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Blue Ice: The Story Of Michigan Hockey



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Synopsis

Blue Ice relates the tale of the University of Michigan’s hockey program--from its fight to become a varsity sport in the 1920s to its 1996 and 1998 NCAA national championships.This history of the hockey program profiles the personalities who shaped the program--athletic directors, coaches, and players. From Fielding Yost, who made the decision to build the team a rink with artificial ice before the Depression (which ensured hockey would be played during those lean years), to coaches Joseph Barss, who survived World War I and the ghastly Halifax explosion before becoming the program’s first coach, to Red Berenson, who struggled to return his alma mater’s hockey team to prominence in the 1980s and 1990s. Players from Eddie Kahn, who scored Michigan’s first goal in 1923, to Brendan Morrison, who upon winning the 1996 national championship with his goal said, "This is for all the [Michigan] guys who never had a chance to win it."Blue Ice also explores the players’ exotic backgrounds, from Calumet in the Upper Peninsula to Minnesota’s Iron Range to Regina, Saskatchewan; how coach Vic Heygliger launched the NCAA tournament at the glamorous Broadmoor Hotel; and how commissioner Bill Beagan transformed the country’s premier hockey conference.In Blue Ice, fans of hockey will learn the stories behind the curse of the Boston University Terriers, the hockey team’s use of the winged helmet, and the unlikely success of Ann Arbor’s home-grown talent.Unlike other sports at the collegiate level, the hockey players at Michigan haven’t been motivated by fame or fortune; rather, they came to Michigan get an education and to play the game they loved.John U. Bacon has won numerous national writing awards and now freelances for Sports Illustrated, Time, ESPN Magazine,and the New York Times, among others.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

I have become a fan of John Bacon due to the style of his commentary. The "Blue Ice" history book about Michigan Hockey is easy to read and enjoyable. Bacon presents a series of stories, page after page. He avoids writing in classic "hisory book" style by taking relevant ideas from the beginning to the end rather than trying to tell the whole story chronlogically. He did a huge amount of research and created a wonderful summary of decades of athletic excellence and down times in between. The is a great book for Michigan sports fans and for hockey fans from anywhere.

It is a history not only of Michigan hockey, but of the University as a whole, and the development of collegiate sport, seen through the eyes of one program. I've heard Bacon is going to write/release a new edition either when Michigan wins a national title or Red retires, whichever comes first. The book currently ends around 2002 but he's been keeping notes and doing interviews so that the addendum could be written quickly. I'm really looking forward to it...Also, check out the documentary.

This is a fantastic book for several reasons. There is certainly enough information about the history of the program to make the book worthwhile in and of itself. But what makes the book special is the way that the history of the program is put into historical context. For example, the book discusses how great people in the University's history were responsible for keeping a program alive when most other's couldn't - during the Depression and WWII, for instance. The book is also very careful to discuss how important people in the program's history have made contributions outside of hockey, not only to the University but to the world. And there is a lot of great information that would be of interest to any college hockey fan, such as how the NCAA tournament was started by a few hotel operators in Colorado who had the foresight, along with some UM people, to put a real national tournament together. I started to read this book to learn more about the history of a sport that I love and a University that means a great deal to me, but got a lot more than I bargained for.

The idea is simple. Write an engaging story recounting the coming of age of a first class collegiate hockey program and spice it with behind the scene details, locker room interviews and humorous anecdotes. The execution is outstanding. Blue Ice takes the reader on a very enjoyable trip looking at the beginnings of college hockey at the University of Michigan, from playing outdoors on the frozen Huron River, to the recent trips that Wolverine skaters have made to the Frozen Four championships. The bonus for readers is getting a sports version of "Connections," with the athletic

stories enveloped and intertwined in the history of the time, showing how seemingly unrelated events can influence each other. Easy and entertaining to read, delightful to give as a gift, when it was over, we wanted a sequel.

Must read not just for Michigan fans, but for fans of hockey in general. Bacon tackles a topic that I don't think many authors would be brave enough to tackle, given college hockey's limited visibility in the US. Bacon's story doesn't just tell the history of college hockey's most successful program, in telling the story of Michigan hockey, he tells the story of college hockey and it's struggle to gain a foothold in the public consciousness. Read this book, you won't be sorry.

A must-read for hockey lovers! Whether you like Michigan Hockey or any other team, this book is for you. Bacon makes this history story of the Wolverine skaters extremely fun and joyous reading. If you are a Michigan fan, you'd enjoy reading all the details and stories; if you (so wrongly) chose another team to cheer -- you'll become curious as to its own history.I especially loved the parts of the book (which I consider as "Hockey chanting for Idiots") detailing the rich content and background behind some of what you hear in Yost Ice arena. After reading it, watching the games was so much more fun!

This is a very informative and insightful look into the rich tradition of Michigan Hockey. The writing is tremendous with great personal interviews with former players and coaches and other people well connected to the program. I loved the off-the-ice stories the most. It is not abook about statistics and generic history. Bacon digs deep into the people involved in the program and relays their stories in a way that makes you feel like you are part of it. You get right inside the locker room, classroom and team parties as well. It is a very easy read and always keeps you entertained.

Blue Ice is a compelling read because Bacon captures the human side of the story of Michigan hockey. In a time when athletes are too often celebrities, it's refreshing to see Michigan hockey players emerge as real human beings - usually from small towns, and usually with the humility and work ethic that creates success on the ice and off. Bacon captures the excitement of the big games, but he also captures all the behind-the-scenes stuff that real fans crave.

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