

# The Noonan Cup



The Naperville North High School hockey team of Naperville, Illinois, coached by Brian Noonan and the Milton High School hockey team of Milton, Massachusetts, coached by his brother Paul, play yearly for the Noonan Cup, a memorial trophy named in honor of their late father, Robert Noonan.

The teams alternate travelling to the Boston area and Chicago area combining college visits and sightseeing with some very competitive hockey games.

Following are highlights of the trips the teams have taken in the past and newspaper and website descriptions of the games.

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## Noonan Cup 2006 – Boston

### Memories Galore for Noonan Brothers' Ice Reunion

By Jack Weland, Sports Writer, The Patriot Ledger

<http://www.southbostononline.com/articles/sports/2006/01-19-06MemoriesGaloreNoonanBrothers.cfm>

Brian Noonan, a Southie product who starred at Archbishop Williams High School before going on to a 12-year NHL career with five different teams that included the Stanley Cup-winning New York Rangers in 1993-94, returned to the Hub this weekend to coach his Naperville, Ill., high school club team against three Ledgerland squads.

Saturday night, Naperville North downed North Quincy, 6-3. Yesterday, the team defeated Milton - in the rink he and his family, including Milton coach Paul Noonan, grew up in - 5-0. Today, the former NHLer will take on his alma mater for a 10:30 a.m. contest at Quincy Youth Arena.

"I forgot how cold it was in here," he said of Murphy Rink, which was an outdoor facility when he was a kid.

"This was where we all played," Brian Noonan said after the game.

"This is the only rink around in Southie, so this is where we all played. This is where we learned how to play. Every Friday night public skating we'd come here and when I won the Cup, I was able to bring it back here. So this rink definitely has a lot of memories.

"It feels weird when you say 30 years," he said later. "It doesn't seem that long, but it's always good to get back home. It's good to be back and see friends and family."

The game was close throughout, until Naperville scored three times in the game's final 3:34 to put it out of reach. The visitors held a 1-0 edge after one period, thanks to a Todd Burtar goal with just 37 seconds left in the opening frame. They made it 2-0 in the second period when Jack Collins slammed home a rebound with 4:21 left. In the third, Collins picked up a loose puck near the Milton blue line and ripped a slap shot five-hole for his second goal of the game with 3:34 to play. Burtar found the net again less than a minute later, making it 4-0. Kyle Smith capped the scoring with 47 seconds left in the contest.

It was an experience Paul Noonan thinks all the athletes enjoyed.

"It's a different team from a different state, a different place, so they'll never see them again," Paul Noonan said. "It's a nice experience and I think it's great for the kids from Chicago to be able to come here and play three different teams, have a nice weekend for themselves."

For the record, Brian Noonan's win knotted the all-time series of organized play between the brothers. Paul held a 1-0-1 advantage going in, from his days at Boston College High School when Brian was at Williams.

Now? Dead even. Bring on the rematch.

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## Noonan Cup 2007 – Chicago

Both teams travelled to South Bend, Indiana, for the weekend.

Trip highlights:

- Both teams stayed at the Inn at St. Mary's
- Tour of Notre Dame University
- Tour and dinner at the College Football Hall of Fame
- Naperville North wins the Cup in a shoot-out thriller. Dan Willer scores the winning goal on the Huskies 17<sup>th</sup> try.



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## Noonan Cup 2008 – Boston

Naperville North Huskies go to Boston.

Trip highlights:

- Hotel - Braintree Sheraton
- Boston – Faneuil Hall/Boston Market, trolley tours, Bodega Shoes
- Rinks - Ulin Memorial Rink (out in the woods)
- Dinner – Four's Restaurant downtown Quincy

### **Noonan Cup Stays in Naperville**

*The 3<sup>rd</sup> annual Noonan Cup game was played this past Friday, outside of Boston, between varsity teams from Naperville North and Milton. The cup is named in honor of the father of head coaches, Brian Noonan of North, and Paul Noonan of Milton.*

*For the 3<sup>rd</sup> straight year, the Huskies were able to defeat the boys from Milton, and keep the cup in Naperville Illinois. A spirited effort was given by everyone on the Huskies short roster, as North traveled to Massachusetts with only 6 forwards, 4 defensemen, and 1 goalie. Led offensively by senior Jeff Mersch's 5 goal outburst, and terrific goaltending by senior Danny Moir, the final score was a dominant 7-3 victory for the boys in Orange and Blue.*

## Noonan Cup 2009 – Chicago

Milton Wildcats come to Naperville.

