

East Grand Forks community celebrates boys hockey championship

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East Grand Forks students cheer after a goal was scored against St. Cloud Cathedral in the second period of the MSHSL boys hockey 1A championship game at Xcel Energy Center in St. Paul, Minn. on Saturday, March 8, 2025. (Alex Kormann/The Minnesota Star Tribune)

Class 1A state champion Green Wave add another hockey banner to East Grand Forks Civic Center

East Grand Forks, tucked up in Minnesota's northwest corner, is about a five-hour drive from the Twin Cities. But an outsider at Saturday's Class 1A boys hockey championship game might have thought it was just down the road.

A large student section, a full band and a legion of fans made the trek to Xcel Energy Center to wear matching green and watch their team vie for the state championship — so large, in fact, that boos from the Green Wave cheering section often drowned out any applause for St. Cloud Cathedral, which the Green Wave [defeated 2-1 in overtime](#).

It was indicative of the community support the newly crowned state champions say has been the lifeblood of their program for decades.

“It’s everything,” defenseman Cole Bies said. “We love to see them all come together.”

Added coach Tyler Palmiscno: “That’s the difference. Don’t take this the wrong way, but we’re a community-based public school compared to a private school. We have a community around us, and our community loves coming to St. Paul and watching us play.”

In that community, they keep it in the Green Wave family. Palmiscno once laced up for East Grand Forks, scoring 23 goals his senior year before starting his college career at North Dakota.

After retiring from the sport, he found his way back to where it all started — and he’s not the only alumni who has returned. Players from the school’s 2014 and ’15 teams, which won back-to-back state titles under Palmiscno, came to East Grand Forks in December to reunite for their 10-year title anniversaries. They wanted to help prepare the next generation.

“These [current] guys got to see those 25-, 26-, 27-, 28-year-olds come back and got to interact with each other. [They got to see] how fun it was for them to come back, tell stories, be honored on the ice,” Palmiscno said. “And now in 10 years, these guys will get to do it. I think it’s so unbelievable for the school, our community, our youth hockey program.”

Players on this year’s team grew up looking at the 2014 and ’15 championship banners hanging from the rafters of the East Grand Forks Civic Center, their home rink.

“It’s everything I wanted to do as a youth,” Bies said. “You look at the banners and you just dream of it, you know? So to hoist them up there and know that it’s going to be up there forever, at home. It’s going to be awesome.”

The community that routinely packs the Civic Center was front row and banging on the boards inside the X as their team skated over with the championship trophy. A group effort, it felt like.

When will all of East Grand Forks get to celebrate together?

“Right when we get home,” Bies said with a smile.

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