

# Making the most of the cold at Bloomington ski jump

By **JASON OLSON**  
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Ski jumpers assembled from not only Minnesota, Wisconsin, Illinois but also New York and Europe to test their skills on the 70 meter Bush Lake ski jump Sunday as part of USA Nordic's Five Hills Tour.

Competitors were in Eau Claire, Wisconsin Friday and Saturday for the 134th annual Silver Mine Invitational before heading to Bloomington to earn valuable tour points and more.

Some skiers practiced earlier in the week before heading to Wisconsin. Event organizer Chris Broz with the Minneapolis Ski Club said the hill was in ideal shape given the cold conditions. The

excess snowfall wasn't an issue as Broz and the maintenance crew were able to push the snow around the hill with a grooming machine.

"We just kept shoveling it off," Broz said. "But the event continues to grow each year and we had more of a festival atmosphere at the base jump."

Fans took advantage of even more food trucks this season, plus fire rings throughout the base and the chalet offered a place to warm up as temperatures hovered around 10 degrees.

A shuttle service allowed traffic to move freely around the area as fans parked in a nearby office tower parking ramp.

Follow Jason Olson on Twitter @SunSportsJason.



David Edlund of the St. Paul Ski Club sails past the heads of spectators on Sunday at Bush Lake Ski Jump in Bloomington. (SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTO BY JASON OLSON)



Left, Slovenia's Nejc Toporis flies toward the landing at the Bush Lake Ski Jump on Sunday evening while the crowd watches on at the base of the hill. Above, Flying Eagles Ski Club's (Eau Claire, Wisconsin) Nathan Mattoon launches down the jump in Bloomington Sunday. Mattoon reached 70.5 meters on his third jump. (SUN CURRENT STAFF PHOTOS BY JASON OLSON)



**Wrestling**

Kennedy wrestling hosts Richfield in a Metro West Conference dual meet at 7 p.m.

Friday, Jan. 24 which will also serve as Bloomington Athletic Association (BAA) Night, Senior Night, Alumni Night and Parent Night.

Junior Varsity matches begin at 5:30 p.m. and will be followed by BAA wrestlers doing drills and a match or two then the alumni in attendance will be honored by Coach Chuck Vavrosky before the seniors and

their parents.

The Dave Ahren's Classic will take over the gym on Jan. 25 with a loaded field once again including Hastings (Class AAA receiving votes), Owatonna (No. 7 in Class AAA), Simley (No. 1 in Class AA), Washburn, Zumbrota-Mazeppa, Champlin Park and one more team to be announced in a dual meet format.

The Bloomington Youth Open is open to kids in pre-kindergarten through eighth grade in a four-man round robin format on Sunday at Kennedy High School.

Entry fee is \$12 per wrestler with weigh-ins for pre-k through fourth grade from 9-11 a.m. and wrestling starting at 10:30 a.m. Wrestlers in grades 5-8 will weigh-in from 10-11 a.m. followed

by matches. Admission is \$5 for adults and \$3 children.

For more information contact Andy Scott at 612-913-2999 or Tim Grams at 952-201-6279.

Richfield wrestling hosts St. Agnes at 6 p.m. Thursday at Richfield High School.

**Swim/Dive**

Richfield boys swimming and diving will

head over to Olson Middle School to face Jefferson in a Metro West Conference meet Thursday with a 6 p.m. start.

**Hoops**

Richfield High School will be the site for a basketball doubleheader against Holy Angels on Friday, Jan. 24. The girls' will begin at 5:15 p.m.

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## E-cig sales ban

A St. Louis Park ban on the sale of vaping products is poised to go into effect in February.  
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## Getting down

Hopkins served as the host of the Paul Bengtson Invitational Jan. 4.  
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Thursday, Jan. 9, 2020

## Minnesota Wild draw a crowd during outdoor practice at the ROC



(SUN PHOTOS BY JASON OLSON)

Bailey Luke, a goaltender for the Hopkins Park 10U A team sits on her father's shoulders, Jeff Luke, during the Minnesota Wild outdoor practice in St. Louis Park on Jan. 2. Wild goaltender Devan Dubnyk, front, autographed her white helmet and blocker pad after the practice while about 1,500 fans lined the ROC. Bailey's teammates to the immediate right include Alex Luke, Ellie Zakrajshcek, Katie Zakrajshcek, Evelyn Osland and Emerson Dorr.

**Right:** Minnesota defenseman Brad Hunt shares a quick fist-bump with some young fans before stepping onto the outdoor ice sheet at the ROC. **For the story, see Page 11.**



## PLACE cancels Via Luna project amid controversy

The nonprofit developer claims that it had 'a more difficult approval path than for-profit projects for the wealthy'

By **SETH ROWE**  
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PLACE's Via Luna project proved to be a moonshot that never got off the ground.

For more than six years, the non-

profit developer has pitched various versions of a development along the Southwest Light Rail Transit line in St. Louis Park. However, development rights for a southern half of the plan called Via Luna, or via the moon, expired at the end of 2019.

As recently as last October, the Minneapolis-based developer had proposed a scaled-back version of the Via Luna plan. The proposed amendment had called for a residential building to be relocated to the corner of Wooddale Avenue and West 36th Street,

with the number of residential units in it reduced from more than 80 units to 50 units. A planned hotel would have been reduced from six stories to five

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# Wild take it outdoors for practice, announce Winter Classic

By **JASON OLSON**

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There couldn't have been a better time to announce the second outdoor game for the Minnesota Wild than during the lone public outdoor practice of the season.