Trip highlights:

- Hotel – Naperville Holiday Inn
- Dinner – Mullins Bar & Grill in Lisle – Mexican Buffet
- Activity – Cybersport (“Whirlyball”) in Addison

### **Miltontimes.com - With the Athletes**

**By Eddie Baker, Sports Editor, 2/5/09**

<http://www.miltontimes.com/DOTnet-With%20Athletes.html>

*The Milton High boys' hockey team traveled to Naperville, Ill., over the Martin Luther King weekend under the direction of Paul Noonan, varsity head coach, to play in the fourth annual Noonan Cup. Participating seniors were Jack Brown, Brendan Finn, J.P. Grant, Nick Hailer, Kevin Joyce, Sean Joyce, Rich Losi, Matt McDougall and James Walker. Juniors: Justin Barbera, Will Benway, Mike Bortolotti, Steven Cimildoro, Greg Corcoran, Mitch DeLuca, James Eckel, Will Gallagher, Joe Indelicato, Jon May, Matt Mullan, Mike Muse, Nolan Powers, Matt O'Neill and Brian O'Reagan. Sophomores: Nick Bligh, Jack Davis, Will England, Chris Glynn, Alan Lasoff, Kevin Lamere, Stephen O'Leary and Robbie O'Neil. Freshmen: Paul Curran, Mike Grant and Brian Higgins. The team played in three games against the Naperville Wild and the Naperville Huskies A and B teams to bring home three wins and the Noonan Cup. In addition to the hockey games, the students proudly represented MHS for a tour of DePaul University in Chicago. A great time was had by all, courtesy of the seniors' parents, who worked tirelessly to make it come true.*

## Noonan Cup 2010 - Boston

Trip highlights:

- Hotel - Braintree Sheraton
- Boston – Faneuil Hall/Boston Market, Bodega Shoes, MBTA trip to Harvard Yard
- Luncheon at Tavolino Pizza at Patriot Place, Foxborough, MA; home of the New England Patriots
- Rinks - Ulin Memorial Rink (out in the woods), Shea Memorial Skating Rink (about 20 degrees inside the rink)
- Adult outing to Woody's L St. Tavern in South Boston. Film location of Good Will Hunting and frequent haunt of the Noonan clan.



*Congratulations to the Naperville North Varsity Hockey Team on a fun and very successful road trip to Boston. The team won all three games they played beating the Bishop Fenwick High School team 6-0 Friday, beating the Milton High School team in a scrimmage 6-5 Saturday, and reclaiming the Noonan Cup from Coach Paul Noonan's Milton Wildcats High School team 6-1 on Sunday. The Noonan Cup is named in honor of Robert Noonan, father of Coach Brian Noonan and Coach Paul Noonan. North has now won the Cup 4 out of 5 years.*

*All of the Huskies contributed with 10 different players scoring goals in the 3 games. Many thanks to Paul Noonan, all of the Noonan family, and all of Milton parents for a memorable Boston weekend.*

## **Noonan Family History**

### **HOCKEY; It All Begins With Street Hockey in Sneakers**

By JOE LAPOINTE, NY Times

*Published: May 3, 1994*

<http://query.nytimes.com/gst/fullpage.html?res=9404E7DF1130F930A35756C0A962958260>

**RYE, N.Y., May 2**— Back when he was a high-school kid in South Boston, Brian Noonan played in a summer hockey league that included older players, some from college, some from professional teams.

One of the big names in the group at the time was Craig MacTavish, then in the early stages of his career with the Boston Bruins.

"I wasn't good enough to be on his line," Noonan said today after practice at the Ice Casino of Rye Playland.

