin Schultz	D	Wisconsin	2009-12
Alec Rauhauser	D	Bowling Green	2016-20
Dryden McKay	G	Minnesota State	2018-21

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## 70 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE- PLAYERS OF THE DECADE



1950s  
John Mayasich  
F, Minnesota

### 1950s

#### John Mayasich, F, Minnesota

No player in college hockey history dominated quite like Minnesota's John Mayasich.

As a Golden Gopher, Mayasich was a three-time All-American and the WCHA's only three-time league scoring champion. The Eveleth, Minn., native's 144 career goals still stand as the league record 65 years after his final collegiate game. His 298 career points rank fourth in WCHA annals and top Minnesota's career scoring list. He remains the first – and only – player in the history of the star-studded Golden Gopher program to have his jersey retired.



1960s  
Keith Christiansen  
F, Minnesota  
Duluth

### 1960s

#### Keith Christiansen, F, Minnesota Duluth

A key figure in Minnesota Duluth's development as a Division I hockey program, Keith Christiansen amassed 196 points on 75 goals and 121 assists in 102 games and shared the UMD record for the most points scored in one game when he tallied six assists against Minnesota in the inaugural game at the Duluth Arena. The six helpers is still tied for the most by a WCHA player in a single game. In 1966-67, "Huffer" earned WCHA Player of the Year, All-WCHA and All-America honors after winning the league's

scoring championship with 46 points on 15 goals and 31 assists in UMD's second season as a WCHA member.



1970s  
Mark Johnson  
F, Wisconsin

### 1970s

#### Mark Johnson, F, Wisconsin

One of the top scorers in the WCHA's highest-scoring decade, Wisconsin's Mark Johnson finished his three-year career with 256 points [125g-131a] in 125 career games with the Badgers, an average of 85 points per season. His career points total ranks No. 11 in league history while his goal total is No. 6 all-time and his assist total is tied for 24th in WCHA history.

Johnson played under his father, Bob, with the Badgers for three seasons, winning WCHA Freshman of the Year

honors in 1976-77 after tallying 80 points on 36 goals and 44 assists in his rookie campaign. He earned the first of two All-America and All-WCHA honors as a sophomore, netting 86 points on 48 goals and 38 assists and sharing WCHA Scoring Champion honors with 70 points in 31 league contests that season. Johnson repeated the All-America/All-WCHA double as a junior with a 90-point campaign [41g-49a].



1980s  
Tony Hrkac  
F, North Dakota

### 1980s

#### Tony Hrkac, North Dakota

The ringleader of one of the greatest teams in WCHA history, Tony Hrkac entered North Dakota as a freshman in the fall of 1984 and scored 18 goals with 36 assists in his rookie campaign. After a season with Canada's Olympic Development Program, He returned to UND in the fall of 1986 to author the greatest scoring season in WCHA history.

In 1986-87, Hrkac tallied 116 points on 46 goals and 70 assists. The point total still stands as a WCHA and NCAA

record while the assist total remains a WCHA record and his 46 goals rank 15th in league history. Hrkac captured the WCHA Scoring Championship with 86 points on 36 goals and 50 assists in WCHA play with the point and assist marks still topping the league charts to this day. He remains the only player in WCHA history to reach 110 points and 70 assists in a single season.

UND teammates skated to a 40-8-0 overall record and a 29-6-0 WCHA mark in 1986-87, both of which stand as league records for victories and victories in WCHA play. The Fighting Sioux captured the MacNaughton Cup and the WCHA postseason title en route to the NCAA crown and Hrkac went on to win the Hobey Baker Award. He was also named the WCHA's Most Valuable Player, All-WCHA, All-American and the NCAA tournament's Most Outstanding Player in 1987.



1990s  
Mike Crowley  
D, Minnesota

### 1990s

#### Mike Crowley, Minnesota

One of just two defensemen to win a league scoring championship in Western Collegiate Hockey Association history, Minnesota's Mike Crowley was a three-time All-WCHA honoree (1994-95, 1995-96, 1996-97) and two-time All-American (1995-96, 1996-97), Crowley also earned WCHA Rookie of the Year (1994-95), WCHA Player of the Year (1996-97) and WCHA All-Academic Team (1995-96) honors and was a two-time finalist for the Hobey Baker Award (1996, 1997) during his Minnesota

career.

As a team captain in 1996-97, Crowley became just the second defenseman in WCHA history to win the league's scoring championship when he tallied 42 points on five goals and 37 assists in league play to share the crown and lead the Gophers to a WCHA regular season co-championship. He joined fellow Gopher Lou Nanne (1963) as the WCHA's only blueline scoring champions, an exclusive club that remains at two members today.



