

Fate made Carroll a goalie, now he's a hall-of-famer

BY JOHN SHERMAN

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It was almost by accident that Steve Carroll became a goalie years ago in the Edina youth hockey program.

Like his other five brothers, who all played hockey in Edina, he started out as a forward. Then, one summer, fate interceded.

"I was playing in a floor hockey tournament at the old Braemar Pavilion," Carroll said. "John Sweetland, the Edina Pee Wee A coach, just happened to be there watching and he asked me if I'd like to try out for his team as a goalie."

The more Carroll thought about it, the better it sounded.

"It was suggested to me that I had a better future as a goalie than I did as a skater," he said.

Carroll found out later how true that was. Eventually, he became an all-state goalie at Edina-East High School, an All-American at Mankato State University and Mankato State's Male Athlete of the Century. Later this month, he will add an Edina High School Athletic Hall of Fame plaque to his resume.

Carroll will be honored, along with seven other new hall-of-famers,

in a banquet at 6 p.m. Sept. 29 at Edina Country Club.

"Growing up, playing hockey as a kid, you never think of things like making a hall of fame," Carroll said. "It's a tremendous honor - to know that the hall of fame committee thinks I am worthy. It is very humbling as well."

Carroll is accustomed to being in the spotlight. He was a sportscaster with KARE-11 television for 12 years and also had a tenure as editor of Let's Play Hockey magazine. Currently, he works as a media-relations specialist for the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources. Carroll keeps his hand in sportscasting as an announcer for the Minnesota State, Mankato men's hockey team.

When Carroll was growing up in Edina in the 1970s, he always had plenty of hockey competition at home. His brother Mike played on a state championship team at Edina-East and younger brothers Tom, Pat, Dan and Jimmy all played high school hockey in Edina. Ann, the youngest of the Carroll clan, was an all-conference soccer player and a figure skater.

"We were involved in a lot of activities," Carroll said. "We played hockey, baseball, football or soccer.

Mike played the same sports I did, but was always in a higher age group. He played two years of hockey at Mankato State and four years of baseball.

"With all the brothers, we always had enough people for a good game of hockey in the garage."

Carroll honed his goaltending skills by working against his brothers, while they worked on their shooting against him.

During his high school career at Edina-East, Carroll said his personal highlight was shutting out Roseau, with future NHL star Neal Broten, in the 1977 state tournament.

Broten had at least one point in every game that year until Carroll slammed the door on the Rams, 2-0.

Surprisingly, Carroll didn't have a lot of college offers when he graduated from high school. Mankato State was about the only school that recruited him, so he signed on almost immediately.

Initially, he was not picked for the varsity, but by winter quarter of his freshman year, he was in the starting lineup. He led the Mavericks to four straight NCAA Division II Final Fours and the national title in his junior year.

"When I was young, my dad

[Jim] was a big influence on me," Carroll said. "He had been a good athlete himself and was a referee for many years. My dad taught me to always play hard, and play within the rules. There wasn't as much pressure on a goalie's parents as there is today."

Carroll knows the pressures of goaltending and tries to help others cope with them.

For the past 11 years, he has directed the Steve Carroll Goalie School. "I have always been interested in working with young goalies," he said. "At the school, my goal is to educate, not to evaluate. The first year, I had about 20 kids. Now, we're up to 150. In the teaching business, you have to deliver and you have to be professional. Obviously, we are doing things the right way, because we are growing every year."

Carroll said he is also working with several hockey associations, including Edina's, to help train traveling team goalies.

While much of Carroll's work is done in the offseason, he is not necessarily a big fan of year-round hockey.

"Kids play hockey year-round, and sometimes I think they miss out on the developmental piece," he said.

“In general, I don’t think they’re as excited about coming to the rink as they used to be - maybe because there are just so many games now.”

Carroll’s own sons, David and Paul, played in the Richfield youth hockey program, and David was a standout on the Richfield High varsity.

Looking back on his own high school career, Carroll mentioned the “quality” of the coaching in Edina.

“Laszlo Szendrey was my soccer

coach and I had Willard Ikola for three years in hockey,” said Carroll. “Every kid in Edina grew up dreaming about wearing the Edina sweater and playing for coach Ikola.

“In baseball, my coach was Bob McCarthy. He kept things loose and made it a lot of fun.”

Carroll had the distinction of playing in three state championship games in his senior year at Edina-East and, by the end of the year, he had three silver medals around his neck.

“We lost to Mounds View in soccer, Rochester John Marshall in hockey and St. Peter in baseball,” he said.

Carroll said a big part of Edina-East’s success in those days was having many good athletes. His classmates included such notables as Bret Bjerken, Gordie Hampson, Mel Pearson, Steve Pepper and Dave Terwilliger in hockey, and Steve Foster and Steve Ramler in baseball.

“Our hockey team produced six

or seven Division I hockey players my senior year,” Carroll said. “There was some concern how well I’d do in college because I had such an incredible team playing in front of me at Edina-East.”

As it turned out, Carroll’s play stood the test. Now, he’s ready to take his place in the Edina High School Hall of Fame.

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