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SPORTS COVER STORY

NT hockey faces past players in alumni game

DAVID JAFFE, Staff Writer

The New Trier girls hockey team has had a winning program for many years.

And alumni have really cherished the time they spent playing for New Trier.

That's why there was so much excitement when former players returned to participate in the Girls Hockey Alumni Game Wednesday, Dec. 23, at Centennial Ice Rink in Wilmette.

Former and current players competed with and against one another and alumni were thrilled to get a chance to wear the school's green and white again.

"It's fun having everyone come together. It's great to get the chance to play with both former and current players," Morgan Crane, who plays for Northeastern University in Boston, said. "I remember playing in this game as a freshman and looking up to all the alumni. Now I'm on that side of it and it kind of feels like a leadership role."

Every year more alumni have come back for the game.

"This is about the 12th or

13th year that we've held an alumni game," New Trier Girls Hockey President Ned Forsberg said. "When we first held it, it was primarily going to be for recently graduated players. But the last few years more alumni have participated. This year we had about 20 former players. Some came from out of town such as from Boston or San Jose. They look forward to it and that camaraderie makes it special."

By also playing with current players, Katy O'Malley and Barrett McBride, 2010 graduates, have seen that the program just continues to grow.

"This is my fifth year playing in this game," O'Malley said. "It seems like the players keep getting better every year. It's a testament to how good girls hockey is in the state. It keeps the former players fresh when we're out there. I feel like a lot of these players, I can rely on in life just as much as when you pass them the puck."

"People think of hockey as an East Coast sport but the talent level of players in Chicago, specifically in



Morgan Baird hits a slapshot.

our area, is very strong," McBride said. "When you see how good some of the players in this game are, it speaks to the strength of the program."

It's clear the alumni enjoy being out on the ice with current players.

"While it's obviously an opportunity for them to see friends they played with, I think they also really take to advising the current players," Forsberg said. "A lot of them have played or are currently playing in college. So they're willing to help them understand what that level is

all about and they get a lot of value out of that."

Crane will always remember being on a state championship team.

"When I played as a freshman in 2011-12, we won the state title," Crane said. "That was the best group of girls that loved each other and who all wanted to contribute to getting a championship. That environment was indicative of the type of program New Trier has."

And there are many reasons why New Trier hockey is remembered long after graduation.



Barrett McBride travels with the puck at the Girls Hockey Alumni Game on Dec. 23 at Centennial Ice Rink in Wilmette. PHOTOS BY CARLOS ALVAREZ/22ND CENTURY MEDIA

"Honestly, playing on this rink was the most memorable thing," McBride said. "I've been playing on this rink since I was a kid. Katy and I have been friends since we were about 5 (years old). I get really excited to have the chance to play another game here."

"Playing with my teammates is the thing that stands out to me the most," O'Malley said. "They made me push myself harder than I would have ever been able to do on my own. The support

among the team was awesome and truly made everyone better because of that."

There was a white team and a green team. Although there was a mix, the majority of green were alumni and the majority of white were current players.

The green team, led by Crane's two goals, won 5-3. Rebecca Lindblad, Brit Schneider and MacKenzie Martin also scored. Barrett Sullivan, Grace Dynek and Maggie Graves scored for the white team.