

NMU Hockey: A winning tradition

In 1976, Northern Michigan University began the ice age with the addition of a Division I men's ice hockey team. Twenty-five years later, the ice age is still present as Wildcat hockey has become one of the most respected and successful programs in the country.

The highlight of Northern's hockey history occurred when the Wildcats captured the 1991 NCAA

Championship. In its 25-year existence, NMU has reached the NCAA Tournament on seven occasions in addition to winning one regular season WCHA crown, three WCHA Playoff Championships, two regular-season CCHA titles, and two CCHA Playoff Championships.

NMU launched its hockey program under the tutelage of Head Coach Rick Comley, who has a record

of 512 wins in his 25 years at NMU. He is the 12th college hockey coach to win 450 games at one school. This season, Coach Comley surpassed John MacInnes in the NCAA All-Time Coaching Win List with 571 career wins.



college hockey's national coach of the year. He has twice been named

In addition to coaching many championship teams and award-winning athletes, he is a two-time winner (1980 and 1991) of the Spencer Penrose Memorial Trophy, given to

the CCHA Coach of the Year (1979-80 and 1980-81) and WCHA Coach of the Year (1988-89 and 1990-91). Comley also acted as head coach of the West team in the 1981 Senior East-West All-Star game.



25

YEARS OF WILDCAT HOCKEY

1976

The NMU Division I men's hockey program begins under Rick Comley. Their first victory came three games into the season with a 5-3 win against Comley's alma mater, Lake Superior State University.



1977-78

The Wildcat team officially becomes a member of the Central Collegiate Hockey Association.

1979-80

In its fourth year of existence, the Wildcat hockey team goes to the Frozen Four, becoming the first CCHA team to reach the NCAA Championship game. The Wildcats beat Minnesota in the first round of the NCAA Tournament before losing to North Dakota in the title game.



1980-81

NMU continues its success with a second CCHA regular-season title. It finishes in fourth place in the NCAA Tournament.

1984-85

The Wildcat hockey program switches from the CCHA to the Western Collegiate Hockey Association.

1989

NMU captures its first of three WCHA Playoff titles, advancing to the first round of the NCAA Tournament.

1990-91

The Wildcats complete the season with a school-record 26-game winning streak, capturing the MacNaughton Cup, the WCHA Playoff title, and the national title in a climactic 8-7 victory over Boston University in three overtimes.

1991-92

NMU wins its third WCHA Playoff title.

1997-98

A new era for the Wildcat hockey program begins as it rejoins the Central Collegiate Hockey Association.



1998-99

The team advances to the NCAA Tournament for the first time since 1992-93.

1999-2000

The Berry Events Center becomes the new home of the Wildcats. They conclude the season in third place in the CCHA, their highest league rating since 1992-93.

Wildcats in the NHL

- Don Waddell** (1977-80)
General Manager, Atlanta Thrashers
- Walt Kyle** (1979-81)
Assistant Coach, New York Rangers
- Brad Werenka** (1987-91)
Calgary Flames
- Ed Ward** (1988-91)
New Jersey Devils
- Dallas Drake** (1988-92)
St. Louis Blues
- Dieter Kochan** (1993-97)
Tampa Bay Lightning
- J.P. Vigier** (1997-2000)
Atlanta Thrashers