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West Word Web Exclusives



District-wide hockey club to return in spring North staff member revives dormant team

 Daniel Friedman
Staff Writer

Beginning in January, District 219 hockey players once again will be able to compete on the Niles Nighthawks club team. After a three-year hiatus, the program is being resurrected by Niles North special education assistant Kevin Kruszynski.

According to Kruszynski, hockey always has been part of his life.

“I started playing hockey when I was four years old. My older brother was on the Nighthawks when he was in high school, so I always looked forward to playing for the Niles Nighthawks,” Kruszynski said.



He was a member of the team beginning 2001-05. Throughout college, he said that he dreamed of restarting the Nighthawks program, and now his dream is about to come true.

Kruszynski said that he feels that the most significant challenge the program faces is getting enough people out for the team. According to Kruszynski, anyone who wants to play hockey, regardless of skill level, can find a spot on the team,

“The Nighthawks are not picky; we want anyone that is interested in playing to come out and skate,” he said.

With the combined student body of Niles West and Niles North, Kruszynski believes packing the house shouldn't be a problem.

“When the season starts, and we begin to win games, I will be taking a look into the [stands] to see how many fans we have. Our hope is to have a combined hockey team with the support of the students cheering for their schools,” said Kruszynski.

The team will regularly play against other local teams from schools such as Latin, Antioch, Jacobs, Crystal Lake South, Cary Grove, Prairie Ridge, Maine South, Maine West, Lake Zurich and Libertyville. However, some of the tournaments in which the Nighthawks will compete may feature teams from other states, Kruszynski said.

Tryouts will begin in January; more information can be found at the team's website: www.nighthawkshockey.com.