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STATE TOURNAMENT GOES HOLLYWOOD

New movie to capture Minnesota hockey's magic

By Jess Myers

I distinctly remember sitting in the darkness of the Roso Theater in Roseau, Minn., one winter night in 1982, and watching "E.T." During the movie's climactic scene, when the kids fly away on their bicycles, a collective gasp went up from the crowd. But the astonishment didn't come from watching kids fly away from police on bicycles, it came from the bird's-eye view of the California neighborhood where the movie took place, and seeing that nearly every backyard had a swimming pool.

Hollywood film producer Brad Turner remembers getting the same feeling recently as he flew into Minnesota on a plane and noticed how seemingly every neighborhood in the Twin Cities had a rink where kids were playing hockey.

"When you fly into here, you see hundreds of sheets of ice with people skating around and playing hockey," said Turner.

That scene, and dozens of others around the state, will be part of "The Boys From Minnesota," a new movie project that is set to be filmed in February of 1997. The idea for coming to Minnesota and making a movie out of the special stories in hockey communities across the state started when a script caught Turner's eye.

The world of Minnesota hockey has blown Turner away over the last few months he has spent in the state. Around every corner he has found hockey people with great stories, and people who are willing to help in bringing Minnesota hockey to the big screen.

"The stories I've heard from people like Wendell Anderson and John Mayasich and Doug Woog are just unbelievable," he said. "All of them have a common thread in hockey, whether they are from Edina, St. Paul, International Falls or anywhere in the state."

The movie shows the determination and love for the sport that it took to play hockey in the cold of Northern Minnesota's outdoors. Turner sees parallels in the dedicated people who make youth hockey work even today.

"It is unbelievable what it takes for individuals to want to play a game when it is 50 below in Northern

Minnesota, as we saw recently," he said. "People have amazing priorities towards the sport and towards their families in making sure their families have this experience. Even today Wendell Anderson and John Mayasich still play the game, and they've been playing since they were five years old. I don't think that dynamic is seen in any other sport."

But Turner's movie is about more than just a game. He plans to show the relationships between members of a community, families, players, fans and all of the efforts

that go into a small town team making it to the state hockey tournament. He has scouted locations and talked to people in towns like Warroad, Roseau, Eveleth and International Falls, and admits that his fictional team will have some parallels to real-life teams, events and people.

"The White Lake Wolves are a fictional team, and anybody that has played hockey at a Minnesota high school or even in any of the youth leagues should be able to identify with the story line," he said. "It's a small town that shows more of the relationships between the people that love hock-

ey, and how the families support these kids for the love of the game."

But the movie is not just aiming to find an audience with the Minnesota hockey community. He feels that the relationships between the characters will appeal to a nation-wide audience, much like the 1987 basketball film "Hoosiers" did in telling the story of a small Indiana town's basketball team winning that state's tournament. Turner admits similarities between the story lines of "Hoosiers" and "The Boys From Minnesota."

"It's similar in that we're showing a coach and a team that goes off and succeeds at a goal that very few people accomplish," he said. "That part of it is very similar."

Audiences who know Minnesota hockey might find similarities between the movie and the actual events of the 1969 state tournament, when Warroad High School



Film producer Brad Turner (right) took a pause on the photo studio set recently to pose with celebrity models like Gopher coach Doug Woog (center) and Doug's daughter Amy Woog Patnode. The trio is showing off apparel from the new movie "The Boys From Minnesota."

Photo courtesy of Joe Treleven

Continued on page 54

State Tournament goes Hollywood

Continued from page 20

made it to the Met Center via the efforts of Native American star Henry Boucha.

"On my first trip to Warroad we got a tour of The Gardens, and I saw some of the old press clippings about Henry Boucha," Turner said. "To see the scope of what this man had done was really incredible, and I realized that element was missing from the story. Two of the original writers were from St. Louis Park and Edina, and they didn't have the Native American experience. I thought it was a very powerful element to bring into the story. So now one of the players in our story is a Native American, who was fashioned after Henry Boucha."

The current plan is to film in Minnesota next February, shooting some exterior shots in downtown St. Paul as well as hockey shots at undetermined locations throughout the state. No casting has been done yet, but impressive names like Paul Newman, Kurt Russell, Dennis Franz, Richard Dreyfus, Scott Wolfe and Chris O'Donnell are being kicked around as potential actors in the movie. Turner says they are aiming for a premiere around Thanksgiving of 1997.

But the "Boys From Minnesota" logo has already hit the streets. Turner recently rounded up hockey names like Woog, Mayasich, Bob Mason, Pat Micheletti and Jim and John Johansson for a merchandise shoot and TBFM apparel is on sale at the 1996 boys state tournament. Turner points out that they are currently meeting with groups like MAHA, the Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission and the Minnesota Hockey Coaches

Association to have five percent of merchandise profits go back into the Minnesota hockey community. They have also planned a celebrity charity hockey game in October at Target Center.

Turner is already talking about possible sequels involving college hockey, the Olympics, the pros and the booming world of girls and womens hockey. But his immediate concern is getting his vision of the first movie onto the screen — to the hundreds of small-town Minnesotans who have reached their dreams via hockey and the state tournament.

