



Miracle on Ice 2



First Row (lying down) Jake Davis. Second Row (kneeling, left to right) Mooch Worley, Drake Dragoo, Travis Shake, Elliott Metzler, Lincoln Ellington, Tommy Blais, Zac Jacobs, Eric Griffin. Third Row (standing, left to right) Coach Scott Blais, Gabe Berkeley, Eli Farmer, Cole Pettay, Robbie Plecher, Ryan Byers, Drew Couper, Bradley Bridges, Cory Sucece, Coach Nick Lightfoot, Coach Dave Couper

Maybe there is something in the water. How else to explain a small city that can produce so many people who accomplish so much in so many different fields. In every issue of *Bloom*, we profile four such people in the Our Town section, near the front of the magazine. And in this issue, we have feature stories celebrating Elinor Ostrom, our Nobel Prize winner in economics, and singer/songwriter Carrie Newcomer, who toured India for the U.S. State Department. In this same paragraph, I would also like to mention the bantam Bloomington Blades hockey team, a bunch of rosy-cheeked kids, ages 13 and 14, who recently won their division at the international Silver Sticks Tournament in Canada.

Not since Team USA knocked off the Ruskies and took gold at the '80 Olympics has there been such a miracle on ice.

For while Elinor has a world-class university behind her and Carrie a supportive arts community, the Blades have not much going for them. Most every other team in the tournament came from a place where there's a hockey tradition, where there's ice year-round, and where coaches have hundreds of kids to choose from for the traveling teams.

In Bloomington, there is only one place to play and practice and that's the Frank Southern Arena, open only in cold months. Coach Nick Lightfoot (who deserves buckets of credit) has 17 kids to choose from for his 17-man squad. In other words, every 13- and 14-year-old who plays hockey in Bloomington is on the team. "It's sort of a cultivation project," is how Coach Lightfoot puts it.

Oh, and then there's Bloomington's hockey tradition. The sport gets about as much press here as dodge ball.



Robbie Plecher.

So, how'd they do it? Coach Lightfoot explains that most of the kids have come up through the Bloomington Blades hockey program and have been playing for about six years. But not all. Coach called out one player, Robbie Plecher, who is in only his second year. "His development has been phenomenal. He puts time in on his driveway and his skating progress has been miraculous." Robbie scored a goal in the championship game, just the third of his short career.

I was invited to see a Blades game right before they headed north. I can tell you as one who grew up in Canada (where hockey is next to godliness) that these kids can play. They're good skaters, big, talented, smart, and they play as a team—unselfishly. It's a shame IU doesn't have a division-one hockey program because there are a number of strong prospects right here, and they might end up going to Notre Dame, Michigan, or Wisconsin.

Are you listening Fred Glass?

Onions: To the "boss" at *The Herald-Times* who would not allow *H-T* columnist Mike Leonard to be interviewed by a *Bloom* writer for a profile in the Our Town section of this magazine.