He's good enough now. Noonan scored twice Sunday night, both goals set up by the veteran MacTavish, as the Rangers defeated the Washington Capitals by 6-3 in the first game of the Eastern Conference semifinals. Game 2 of this four-of-seven series will be played Tuesday night in Madison Square Garden, with Games 3 and 4 in Landover, Md., on Thursday and Saturday nights. A Keenan Favorite

Noonan, selected by Chicago on the ninth round of the 1983 draft, passed through two minor leagues before hooking up with Mike Keenan, then the Blackhawks' coach. After Keenan left Chicago, he lobbied hard to acquire Noonan at the March 21 trading deadline because there is something about Noonan's character that Keenan likes.

"Brian has been an underestimated player, misunderstood, a late bloomer," Keenan said. "He's not exceptionally fast, but he's deceptive. He's strong on his skates. He protects the puck well, with a good base. He doesn't get knocked off his feet easily. He's nifty with the puck."

Keenan said he likes Noonan's "size and strength on the walls and in the pit." His personal history also appeals to the coach.

"He comes from a tough background," Keenan said. "He's a sensitive individual. He's had some disruption. He has his own quiet way about him. He's not a demonstrative person."

Noonan is the 10th of 11 children who grew up in a South Boston housing project called The Old Colony Houses. His father worked two jobs simultaneously, as a policeman and as a longshoreman, for 21 years, and put in four years of service in the fire department as well.

Noonan's brother Paul said the Noonan children lined up in the morning for the bathroom in their apartment before heading off to grade school at St. Augustine's and high school at Archbishop Williams. As the family grew, it knocked down a wall, at the back of a closet, to the next apartment, a procedure called a "breakthrough."

"We'd go outside to play street hockey in sneakers," Paul Noonan said. "We used to use a tennis ball. That's how Brian learned to control the puck so well. On ice, we played on a rink that must have been 40 feet in diameter. We'd play with 6 kids or 16, and we'd play keepaway. That's how Brian learned to shield the puck."

The Noonan boys used hand-me-down skates and hand-me-down gloves. Paul said their father could afford only two sticks at a time.

"A right and a left," he said. "So I learned to shoot left and Brian learned to shoot right." Paul is the ninth child in the family, a year older than Brian, who will turn 29 on May 29.

Brian Noonan agrees with Paul that "we didn't grow up with much, but we weren't starving, either."

"There were some families who were worse off than we were," Brian Noonan said. Early Practice in a Rush

Paul said the older brothers "kept us out of trouble, although they might've got in some themselves." He said that sometimes the brothers and their friends would head to Boston Garden to see the Bruins, even if they didn't have tickets. "We snuck in," Paul Noonan said. "We'd get 30 or 40 guys and we'd hit the door at the same time, running and spreading out. Maybe three or four got caught. The rest got in."

Although Robert Noonan lived to see his son play in the National Hockey League, he had Alzheimer's disease in his later years, and died in 1991. The boys call their mother, Doris, the backbone of the family. Brian recently bought her a house, which she shares with three of her daughters.

"When Brian comes home, they let him sleep in a cot in the cellar," Paul Noonan said with a laugh. "Nice of them, huh?" Brian is the only one who has left "Southie," Paul said, adding

that the siblings get on Brian's case because his hockey card lists him from "Boston" and not "South Boston."

MacTavish, who also joined the team at the trading deadline, plays center with Noonan on his right and Esa Tikkanen on his left. Of Noonan, MacTavish said: "He's a real finisher, he's got great hands, he can put the puck in the net. He's very reliable defensively. He's an intelligent player."

Defensive duties are primary for this line. During the first round, it successfully checked the line centered by Pierre Turgeon of the Islanders. In this round, the three are matched, much of the time, against Joe Juneau, Washington's top center.

Back home in Southie, the family watches the Rangers' playoff games on television and hopes the Bruins and Rangers meet in the third round in their respective Gardens. If Brian can't get them tickets, they just might have to find a way in anyway.

**Editors note: Brian Noonan and the New York Rangers went on to win the Stanley Cup that year, 1994.**