About 1,500 Wild fans watched on as the team took to the outdoor rink at the St. Louis Park Rec Center, known as the ROC, for the team's third-annual outdoor practice.

Fans lined both sides of the walkway from the locker room to the ice in hopes of a quick high-five or after the practice an autograph or stick as players took time to interact with the fans during the only outdoor hockey opportunity this season.

In addition to the outdoor practice, the franchise formally announced that the Winter Classic will come to Target Field on Jan. 1, 2021 against a yet-to-be-announced opponent.

The marquee game on the NHL schedule, the event will be part of the 20th anniversary season for when NHL hockey returned to Minnesota.

There are several compelling cases to be made for the opposing team, including the Dallas Stars (formerly known as the Minnesota North Stars), Winnipeg Jets (budding rivalry), Chicago Blackhawks (historic rivals with Minnesota hockey and the 2016 Stadium Series success), Columbus Bluejackets (entered the NHL along with the

Wild in 2000) or New York Islanders (several Minnesota natives on the roster including Edina's Anders Lee, Eden Prairie's Nick Leddy and Warroad's Brock Nelson and might draw a national audience).

## Winter Classic announcement

Wild President Matt Majka was joined by Minnesota Twins President and CEO Dave St. Peter and other dignitaries to formally announce the next Winter Classic will be coming to Target Field in Minneapolis and include the Minnesota Wild.

This will be the second outdoor game for the Wild after a highly successful 2016 NHL Stadium Series game against the Chicago Blackhawks. The Wild won 6-1 in front of a crowd of 50,426 at TCF Bank Stadium. Minnesota had goals from Matt Dumba, Thomas Vanek, Nino Niederreiter, Jason Pominville, Ryan Carter and Erik Haula. Haula received the No. 1 Star of the Game.

The ice condition and consistency is a huge component to the experience to make it just right, given the constantly changing conditions. Target Field head groundskeeper Larry DiVito was in Dallas to see first-hand how the crew worked on the Cotton Bowl in Dallas for this year's Winter Classic between the Stars and Nashville.

St. Peter said he's met with Majka on a nearly monthly basis over the



(SUN PHOTOS BY JASON OLSON)

Nordy, the Minnesota Wild mascot, pumped up the assembled crowd in St. Louis Park for the outdoor practice on Jan. 2.

last decade about the opportunity to bring an NHL game to the Twins ballpark.

Wild defenseman Ryan Suter said his first experience in the outdoor game at TCF Bank Stadium was awesome and is excited to have a chance to do it again.

"Once you come into the stadium and see all of the fans cheering loud, it was a special experience and we know people in Minnesota love hockey," said Suter, who grew up with the opportunity to skate on a frozen lake in Madison, Wisconsin. "Those were great memories and it makes you appreciate it even more."



See **Wild**, Page 12

Minnesota Wild fans showed their support for the local team with handmade signs during the outdoor practice in St. Louis Park. Wild forward Kevin Fiala takes a break during an eventful practice session.



Dave St. Peter, Minnesota Twins president and CEO, talked with the media about the 2021 NHL Winter Classic coming to Target Field Jan. 1, 2021. The Minnesota Wild will take on a yet-to-be-determined opponent for its second outdoor game.

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(SUN PHOTOS BY JASON OLSON)

Matt Dumba, right, consoles his Wild teammate and goaltender Deven Dubnyk after Dumba fired a point-blank shot which dropped the 6-foot-6 Dubnyk to the ice for a brief moment. The two were all smiles during the rare outdoor practice. The team announced it would host the next Winter Classic at Target Field in Minneapolis on Jan. 1, 2021, against a yet-to-be-announced opponent.

### Wild

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

“I know we were spoiled to get the first stadium game and I know [owner] Craig [Leopold] has been working hard to get this one. Our fans deserve it.”

When asked about the game itself, Suter said the first hit helped bring him back to reality that they had a game to play.

“It’s not shinny and that first hit wakes you up,” he said.

Bloomington native Zach Parise said the 2016 game was great and it speaks to the passion the state has for the sport. “As great as the Stadium Series game was, I know this will be that much better. Being outdoors is always great but it poses challenges with the ice conditions.”

He said the opportunity to host the Winter Classic

is overdue for the State of Hockey. “I feel like everyone has some type of hockey background here and the people of Minnesota deserve this game.”

Parise is excited to play in the Minneapolis venue. “A lot of us are Twins fans and to be able to play with the skyline in the background will be great.”

As far as distracting from the game at hand, Parise said everyone takes a glance into the surroundings. “Just to appreciate the experience. I remember sitting on the bench after the game was out of reach looking around.”

The roster has plenty of dads with upwards of 30 children among them, sharing the experience with family offers a unique opportunity to make memories.

Follow Jason Olson on Twitter @SunSports.Jason.



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Minnesota veteran Eric Staal, left, lands on goaltender Deven Dubnyk, middle, during a drill Jan. 2. Neither was injured on the play and both laughed it off during the rare outdoor practice.



Wild head coach Bruce Boudreau, middle, coaches Ryan Hartman, right, during the Jan. 2 outdoor practice in St. Louis Park, the only outdoor practice scheduled for the team.