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PHF

# Rink Rat

Nearly three decades later, Winny Brodt Brown continues to leave her mark on women's hockey in Minnesota and beyond



by Heather Rule February 17, 2022



Minnesota Whitecaps D Winny Brodt Brown skates the puck up ice during a Sept. 22, 2019 exhibition game against the University of Minnesota at Ridder Arena in Minneapolis. (MHM Photo / Rick Olson)

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## Growing up on skates

One thing most will agree on when talking about Winny, her hockey abilities and the longevity of her playing career, is the strength of her skating. As a high school player, she made it look effortless and so natural, Palmquist said.

"It was like riding a bike," Palmquist said. "It was like walking for her."

There's a good reason for that comparison: Winny and Chelsey were put on ice skates at about 18 months old, learning to walk and learning to skate. The sisters, now each a mother to two young children apiece, did the same thing with their kids.

Along with hockey, Winny figure skated three or four times a week, which paid off long-term in her ability to skate backwards "as good as probably anybody you'll ever see," Jack Brodt said.

When Winny was young, Jack Brodt could tell her skating was above most of the other kids, including the boys who tried to hit her on the ice. But even with her small frame, she was elusive.



Minnesota Whitecaps Head Coach Jack Brodt (MHM Photo / Rick Olson)

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Ever the coach, Jack Brodt said Winny's not a great shooter and is a pretty good passer, but it's the skating that's always been exceptional.

"She's actually going a lot faster than you think she might be going because she's so efficient in her skating," Jack Brodt said.

It's definitely set her apart and prevented her from losing a step that might come with age, Slominski said. Winny has kept up with the best-of-the-best because the foundation of her game is solid and efficient skating "that most people of her generation do not have," Slominski said.

Winny showed off just how good her skating can be in a Whitecaps game a few years ago against the Gophers. Lindsey Brown (no relation to Winny) was in net for the Whitecaps and remembers Winny, who was in her late 30s at the time, turning the puck over at the offensive blue line, putting the speedy Cara Piazza on a breakaway.

"Winny caught her within about five feet inside my blue line," Lindsey said. "And it's just like, it doesn't make sense.

"One of the fastest girls on one of the best teams in the country, and you chased her down after turning the puck over yourself. And you were starting basically facing the other way, and you're flatfooted. It doesn't make sense. But she's just so smart."

Winny may be in her 40s – with a decade or two on some of her Whitecaps teammates and other PHF players – but it's not like that gap shows on the ice. Up until the pandemic, Winny was a trainer at Lifetime Fitness, so conditioning wasn't an obstacle either. Chelsey also continues to work as a trainer at Lifetime.

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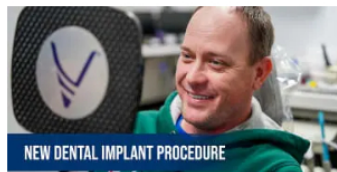
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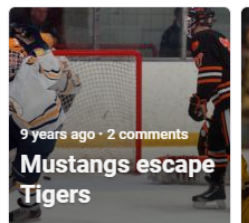
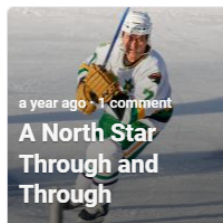
Heather's love for watching hockey started when the Minnesota Wild came to town in 2000. Before that, she caught a few Minnesota Moose games as a youngster, and more recently she's kept up with the Austin Bruins and Fargo Force. She's a writer, freelance journalist and blogger who previously worked as a news reporter in Austin and Fergus Falls, Minn. She enjoys watching sports and closely follows the Wild, Minnesota Twins, IndyCar Series, tennis and prep sports. Heather keeps up her sports blog [Thoughts from the Stands](#). You can follow her on Twitter/X [@hrule](#) or Instagram [@hrule](#).

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