



# Skating To The United Center

## *The Road to the 2014 Illinois High School State Championship & High School Thanksgiving Tournament Wrap-Up*

By Ross Forman

The road to the United Center appears, once again, to run through New Trier Green.

But plenty of other Illinois high school teams are poised to knock the defending state champions off the pedestal.

Let's see, there's New Trier's arch-rival, Loyola Gold, of course; or the 2013 state runner-up, Glenbrook North; or the 2013-14 preseason No. 1-ranked Stevenson Patriots; and also perennial power Naperville Central. That's not to mention such soaring programs as Providence Catholic, Benet Academy and Waubonsie Valley. There also are, naturally, plenty of dark-horse contenders too, each shooting to skate next March for the Illinois state championship (Red Division), including St. Rita, Highland Park and Fenwick.

The current Illinois High School Rankings (for all teams, including co-op clubs) has the Trevians at No. 1 – a spot the school has long been accustomed to. After all, New Trier Green has won the state championship 11 times since 1983, including five consecutive from 1998-2002. The Trevians have won state three of the past five years.

The Trevians skated past Glenbrook North 4-2 on Dec. 1 to capture the championship of the 42<sup>nd</sup> annual Loyola Thanksgiving Tournament, played in Wilmette. The Trevians advanced to the finals with a 2-0 win over Benet in the semifinals.

GBN, meanwhile, skated into the title match against Green after a seemingly simple semifinal win over St. Rita, 6-1.

The Spartans struck first against the Trevians, scoring on the power play in the second period. New Trier answered two minutes later with its own power play goal by Chris Brower. It was 2-1 New Trier after two. Brower struck again, 34 seconds into the third period, scoring on assists from Kevin Marren and Jason Kuker. The Spartans cut the lead to 3-2 with 10 minutes remaining in regulation time, but Brad Glass iced the Trevians' victory in the final minutes.

Brower was awarded the Championship Game MVP award.

New Trier also claimed the championship in the girls' division of the 2013 Loyola Thanksgiving Tournament, while Glenbrook North captured the honors in the JV ranks.

Meanwhile in Buffalo Grove, the host Stevenson Patriots captured the JV and varsity championships of the 10th annual Stevenson Thanksgiving Tournament, played at the Twin Rinks Ice Pavilion.

The Patriots captured the varsity title with a come-from-behind 5-3 win over Waubonsie Valley. Stevenson trailed 2-1 heading into the third period, but answered with four goals in the final 17 minutes. Jared Projansky paced the Patriots with 3 goals and an assist. Trevor Patten and Evan Baker also scored in the championship game, while goalie Corey Benjoya stopped 40 of 43 shots.

The Stevenson JV slipped past York for the title, 3-2.