

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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50 Days to the 50th World Juniors: Details Unveiled For “Bold North Breakaway” Fan Fest *Family Fireworks on New Year’s Eve; Medal Round Ticket Packages On Sale Now*

BLOOMINGTON, Minn. – With 50 days to go until the best hockey players under 20 take the ice in Minnesota for the 2026 IIHF World Junior Championship, local organizers officially “dropped the puck” today at Mall of America®, marking the start of the state’s countdown to hosting the 50th edition of the iconic international tournament, taking place **Dec. 26, 2025 – Jan. 5, 2026**, at Grand Casino Arena in Saint Paul and 3M Arena at Mariucci in Minneapolis.

The celebration featured a “D2: The Mighty Ducks”-inspired rollerblading entrance by youth hockey players carrying the flags of all 10 competing nations, remarks from state and hockey dignitaries, and the details on the Bold North Breakaway Fan Fest, a free event which will transform downtown Saint Paul into a winter playground for fans and families during the 11-day tournament.

“Fifty days from now, hockey fans from around the world will descend on the State of Hockey,” said **Wendy Williams Blackshaw**, president and CEO of Minnesota Sports and Events. “From the opening faceoff to the gold medal game, the World Juniors will unite 10 nations over 29 games and thousands of fans celebrating their shared love of hockey. Bold North Breakaway will extend that spirit beyond the rink and into downtown Saint Paul.”

Bold North Breakaway Fan Fest: A Statewide Celebration of Hockey, Culture and Community

Coinciding with the tournament, Bold North Breakaway will run Dec. 26 - Jan. 5, bringing **Rice Park** and the **Saint Paul RiverCentre** to life with hockey, food, music, and family fun – **all free and open to the public**. Fan fest hours and the complete schedule of events and experiences can be found at WorldJuniorsMN26.com/fanfest.

Outdoor highlights include:

- **Securian Financial Bumper Car Zone** – Take a spin on the ice in Minnesota’s newest winter thrill, a first-of-its-kind bumper car rink. Rides are \$5 each and reservations can be made in advance at WorldJuniorsMN.com/FanFest.
- **Saint Paul Pioneer Press Trolley Ride & Tales** and **free horse-drawn carriage rides** – Experience downtown Saint Paul in true winter style.
- **TRIA® Skills Rink** – Daily games and skills challenges including **Red Bull’s** “Light the Lamp” mini-golf, **CCM** youth activations, and open skating.
- **Explore Minnesota “We Love Hockey” Sign** – A lighted photo op above the Rice Park fountain, perfect for fans showing off their State of Hockey pride.
- **Family New Year’s Eve Fireworks Show** – A special fireworks display will light up the Saint Paul skyline around **8:00 p.m. on Dec. 31**, about 30 minutes after the **USA vs. Sweden** game, with live music and the **Red Bull DJ Truck** keeping energy high before the show. **Metro Transit** will offer sponsored free rides from 6 p.m. through end of service on New Year’s Eve to help fans get to the Bold North Breakaway festival and fireworks safely.

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- **HealthPartners Breakaway Box** – Grab snacks from Tom Reid’s Hockey City Pub, play games, and test your reaction time.
- **PleasureLand RV** will provide cozy warming recreational vehicles throughout Rice Park, offering fans a place to warm up between activities and enjoy the full Bold North Breakaway experience.
- **PNC Bank Bonfire Zone & Snow Globe** – Cozy up with s’mores, hot chocolate, and photo moments.
- **Red Bull® DJ Truck** – Bringing the energy to Rice Park and Saint Paul RiverCentre throughout the festival, with live sets and music to keep fans hyped all tournament long.
- **Xcel Energy® Tiny House** – Learn ways you can save energy and money in your own home by exploring the Tiny House while enjoying icy yard games.