2000s  
Jordan Leopold  
D, Minnesota

### 2000s

#### Jordan Leopold, Minnesota

The first of six consecutive Hobey Baker Award winners for the WCHA between 2002-2007, Minnesota's Jordan Leopold established himself as one of the top defenders in college hockey, winning back-to-back WCHA Defensive Player of the Year Awards along with two more All-WCHA nods, a pair of All-America accolades and the 2002 Hobey Baker Award as the top player in college hockey to cap a memorable senior season.

In 2001-02, Leopold captained a Golden Gopher squad that reached the Frozen Four St. Paul's Xcel Energy Center, Minnesota took down Michigan, 3-2, in the semifinals before capping the season with a 4-3 overtime win over Maine to capture the school's first national championship since 1979. Leopold earned All-Tournament honors after assisting on the championship-winning goal. The victory, coupled with his selection as the Hobey Baker winner, made Leopold the first Gopher to win both the Hobey and a national championship in the same season.

Leopold finished his collegiate career with 144 points on 45 goals and 99 assists. His goal total remains a Minnesota defenseman record and ranks No. 6 all-time among WCHA blueliners. The assist and point totals still rank among the top-25 defender totals in the league record book.



2010s  
Jack Connolly  
F, Minnesota  
Duluth

### 2010s

#### Jack Connolly, Minnesota Duluth

The captain of Minnesota Duluth's first national championship team and the WCHA's most recent Hobey Baker winner, Minnesota Duluth's Jack Connolly captained a UMD squad that captured the program's first national title with a thrilling 3-2 overtime win over Michigan in the national championship game at St. Paul's Xcel Energy Center. Connolly led the Bulldogs in scoring that season with 59 points on 18 goals and a career-high 41 assists to again earn All-WCHA and All-American honors and a spot on the finalist list for the Hobey Baker Award.

The Hobey nod was a sign of things to come as Connolly authored a senior campaign that saw him win the WCHA Scoring Championship along with WCHA Player of the Year honors and his third All-America and All-WCHA awards before he heard his name called as the 2011-12 Hobey Baker winner, the 15th player in WCHA history to earn the accolade. Connolly finished his UMD career eighth on the school's scoring list with 197 points on 66 goals and 131 assists and did not miss a contest in his 166-game career. His assist total ranks 24th in WCHA history.

# 70 YEARS OF EXCELLENCE- COACHES OF THE DECADE

**1950s****Vic Heyliger, Michigan**

Vic Heyliger, whose coaching tenure at Michigan predated the founding of the WCHA, led the Wolverines to a record of 110-29-6 (.779) in six seasons of WCHA competition from 1951-52 to 1956-57 and won four NCAA championships (1952, 1953, 1955 and 1956) during that span.

His teams compiled a 74-21-3 (.771) mark in WCHA games, winning one WCHA title outright and sharing second with four runner-up finishes. Individually, Heyliger was honored with the Spencer Penrose Award in 1954 as the national coach of the year.

**1960s****Murray Armstrong, Denver**

Denver's Murray Armstrong led the Pioneers to five national championships, seven WCHA regular season championships, 10 WCHA tournament titles, 11 NCAA tournament appearances and eight trips to the national championship game in 21 seasons. He coached 23 All-Americans, earned national recognition was a two-time WCHA Coach of the Year (1961, 1968) and was the 1961 recipient of the Spencer Penrose Award as National Coach of the Year.

In the 1960s alone, the Pioneers captured four NCAA championships (1960, 1961, 1968, 1969), five WCHA postseason titles (1960, 1961, 1965, 1968, 1969) and four WCHA regular season titles (1960, 1961, 1963, 1968). His Denver squads posted a record of 22-70-17 (.751) during the decade, including a 118-48-6 (.703) mark in WCHA play.

His 1960-61 team is considered one of the greatest in NCAA hockey history. That season the Pioneers stormed to the national title with a 30-1-1 record.

**1970s****Herb Brooks, Minnesota**

Minnesota's Herb Brooks has been named the WCHA Coach of the Decade for the 1970s.

Brooks led Minnesota to the school's first three national championships in the 1970s, winning NCAA titles in 1974, 1976 and 1979 along with a runner-up finish in 1975. In WCHA play, Brooks' Golden Gopher squads captured four postseason titles and one regular season crown. The St. Paul, Minn., native compiled a seven-season record of

167-97-18 (.643) with Minnesota from 1972-1979, including a 119-83-14 (.583) mark in the WCHA.

