

Versatile Bill Vollbrecht

By RALPH TURTINEN

When Bill Vollbrecht was playing defense for Buffalo High School's hockey team in the late '70s, little did he realize that his love for the sport would lead to some fascinating "night jobs" for this 40-year-old turf manager whose "day job" is with Hennepin County Parks.

Virtually every weekend during the winter you'll find Vollbrecht, an assistant golf course superintendent at the new Eagle Lake Golf Club in Plymouth as well as Glen Lake Golf Club in Minnetonka, officiating at Western Collegiate Hockey Association games in St. Cloud, Mankato, Duluth or Mariucci Arena in Minneapolis and, on occasion, in Bemidji.



BILL VOLLBRECHT AND HIS SON HUNTER



BREAKING UP FIGHTS goes with the territory for MGCSA member Bill Vollbrecht, linesman on the right, when working WCHA games throughout the state.

For the past five years he has been a linesman and an assistant referee at games for the Gophers, Mavericks, Huskies and Bulldogs, and it's evident that he likes what he's doing in both of his jobs.

"The WCHA is a great league with a lot of fast, strong, talented players, and you have to skate and think quickly to keep up with the fast pace of the game," Vollbrecht said.

"Working on golf courses also is a fascinating profession, and something I've really enjoyed," he said.

But let's step back a few years to see how this all came about.

Born in Hanover, Minn on June 5, 1961, Bill played defense for three years for Buffalo where he was graduated in 1979. He then continued his hockey career for the

University of Minnesota/Crookston where he majored in horticulture and natural resources and was graduated with high honors in 1983.

The following year he began working for Hennepin Parks full-time as a nursery specialist, where he developed considerable interest in the growth and care of trees, shrubs and grass. Much of his early work was with Glen Lake Golf Club until Eagle Lake opened last summer. Both are 9-hole courses in Hennepin County.

"Working on a brand new course was a great challenge," he said. "It also developed several new interests in the care and maintenance of golf courses."

But his golf course work didn't take Bill away from hockey. Like virtually all hockey officials, he began by working youth hockey games, then advanced to high schools and the Minnesota state high school tournament for three years.

In 1997 he was selected as an official for the WCHA, and his weekend work began with games at the four Minnesota schools which are in the league as well as at Bemidji

"All of these are great hockey venues, and there always is a great atmosphere," he said.

Bill and his wife, Paige, live with their son Hunter, 9, and daughter Haily, 4, in Greenfield in western Hennepin County.