

# Hingham Harbormen Hockey

## A Tradition of Success

The rich history and longtime success of Hingham High hockey is no accident; it is the product of the hard work and caring of many people. Hingham was among the first schools in Massachusetts not only to produce championships, but to produce players and coaches of character, skill and good sportsmanship. The team playing today is linked to this past, and currently adds much on its own to Hingham hockey tradition.

Competitive hockey goes back to the early 1930's when amateur teams played in a South Shore league based in Quincy. A few years later a group of volunteers created the Hingham Skating Club at the pond on East Street. Literally hundreds of games were played every winter utilizing makeshift boards, nets and even overhead lighting. Even then the Hingham Hockey Club was a winner, routinely finishing at the top of the league. In 1941, they reached the finals of the New England AAU championships before losing to Berlin, NH, 2-1 in four overtimes. The same year, the team entered the national championships where they reached the semifinals before losing to the team from Messina, NY, 7-6. Boston College was the champion that year.

Hingham High School hockey was started during this time by one of the town's great sports legends, Bill Cronin, Sr., who also coached the school's football and baseball teams. Bill was a spectacular athlete at Hingham High, Boston College and with the Providence Steamrollers professional football club. During these years, the team practiced on the Broad Cove Creek (behind Derby Academy) before moving to the Skating Club on East Street. Even then there was great fan interest. Under Cronin's direction in the early 50's, the South Shore High School Hockey League was formed, including teams from Weymouth, Quincy, North Quincy, Archbishop Williams, Milton and Braintree. At Cronin's request, the Boston Garden allowed the league to play on Thursday nights, provided they could guarantee a crowd of 300. Every Thursday, the league played three games, and, by the mid-50's, it was usual for twenty buses of Hingham fans to attend the games.

The 1950's produced great teams that routinely challenged for the state title - there was only one division. Future Hingham Hall of Famers Ed Connors, Dave Morse, Bill Cronin, Jr. and Ned Platner were known as "The Big Four" and began the winning tradition. Morse and Cronin later played for Harvard, and Connors, who would return to coach the team, went on to star at B.U. While this group won many memorable games, they are also remembered for a heartbreaking loss to eventual champ, Arlington, in the state tournament, 2-1, in a game requiring four overtimes over two days! It would take until 1971 for the Harbormen to avenge that loss.

When Bill Cronin Sr. died suddenly in 1956, Dan Hall succeeded him as coach and kept the tradition alive. A few years later, Walter Anderson, an All-American at B.U., would take over. Among the many great players of this era was Steve Dowling, who went on to captain the Boston College team. When Anderson had to choose football or hockey in 1966, Ed Connors, who played for Hall, was ready. He introduced the novel idea of weight training and video watching to improve performance—it worked. Many great players proudly

wore Hingham red during this era—future coach Steve Daly, John Hiltz, Kevin Duggan, Jeff Gill, Leo Scary, Jack Merrill and Joe Hammond. During this time there were still very few rinks available. In an effort to create a regular schedule, the coaches flooded one of the old concrete ammunition buildings in the Hingham depot and strung up some lights to create a practice facility. Irregular dimensions and an occasional odd patch of concrete through the ice made this facility short lived, however. The Ridge Arena in Braintree was the site for all games; crowds of 3000-4000 were routine. One of Hingham's great victories occurred in 1968 when Hingham shocked defending, undefeated state champion Needham, 2-0, in the first round of the playoffs before a screaming crowd of 5000 fans. One of the biggest upsets in the 25 year history of the tournament saw both goals scored by Hingham legend Bobby Coughlin, and masterful goaltending by Kevin Duggan.

Steve Daly succeeded Ed Connors for the 1973-74 season and didn't miss a beat. Pilgrim Arena opened, providing a great home rink for games and practices. The Harbormen compiled a record of 100-33-12 in the Old Colony League and a state tournament record of 9-7, including five games played in the Garden. Great players included Jack O'Neil, Dick Hamel, the Cox brothers, Hugh Gorman and the first of the legendary Messina brothers, Tony. One of the great highlights of this era was the 1980 team which compiled a 20-3 record and went four games into the state tournament before losing to eventual champion Matignon, 5-4. Tony Messina had a hat trick and Paul McCarthy recorded 49 saves. Also in 1980, the Hingham High School Hockey Boosters were born under the direction of Paula and Tony Messina Sr., a tradition which continues today.

