



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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## An athletic family tree

The Brodt family has five children – Vic Brodt, Kerry Wethington, Winny, Chelsey and Tony Brodt – all about six years apart in age.

The skating, competitiveness and passion aside, perhaps the biggest thing for the Brodts is that hockey is a family affair. Plus, as the middle sister, Winny witnessed older sister Kerry have to quit playing hockey at 16 years old because the opportunities weren't there. Opportunities that Jack Brodt and Winny helped create for herself, for Chelsey and plenty of other players.

"(Kerry) was as good if not better than me," Winny said. "So, I never take for granted any time I'm on the ice."

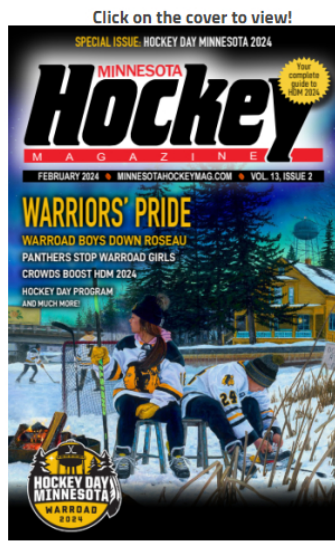


From L to R: Minnesota Whitecaps D Chelsey (Brodt) Rosenthal, Whitecaps coach Jack Brodt, University of Minnesota D Maddie Wethington and Whitecaps D Winny (Brodt) Brown following a Sept. 22, 2019 exhibition game at Ridder Arena. (MHM Photo by Rick Olson)

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kerry's daughter, and winny's niece and goddaughter, madeline wettington, has a bit of that perspective, too. Madeline knows she has opportunities to play that her mom didn't, with a lot of thanks to Winny leading the way.

"She really grasped that role," said Madeline, a junior defenseman with the Gophers. "She's always been an ambassador of it."

It's given Winny an appreciation that she tries to instill within the kids she coaches. It's not about how good you are but instead about how long they're going to play and having fun.

"That should be everyone's main goal," Winny said. "I think people get too caught up in where is their kid going to go with this sport, versus just enjoy it. And wherever it takes you, great. Otherwise, you're just going to set up for failure."

Sisters Winny and Chelsey are next-door neighbors in Roseville, and their dad picks them up so they can carpool to Whitecaps practice. While they're all on the ice, mom Marlene sits up high in the stands at TRIA Rink to watch. She doesn't want to miss anything, Chelsey said.

"She's our biggest fan," Winny said. "I can't tell you the amount of hours that lady has sat and watched. Like, more than my dad."

Playing hockey was also a neighborhood affair for Winny and Chelsey, growing up with the Curtin sisters, whom Winny recruited for the Roseville girls' team before they joined together at the Gophers. Everything they did was competitive, Engelhardt said, "from playing street hockey to capture the flag."

Chelsey didn't get the chance to play with her older sister until they were at the University of Minnesota together. She was a sixth-grader, a grade too young for the high school team when Winny played her senior season at Roseville.

"And I so badly wish I could have (played)," Chelsey said. "If I would have been in seventh grade, I could have been with Winny, Ronda, Renee. I was just on the sideline."

Chelsey got her own shot at Roseville, even if it was after her sister already graduated. She played for the Raiders from 1997-02, winning a state title in 1999 and was a Ms. Hockey finalist in 2002.

Because of the time Winny spent on national teams, it worked out that she was teammates with Chelsey during the 2002-03 Gophers season. Although, that move wasn't as simple as it seemed. Along with the option to play at Minnesota with her sister Winny and the Curtin sisters, Chelsey was also recruited to play at St. Cloud State, where older sister Kerry was the head coach.

"And so, my poor older sister was the head coach at St. Cloud, and then all her neighbors and sister were going to Minnesota," Winny said. "When she's trying to build a program."

While Winny had the 2000 national championship under her belt, Chelsey helped the Gophers to national titles in 2004 and 2005 and four-straight NCAA Frozen Four appearances. She scored seven goals and 43 points across her 151-game career.

Being teammates at Minnesota and then with the Whitecaps is a blast for Chelsey and Winny, though the two aren't paired together on the blue line.

They know themselves and their similar playing styles too well for that.

"Even though I'm a righty, she's a lefty, you would think it would work just perfect," Chelsey said. "No. We know better."

"We used to fight for who would get to the puck first. Like, 'no, I'm going to break it out!' or 'no, no, I got it!'"

The athletic apple isn't falling far from the tree either. Madeline was a standout in the Blake School



Winny Brodt (center, next to Goldy) poses with her Gopher teammates after capturing the 2000 AWCHA National Championship on March 25, 2000. (Gopher Athletics)

girls' hockey program and named 2019 Ms. Hockey before being named WCHA Preseason Rookie of the Year prior to her freshman season with the Gophers. Her three younger sisters have all played at Blake, too. Audrey was a 2020 Ms. Hockey semifinalist before joining Madeline as a forward for the Gophers. Still at Blake, Jackie is a junior this season while Addie is in seventh grade, both defenders for the Bears.

When the Whitecaps and Gophers played during the fall of 2019, it set up a match between niece Madeline and her aunts, Chelsey and Winny. Madeline, who wears a No. 5 jersey just like her aunt and godmother Winny, remembers being out on the ice for a faceoff with her in that game.

"We looked at each other, and we just smiled the biggest smile," Madeline said. "This is coming full circle for both of us. For her to play against her niece and for me to wear the Gopher jersey and her number, No. 5."

Winny is raising two young boys, Weston, 8, and Branson, 7, while Chelsey has 8-year-old Haley and younger son, Jake, who come to the rink and watch Whitecaps games. Haley and Weston play on the same hockey team.

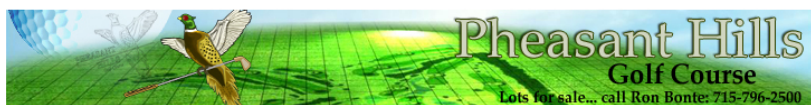
Winny and Chelsey, naturally, are going to raise their kids to be rink rats.

"She has no idea how lucky she is," Chelsey said, of her daughter. "Like, she just thinks it's always been around, probably.

"So, I think that's a huge thing, why I've continued to play."

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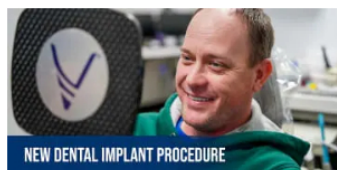
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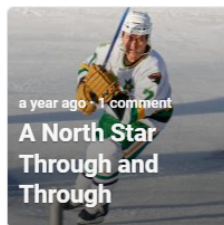
Heather's love for watching hockey started when the Minnesota Wild came to town in 2000. Before that, she caught a few Minnesota Moose games as a youngster, and more recently she's kept up with the Austin Bruins and Fargo Force. She's a writer, freelance journalist and blogger who previously worked as 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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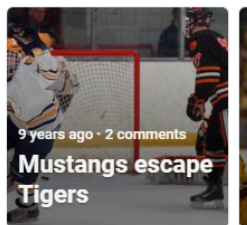
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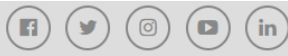


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