"When I flew up to Warroad and saw Lake of the Woods, I thought it could make one of the most powerful scenes that I could imagine," he said. "You're in the middle of nowhere, and from there these people go on this long journey to come down to the state tournament. It's just remarkable, but it all starts in these small towns all across Minnesota. And this is more than just one story. There are thousands of stories from all of the people who have played in the state tournament over the past 51 years."

Watch for one of those stories soon, at a theater near you. ●

Jess Myers is the editor of Minnesota Showcase Hockey Magazine. He lives in Burnsville, Minn.

The Movie / The Merchandise

Filming in the Winter of '97, "The Boys From Minnesota" is a feature film that builds to its exciting climax amidst the uproar of the 1966 Minnesota State High School Hockey Tournament.

The Boys From Minnesota sportswear reflects the glamour of movie-making. The sportswear's quality and craftsmanship is outstanding. Like our solid Midwestern values, it's the kind of quality associated with an earlier time. Yet it's timeless.

Just like the movie's hockey team, the fictional White Lake Wolves, who stand for everything that hockey is: friendship, community, spirit, tradition.



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In Minnesota -

'Boys' captures imagination of hockey fans

By JACKIE HEBERT
Pine Knot Managing Editor

Set for filming next winter, *The Boys From Minnesota* is already causing a stir in hockey communities across the state.

The coming-of-age story centers on a group of boys from the small fictional town of White Lake who become heroes when they win the state high school hockey championship in 1966.

Film producer Brad Turner expects to capture the essence of Minnesota hockey for a national audience, exploring the boys' love and dedication to the sport, the support and commitment of their families and community, and the relationships between characters in the feature-length film due for release in November 1997.

Since Turner's arrival in Minnesota to begin preliminary work on the project, he and his company have been able to pick the brains of some of the state's most well-known hockey legends, including John Mayasich, and a long list of others who are contributing their impressive knowledge and lore of the Minnesota hockey community and its tradition to add authenticity to the story line.

Two of the three writers of the screenplay, Dean Kaner and Jeffrey Viaming, are Minnesotans, as is Director David Mackay.

Walter Bush, Doug Woog, Lou Nanne, Warroad's Marvin family, and Lou Contronco are just a few of the many who have contributed their expertise to the project.

Turner has also scouted several locations and talked to residents from towns such as Warroad, Roseau, Eveleth and International Falls to obtain personal glimpses of these places and insights into the people and events surrounding real-life small-town teams that have gone to the Minnesota state tournament.

Although some filming locations have already been selected, others are still under consideration as Turner and his company recreate a Minnesota hockey season and tournament in the 1960s.

At the 1996 Minnesota State High School Hockey Tournament last week, Turner and Brian Bailey, and former Minnesota Gopher goalie Mike Vacanti, Concept Marketing & Development, Eden Prairie, manned "The Boys From Min-

nesota" booth at the Hockey Expo. Turner and Bailey visited with players and fans, while absorbing the color, excitement and drama of the premier high school hockey state tournament in the United States.

At the booth, sales of TBFM sweatshirts, T-shirts and caps bearing the movie's logo and White Lake Wolves colors and insignia were brisk, with a portion of each sale designated for a number of hockey organizations including: Minnesota Amateur Hockey Association (MAHA); Minnesota Amateur Sports Commission; Minnesota State High School League; U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame; U.S.A. Hockey; University of Minnesota Women's Hockey Program; University of Minnesota Men's Hockey Program; and individually specified youth hockey organizations.

Along with the sale of promotional items bearing the TBFM logo, Turner was also promoting upcoming events which will benefit a number of the same groups already mentioned and includes the Youth Trust.

A two-day promotional/benefit event is planned for Saturday and Sunday, Sept. 28 - 29 in the Twin Cities.

Beginning at 10 a.m. Saturday with a Celebrity and Hockey All-Star Autograph Party at Mall of America, the event will continue at the Target Center where these activities will occur: MASC Sports and Corporations Trade Show; Jack White Hockey Clinic and Skills Competition; MAHA Youth Hockey Game; MSHSL



'The Boys From Minnesota' go Hollywood -

Making a fashion statement with official sweatshirts, T-shirt and White Lake Wolves letterman's jacket, (L-R) Brian Bailey and Producer Brad Turner, Skyway Productions, Inc., and Mike Vacanti, Concept Market & Development, Eden Prairie, hang out at "The Boys From Minnesota" booth at Hockey Expo in the St. Paul Civic Center last week. The three are promoting "The Boys From Minnesota," a movie about the tradition of Minnesota hockey and a small-town high school team that wins the state tournament. The movie will be filmed in Minnesota next winter and released in November 1997.

From Minnesota Celebrity All Girls All Star Game; University of Minnesota - NHL - Olympian All Star Game; Celebrity VIP Skate and Shoot Fund-raiser; The Boys From Minnesota and NHL Celebrity All Star Game. Plans are still being finalized for Saturday evening's The Boys

products is invited to contact The Boys From Minnesota, 7550 Corporate Way, Eden Prairie, MN 55344, or phone, toll free, 1-888-BFM-BOYS for more information.

Individuals wishing to purchase merchandise may also phone for a catalog and order sheet at the toll-free number.