

St. Louis Hockey Community Unites for Annual Tournament to Support Wood River Youth

by Sydney Sinks, News Reporter
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WOOD RIVER/ST. LOUIS - The DAWG Nation Hockey Foundation will host a fundraiser for local hockey player Wyatt Owens. Community members are invited to support the 18-year-old at an upcoming hockey tournament in St. Louis.

The winter classic kicks off at 6 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 23, 2024, and 36 teams throughout the St. Louis area will be competing. On Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024, spectators can enjoy an auction and a public skate with Reed Low, a former St. Louis Blues player. All proceeds will go to St. Louis resident Adam Dowling and Wood River's own Owens, who was recently diagnosed with lymphoma.

"This is an annual fundraiser that we do to help members of the hockey community going through times of crisis," explained Jared Schmierbach, director of the St. Louis chapter of DAWG Nation. "Aside from the financial aspect of this, we try to get the community together to support these people going through these very challenging times."

The tournament is a four-on-four winter classic at Steinberg Ice Rink in Forest Park. In the weeks leading up to the classic, DAWG Nation is also sponsoring a fundraiser where they will match donations three-to-one up to a total of \$2,500. You can [donate to Owens here](#).

On Saturday, Feb. 24, 2024, community members can check out vendors, an ice sculpture, silent auction and raffles in addition to the live auction and public skate. All proceeds from the auctions, raffles and fundraiser will go to Owens and Dowling.

"We're going to have a lot of cool stuff going on out there and even if you're not a hockey player, just being out there and supporting," Schmierbach said. "There's different ways that you can give back by being out there."

Schmierbach explained that this annual fundraiser aims to raise money for local hockey players who need help. As a foundation, DAWG Nation has given away over \$4 million to members of the hockey community.

While all athletes are close to their teammates, Schmierbach said there's something special about hockey. Most of the players have been friends on and off the ice since they were children, and a lot of them will continue playing into adulthood. It's no surprise that the players are so willing to help out when one of their own needs it.

"It's just a special community and they just stick together," he added. "I'm just so grateful to be part of it with this organization and be a catalyst to kind of help bring people together."

For more information about DAWG Nation Hockey Foundation and the upcoming tournament to support Adam Dowling and Wood River's Wyatt Owens, visit the [official website at DAWGNationSTL.org/Classic](http://DAWGNationSTL.org/Classic).

