

# Reviving the Ramblers

Absent for more than 20 years, boys ice hockey at Fraser is back

By Fred Costello  
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It has been a long time coming, this revival of the Ramblers.

For a matter of three years, forces have been at work to bring back the Fraser High School boys

## Fraser Boys Ice Hockey

hockey team. A dominant program throughout the 1970s, Fraser's

hockey team had a number of successful seasons – culminating with a state championship victory in 1983. But, just a few years after its title-winning season, the program disbanded. Economics and a lack of participation were to blame. Since 1986, the school has not fielded a team.

But this week, all the behind-the-scenes effort will have paid off when the Ramblers take the ice on Friday, hosting Stevenson in their first varsity hockey game in over 20 years.

"We're all really excited," Fraser coach Don Krussman said. "We started to get the kids together in the summer and generate interest in the team. And now, here we are."

According to Krussman, a 1979 Fraser graduate and hockey alum, the idea to revive the team was the brainchild of Fraser Schools superintendent Rick Repicky and Board of Education trustee Gerry Gauthier.

Repicky – who was Krussman's high school coach in the '70s – and Gauthier figured that a leader with strong ties to the school would be needed. A former University of Michigan player and high school assistant coach, Krussman was viewed as the perfect fit.

All three of the men realized that, like every other hockey program in the Macomb Area Conference, the team would need to be entirely self-sufficient and receive no funding from the district. Yet,



Fraser's Cameron Martey looks forward to the revival of the boys ice hockey program at the high school. The Ramblers open the season Friday against Stevenson.

Macomb Daily staff photo by David N. Posavetz

## Macomb Area Conference Showcase

For years, the Trenton Invitational has been the granddaddy of high school showcase tournaments. Many of the state's best programs

### Tournament

yearn for the chance to participate and be seen. This season, the MAC has stepped up to the plate with a showcase tournament all its own.

On Jan. 16 and 17, at Suburban Ice Macomb, all 17 teams in the MAC will play a whirlwind schedule that features almost 20 games during that span.

For the people organizing the tournament, such as Dakota coach Dave Koons, the showcase is all about creating opportunity.

"When we talked about it at the MAC coaches

meeting, everyone was in 100 percent agreement," Koons said. "We want to move this league forward and promote the kids. If even one kid gets seen by a scout and picked up, the whole event will be a success."

Romeo and Marysville are co-hosting the event, and Bulldogs coach Rich Boggio couldn't be happier.

"I think the showcase is awesome," Boggio said. "I think it's great for the league and its exposure. More and more talented kids are coming to play and this really does more for us to show these kids that there's a chance you'll still move on if you play high school hockey."

The full schedule for the showcase can be found on the home page of the MAC Web site, [www.machockey.com](http://www.machockey.com).

they were undaunted by the enormous costs associated with starting a hockey team. That's because they knew they could turn to the past to create their future.

An alumni gathering was held last May, with the goal of raising money for the new team and reuniting the people who gave Fraser hockey its identity for many years.

Krussman was astounded with the results. More than 40 former players, nine former coaches and nearly 200 people in total attended the event and enough money

was raised to really get the ball rolling.

"The people that lived in this community back when the school had a team haven't moved," Krussman explained. "The community is interested and they can all remember when hockey was a popular sport at the school. A lot of people are excited and they were anxious to support it."

Another MAC coach is excited to see the Ramblers back in the fold. Saint Clair Shores Unified's Frank DiCristofaro has been around high school hockey long

enough to remember coaching against the Ramblers.

"I think it's great that they're back," DiCristofaro said. "It really brings back memories of when I started coaching and going up against those great teams. They had a lot of good players and you just hated playing against Fraser because they were so tough. Hopefully, this generates a lot of interest and gets a lot of kids out to play."

The 2008-09 season will see the Ramblers competing in a new-look MAC. The league – which is

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Fraser boys ice hockey coach

now one of the biggest in the state – will include the Red, White and for the first time a Blue division. Fraser will be in the Blue along with Warren-Mott, Ford, Lamphere, Marysville and Port Huron.

Krussman will be joined by a pair of assistant coaches, Jason Neale and Bob Fluent. Neale is recent Fraser alum, while Fluent was a part of Fraser's '83 championship team.

Krussman has kept his expectations for the team close to the vest. He is reluctant to point out any of the 18 team members on an individual basis, preferring to keep the team concept at the forefront of his philosophy.

"The main thing we want to accomplish is to establish a program that is based on good principles, integrity and players with character," Krussman said. "Once that's established and we kind of mold the team from that aspect, then we'll see success on the ice as a follow-up. Time will tell how quickly we achieve that."

It all begins Friday at Great Lakes Sports City in Fraser, when the Ramblers will face off against Stevenson at 8:25 p.m. No matter how the Ramblers fare in their first season back on the ice, Krussman is proud to be a part of its resurgence.

"There is pride here," Krussman said. "All my friends from those old teams look back with fond memories. It's really a neat thing to get hockey back here."