Inside the Saint Paul RiverCentre, fans will discover even more experiences:

- **Hockey Hall of Fame Showcase** – Featuring exhibits from the Hockey Hall of Fame in Toronto, U.S. Hockey Hall of Fame in Eveleth, and the recently-announced Minnesota Hockey Hall of Fame.
- **Waggle® Puck Drop Free Fall** – Take the plunge (safely!) in this exhilarating vertical jump experience. Harnessed participants step off a platform and enjoy a thrilling free fall before landing softly on a giant airbag - perfect for daring fans looking to test their courage between games.
- **Hockey Moms Market curated by Mich Berthiaume** – Dozens of local makers offering handcrafted gifts, décor, and hockey-inspired goods. Fans can shop for handcrafted goods, apparel, décor, and gifts - all with a local twist.
- **SportsEngine® Zone** – Music, hockey games, and free skate sessions for fans of all ages inside Saint Paul RiverCentre.
- **Delta Dental of Minnesota Locker Room Experience** – Step into the ultimate hockey locker room with gear from all 10 nations and interactive photo ops.
- **Mini Mites Kids Zone presented by Cub** – featuring knee hockey, coloring tables, reading corners, and a cozy warming house.
- **Minnesota Photo Opp** presented by **Mall of America®** featuring special opportunities to get your photo taken with your favorite Nickelodeon® characters!
- **Explore Minnesota Watch Party Room** – Watch live tournament games and classic hockey films while enjoying local snacks and hot beverages.
- **Blue Line Bar Game Zone** – Fans can compete in Super Deker and Knockout Net contests or relax with video game rivalries.

Paired with local food and beverage vendors and family-friendly activities throughout winter break, Bold North Breakaway will be a true celebration of Minnesota creativity, community and winter fun.

The **Blue Line Crew Powered by Cub®**, is the official name of the all-star team of volunteers that will bring the World Juniors experience to life for all fans. Volunteers will also be outfitted by **Waggle®**, the official supplier of the Blue Line Crew uniform.

Official World Juniors Gear Available Soon

The **World Junior Championship Headquarters store** will open **Monday, Nov. 24 at Mall of America (Level 3, North)**, featuring official tournament apparel, merchandise, and collectibles. Merchandise will also be available on site during the tournament.

Celebrating the State of Hockey

Today’s event featured remarks from **Minnesota Sen. Karin Housley**, **Tony Driscoll**, assistant executive director of USA Hockey, **Bob Motzko**, head coach of the 2026 U.S. National Junior Team, **Wendy Williams Blackshaw**, president and CEO of MNSE, and **Lauren Bennett McGinty**, executive director of Explore Minnesota, highlighting the economic and cultural impact of hosting the tournament.

World Junior alumni in attendance included **Phil Housley**, Hall of Fame defenseman and South St. Paul native who starred at the World Juniors before going on to set the U.S. points record for defensemen, and **Jordan Schroeder**,

the Minnesota-born center who broke the American record for career assists and points at the World Junior Championships and helped the U.S. win gold in 2010.

“This event will bring visitors from across the globe, showcase our communities, and inspire the next generation of hockey players to chase their dreams,” said **Sen. Housley**, co-chair of the host committee.

Medal Round Tickets Now on Sale

Ticket packages for **medal-round games** (semifinals, bronze, and gold medal games) are now on sale at **WorldJuniorsMN26.com**. A medal-round package includes a ticket to both semifinal games on Sunday, Jan. 4, and the bronze medal game and gold medal game on Monday, Jan. 5, for a total of four games. Tickets are digital and transferable.

About the 2026 IIHF World Junior Championship

The IIHF World Junior Championship features the best men’s hockey players under 20 competing for gold. From Dec. 26, 2025 – Jan. 5, 2026, games will be held at Saint Paul’s Grand Casino Arena (formerly Xcel Energy Center) and 3M Arena at Mariucci in Minneapolis, with exhibition games in Bemidji, Duluth, Mankato, and Rochester, dubbed the World Juniors Pre-Tournament Series presented by Delta Dental of Minnesota.

Tickets and information: 2026.worldjunior.hockey | WorldJuniorsMN26.com. Follow MNSE on [Facebook](#), [X](#), [Instagram](#) and [LinkedIn](#).

MEDIA: Digital assets available for download in the [2026 World Juniors Digital Media Kit](#). *Photos and video from today’s announcement will be uploaded as soon as possible following the event.*

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About Minnesota Sports and Events

Minnesota Sports and Events is an independent 501c6 organization designed to bring significant economic, reputational, and social impact to the region through the attraction, promotion, and execution of world-class events. MNSE also advances community initiatives associated with each event with a focus on underserved communities and statewide engagement. For more information, visit www.mnsportsandevents.org.