



Celebrating 50 years of NU Trailblazers!

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From Club Sport to Champions: Norwich Women's Hockey



Liz Kennedy '01

Liz Kennedy '01 was a sophomore in 1998 when construction of the Kreitzberg Arena was completed. A lifelong ice hockey fan-turned-player, Liz wanted to start a women's hockey team at Norwich. She requested a meeting with President Richard Schneider to make her pitch. "Women are going to be playing hockey in the Olympics for the first time this year and the sport is going to explode," she said to him. "Norwich should be on the forefront of that." A consummate fundraiser, Liz convinced President Schneider to allocate \$1,000 to launch the Norwich Women's Hockey Club.

"We held a meeting to see if anybody was interested in playing," Liz said. "That first rag tag group had four or five girls who had played hockey, two figure skaters we made into hockey players, and the rest were rugby girls we propped up on skates to be barriers."

Dana Bean, who worked as the equipment room manager for NU Athletics, volunteered his time to coach the team. They played two games in their inaugural season, both against St. Michael's College, finishing with a record of 1-1. That winter the U.S. Women's Olympic Hockey Team took their first gold medals and, as Liz predicted, women's ice hockey exploded.



2010-2011 NU Women's Hockey team

In 2002, Mark Bolding, who had been the assistant coach for Norwich's men's hockey program, took the reins of the women's club. With Coach Bean serving as Bolding's assistant, the team began to blossom. The 2007-2008 season marked a significant milestone on their journey when the team joined the ECAC Women's East Hockey League and achieved varsity status.



Sophie Leclerc '10

A short four years later the **2010-2011 team** clinched their first NCAA championship. With a stellar record of 25-4-1, Norwich defeated Rochester Institute of Technology in the National Championship Game in Rochester, NY.

No longer a team of novice skaters, the elite athletes on the championship team included the likes of Julie Fortier '12 and **Sophie Leclerc '10**. Both women set records and earned multiple awards including All-American honors and left an indelible mark on the team's legacy.

The [2010-2011 team was inducted into the NU Athletics Hall of Fame](#) in 2021. During the ceremony Coach Bolding said, "It's truly a credit to all our players who bought into their roles and sacrificed daily for the good of the team. The result was magical, and this group cemented Norwich Women's Hockey as one of the premier programs in the nation."

Coach Bolding went on to coach the Cadets for twelve seasons. In 2019, Sophie Leclerc was announced as the second head coach in program history.

Norwich University's women's ice hockey program demonstrates the power of dedication, skill, and teamwork. With the championship banner permanently hung above the Kreitzberg Arena, the legacy of this extraordinary program continues to be a beacon for female athletes aspiring to reach new heights in collegiate sports.

Records documenting women's history and experience at Norwich are available through the University Archives. <https://archives.norwich.edu/>

In 1972, Vermont College merged with Norwich University. 2024 marks the **50th anniversary** of the first women to live on the Northfield campus and the first to join the NU Corps of Cadets—two years prior to the US Service Academies!

Attend a Women Kicking Glass Event.

- Sunday, May 5, 2024 - [Women Kicking Glass High Tea](#), Boston, MA
- Saturday, May 18, 2024 - [Women Kicking Glass So. California Gathering](#), Los Angeles, CA
- Sunday, June 23, 2024 - [Washington DC Women Kicking Glass Reception](#), Military Women's Memorial, Arlington, VA
- Friday, September 20, 2024 - [Women Kicking Glass Gala](#), Plumley Armory, Norwich