But his lasting legacy stretched far beyond his time in Minnesota as he coached the 1980 U.S. Olympic Hockey Team – comprised primarily of WCHA players – to one of the greatest upsets in sports history. After an unbeaten run through pool play, the United States took down the mighty Soviet Union, 4-3, on Feb. 22, 1980 before clinching an improbable Gold medal two days later with a 4-2 win over Finland.

**1980s****Gino Gasparini, North Dakota**

North Dakota's **Gino Gasparini** coached at his alma mater from 1978-1994 and led North Dakota to three national championships in the 1980s (1980, 1982, 1987) along with a runner-up finish in 1979 and a third-place finish in 1984. In WCHA play, Gasparini's Fighting Sioux squads captured four regular-season titles and four postseason crowns during the decade. Gasparini compiled a 16-season record of 392-248-24 (.608) with North Dakota, including a 277-197-21 (.581) mark in the WCHA.

His 392 career wins are the most in North Dakota's storied history and stand as the sixth-most in WCHA history.

Gasparini was named the WCHA Coach of the Year three times (1979, 1982, 1987) and received the American Hockey Coaches Association's Spencer Penrose Award in 1987. In 1999, the AHCA honored him with the John MacInnes Award.

**1990s****Dean Blais, North Dakota**

Dean Blais coached at North Dakota from 1994-2004 and led the Fighting Sioux to two national championships (1997, 2000) along with a runner-up finish in 2001. In WCHA play, Blais' UND squads captured four regular-season titles and two postseason crowns during his tenure. After taking the reins in Grand Forks at the start of the 1994-95 season, Blais guided the Sioux to a 130-60-9 (.676) overall record and a WCHA mark of 96-48-8 (.658) with three WCHA regular season championships, one

postseason title and the 1997 NCAA championship through the remainder of the decade.

Blais compiled an 18-season record of 408-248-63 (.611) with North Dakota and Omaha, coaching in the WCHA (1994-2004, 2010-13), CCHA (2009-10) and NCHC (2013-17). As a WCHA head coach at UND and Omaha, Blais posted an overall mark of 316-167-43 (.642) and a 218-107-35 (.654) ledger in WCHA play, winning five MacNaughton Cups, two Broadmoor Trophies and two NCAA titles.

He was honored with the Spencer Penrose Award in 1997 and 2000 and took home WCHA Coach of the Year honors four times between his stops at North Dakota and Omaha (1996-97, 1998-99, 2000-01, 2010-11).

**2000s****Don Lucia, Minnesota**

Don Lucia, who coached at Minnesota from 1999-2018, led the Golden Gophers to back-to-back national championships (2001, 2002) along with a third Frozen Four appearance during the 2000s (2004-05). In WCHA play, Lucia's Minnesota squads captured two MacNaughton Cups and three Broadmoor Trophies during the decade. After moving from WCHA rival Colorado College in 1999, Lucia guided the Gophers to a 256-125-45 (.652) overall record and a WCHA mark of 155-91-34 (.614) between

1999 and 2010 and made eight NCAA tournament appearances with the Maroon & Gold, earning WCHA Coach of the Year honors in 2006.

Lucia compiled a 31-season record of 736-403-102 (.634) with Alaska Fairbanks, Colorado College and Minnesota during his tenure. As a WCHA head coach at CC and Minnesota, Lucia posted an overall mark of 510-250-77 (.655) and a 325-167-55 (.644) record in WCHA play, winning the MacNaughton Cup seven times, the Broadmoor Trophy three times and taking home a pair of NCAA championships. His 510 wins and 837 games coached in the WCHA both stand No. 2 in league history.

**2010s****Mike Hastings, Minnesota State**

Mike Hastings led Minnesota State to six MacNaughton Cup titles, including an unprecedented four in a row from 2017-18 through 2020-21. The six regular season titles tie him for third all-time in the WCHA with long-time Michigan Tech head coach John MacInnes, trailing only the seven crowns won by Denver's Murray Armstrong and Minnesota and Colorado College's Don Lucia.

The Crookston, Minn., native compiled a nine-season record of 234-90-24 (.708) with Minnesota State. His .708 career winning percentage is the best in WCHA history for any coach with more than 300 games in the league and he is the only man with a career winning percentage above .700 in WCHA annals. His 234 career wins rank No. 18 in WCHA coaching history and are the most in the NCAA over the last nine seasons.

In league games, Hastings led the Mavericks to a 168-50-19 (.757) mark along with the six regular season titles. His .757 winning percentage also tops all WCHA bench bosses. In the WCHA postseason, Hastings has guided MSU to three WCHA tournament crowns (2014, 2015, 2019) and his squads have advanced out of the first round in all nine seasons of his tenure.

At the national level, Hastings led the Mavericks to six NCAA tournament appearances and a berth in the 2021 Frozen Four.