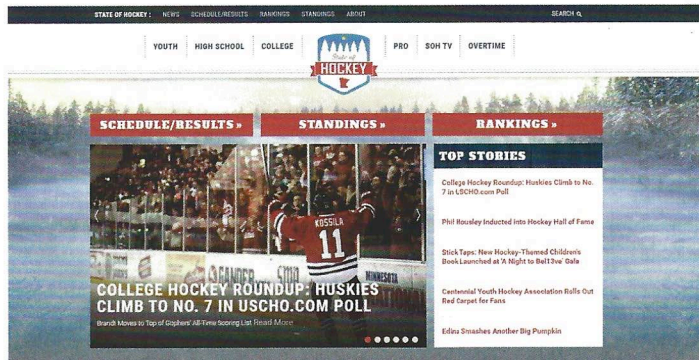


A DIGITAL

BY ROSS HOLLEBON

## STATE OF HOCKEY



It's only natural that the metaphor of head-manning the puck hops off the tongue of Jamie Spencer, VP of business development for the Minnesota Wild, as he talks about the launch of an enhanced State of Hockey brand, meant to empower, entertain and inform the passionate hockey populace of Minnesota.

"The State of Hockey is, to me, an emotion that we all feel, whether it's at a Wild game, at a rink, sitting at home watching a game, watching a kid from Eden Prairie get drafted," said Spencer. "All those moments are really what the State of Hockey is all about. And now it's sort of taking it from that emotion to another level."

The State of Hockey, before ever being defined as such, has been evolving since the first puck was passed on Iron Range frozen ponds in the late 1800's. A sense of community pride, the shrieking cut of the blade into the ice is seen as a beautiful act of skill, sportsmanship, and friendly competition. It is a concept and sense of state pride owned by fans, players and purists who live and benefit from being part of such a strong community.

This community is officially going digital thanks to

a collaboration between many important hockey groups in Minnesota, including: the Minnesota Wild, Minnesota Hockey, College Hockey Inc., Let's Play Hockey, Total Hockey, Sport Ngin, and numerous college and youth associations, leagues and teams.

These groups are coming together in hopes of continuing to grow the game and improve the experience for every type of stakeholder associated with the sport.

"When you really weave it all together, we hope to just play a role in helping to collaborate with all of those entities to celebrate the game, create rich content, and communicate directly to the families with relevant stories, scores



and standings — all of those things will be a really big part of this."

Sharing it across a larger audience is now possible thanks to [www.StateofHockey.com](http://www.StateofHockey.com), and a new television series, developed in partnership with FOX Sports North, that launched Nov. 19th, along with social media properties on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram.

Discussing the future of the property, Spencer points to the evolution of Hockey Day Minnesota, which started as a push to get an outdoor game for the state.

"It wasn't long ago we were dreaming about an outdoor game and that became Hockey Day Minnesota," Spencer said. "Now 10 years later — with 16 hours of dedicated programming on FOX Sports North — it's almost like a holiday here now."

Programming and content will be equally as important to [StateofHockey.com](http://StateofHockey.com) as it is to Hockey Day Minnesota, but now the general hockey community

will be empowered to contribute much more and on a constant basis.

"User generated content will be a very big part," Spencer said. "I think it's important to point out that we don't just want to tell all the stories ourselves, we want to find the stories and showcase those stories. So whether it's a young writer from Roseau or an official who wants to give the perspective of what it's like to be a referee in a state tournament and give that perspective of the game to the people who care about the game."

Whether you're a player, parent, fan, official, or just a hockey purist who wants to contribute to the sport you love — now there's a great new outlet for you to get involved and help grow the State of Hockey even further. X



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MINNESOTA

# WILD

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Forward  
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# HIGHEST TO PLAY AGAINST

THE WILD IS MAKING LIFE DIFFICULT  
FOR ITS OPPONENTS IN ITS OWN WAY.

By Evan Sporer P.12

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