In 1982, Garrett Reagan took control of the Harbormen and began to establish two very important traditions—winning and sportsmanship. During the early years of his tenure, Reagan led the Harbormen to three Old Colony Championships, seven Atlantic Coast Championships and a Patriot League Championship. Hingham was a fixture in tournament play and won the Division II State Championship in 1992 and 1997.

The 1992 squad, led by captains Brian McNulty and Rick Schuhwerk, went 23-3-1 during the season and prevailed over St.John's of Shrewsbury 2-1 at the Boston Garden. The 1997 team, led by captains Bryan Gautreau and Mark Melanson and goalie, Mark Carlson, also ended their season with a record of 23-1-1 and beat Newburyport, 7-1, at the Fleet Center to win their second Division 2 title. This victory classified the 1992 team as the only squad to win both state championship and the James F. Mulloy Sportsmanship Award.

In 1998 Hingham became an independent Division 1 team in order to compete with the best teams in the state and in 2001, the Harbormen confirmed Coach Reagan's strategic decision. They went 18-6-2 and in a very exciting game at the Fleet Center, Captains Kevin Olson, Mike Cavanaugh, and Anthony Forgione led the team in a real nail biter against St.John's of Shrewsbury. With 58 seconds left in the game, Andrew Genovese curled out of the corner and found Jed McDonald alone at the point. His slap shot found it's way home, and the Harbormen held on to win their first Division 1 title, 5-4!

Since 2001, Hingham qualified for the Super 8 tournament 5 years in a row. In 2002, Kevin Olson, Andrew Genovese, and Mike Boles led the team to a 23-3-1 record. They defeated Reading, Billerica, and St.John's of Shrewsbury before falling to CM in the semi-finals. 2003 proved to be equally exciting as the team went 19-5-1 to earn a # 4 Super 8 seed with Garret Daigler, Greg Genovese and Jed McDonald at the helm. Austin

Prep, Arlington Catholic, and Chelmsford all fell to the Harbormen but CM prevailed again in semi-final round at BU.

Even after losing 8 key players to graduation, the 2004 squad posted a 14-6-5 record as Alex Olson, Brian Collins, Bryan Wilbur, and Mike Genovese propelled the Harbormen to their second #4 ranking in the Super 8. In the new Round Robin format, Hingham trounced Duxbury 8-0, but CM struck again to end their season.

The 2005 team finally put an end to CM's reign as the Harbormen beat CM 3-2 in front of a sell-out crowd at Pilgrim Arena for the first time since 1965! Captains Brian Buckley, Mike Genovese, and Ty McDonald guided the team to another impressive season (15-8-2). The 2006 team kept up the pace to make it 5 years in a row qualifying for the Super 8. Captains Ty McDonald and Mike Perkins led the Harbormen to a 16-6-3 season. In 2006-2007, the Harbormen finished the season with a 13-10 record. Captains Matt Genovese, Jay Dupras, and Trevor Marsden led the team to a Division 1A tournament appearance.

The Harbormen have won the James F. Mulloy Sportsmanship Award multiple times in Division 1A (2000, 2005) and Division 2 (1997). Under Coach Reagan's 26 years of leadership, Hingham has consistently been among the least penalized teams in Massachusetts.

The 2007 – 2008 season signaled the end of an era for Hingham High School Hockey. What would be the legendary Coach Garrett Reagan's final season behind the bench, the Harbormen did not disappoint. Captains Conor Leary and Steve Sypek would lead a prototypical GR coached team. Strong leadership, team defense, contributions from across the board and sportsmanship delivered a number two seed in the Super Eight Tournament, the James Mulloy Sportsmanship Award, and a 17-6-2 final record.

Shortly after the season ended, GR stepped down as Head Coach after leading the Harbormen for 26 seasons and passed the torch to long-time assistant and former Hingham captain Tony Messina. Following months of helping Tony and the current coaching staff with the transition and off-season responsibilities, Garrett passed away suddenly on June 17th.

The Hingham High School coaches and players have dedicated this season and all future seasons to Garrett's memory for all that he did for the Harbormen program and the sport of Hockey in the town of Hingham.