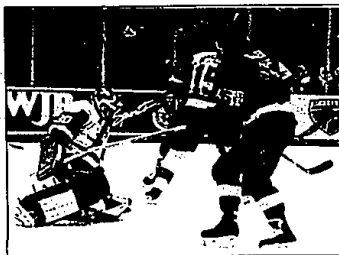


ON-KYZ is a band celebrating 10 years of performing reggae around the Detroit area. Find out why this band's music touches the subatomic in your body and gets you on the floor to dance. Please turn to Page 3D.



The Red Wings are packing them in with first-rate hockey action.

## Hockey night in DETROIT

By Tom Henderson  
staff writer

What's the hottest ticket in town? The Pistons? Nah. Sinatra and Minelli? No way. Forget Bruce. Without a doubt it's the Detroit Red Wings.

Consider: Last year, in 40 home games, the Wings average attendance was 19,638, which is more than the seating capacity of the riverfront arena. Each game, an average of 363 fans paid \$14 to stand in the aisles, and this year, they're paying \$16 for the pleasure of standing there for 3 hours to see fragmented bits and pieces of the ice as the heads in front of them bob and weave.

For 79 straight games, the Wings have drawn more than 19,000, dating back to Feb. 26, 1987, and 72 of them have been sellouts. There has never been anything like it in the history of the National Hockey League — the NHL attendance records for both a season and a game belong to the Wings, who somehow wedged 21,019 into the arena the day after Thanksgiving in 1983.

Think you might want to buy a season ticket for next year and avoid the hassle? Get in line. There are already 750 ahead of you, on the waiting list in the slight event someone who has season tickets now won't renew them. Better to marry into a family that has them, then sue for divorce and custody of the tickets.

Here's a primer on the sport that has intoxicated the town.

**HISTORY:** The first game was played March 3, 1875 by a bunch of McGill University lacrosse players in Montreal who were looking to stay fit in the off-season. They were going to use a ball and smack it around with sticks, but after some prospective spectators at the Victoria Skating Rink expressed fear at being hit by the ball as it flew into the stands, the players decided to use a flat, circular piece of wood.

The nine-men-a-side in the first game later became six, and the wooden disc became a rubber puck, which despite original intentions, flies into the stands with regularity, not to mention fearsome impact.

Some purists moan about the modern game, wishing to return to the good old days of the "Original Six." That refers to the pre-

expansion days before 1967, when the NHL had just six members — Detroit, Boston, Chicago, New York, Toronto and Montreal. Today, it has 21.

Actually, the original six is a myth, as are many of the claims to superior play in the good old days. In truth, players then knew little of nutrition or conditioning, equipment was atrocious and, without synthetic, incredibly heavy. Players were much older, much slower, much smaller, and almost none of them could shoot the puck.

The NHL was organized in 1917 with five teams, the Montreal Canadiens, the Montreal Wanderers, Ottawa, Quebec and the Toronto Arenas (snappy name, that). In 1918, the first franchise folded when Montreal's Westmount Arena burned to the ground and the Wanderers decided to take a hike.

The first American franchise was established in Boston in 1924, and in 1926, the Victoria team of the Western Canadian League switched leagues and moved to Detroit, playing as the Cougars, then as the Falcons and, beginning in 1933, as the Red Wings.

Teams came, teams went. Not until 1942 did the so-called "Original Six" exist in that form.

**THE MODERN ERA:** Most sports have one modern era. With baseball, it began in the Twenties with Babe Ruth and the rabbit ball. In basketball, it was when the jumpshot replaced the set shot, and the game began to be played at rim level. But hockey has had as many modern eras and as many facelifts as Phyllis (Is My Forehead Still Tight?) Diller.

Some say it began when the league doubled in size in 1967. Others say it was in 1979, when the Russians humbled the NHL All-Stars over a three-game series. Others say it was when Bobby Hull and Frank Mahovlich invented rocket-power slapshots in the Fifties. Others say it came in 1943-44, when the center red line was painted on the ice, leading to shorter passes and faster skating.

Here's a vote for 1940, when a guy named Frank Zambooni rigged up a truck that drove on the ice and melted the top layer. Suddenly, players had good ice for three periods, and rapid improvements in fitness were possible.

Please turn to Page 4



photos by DAN DEAN/staff photographer



The standing room crowd (above) at Joe Louis is gets to see all the action — but only that of the people walking in front of them. Red Wing season ticket holder Vince Silvestro and Erin Murphy are avid Red Wing fans.

### Karlos Barney Holiday Gift Guide



What to get for the culture who has everything:  
A holiday road-kill basket.

## This fan is there for every faceoff

By Tim Smith  
staff writer

When you go to Joe Louis Arena more than 30 times a year to watch Red Wing hockey, which season ticket holders such as myself do, you'd better know all the ins and outs.

And if you're a trendy newcomer to the ice box on the Detroit River, take heed: There's more to attending Wing dings than chanting "Probie" or "Jacques."

The first thing is securing hard-to-come-by-and-very-expensive (most seats between \$16-23) tickets.

Since the team has become competitive, gone are the days of stepping up to the ticket window on game day and buying seats for the lower bowl, the prime area now called the "executive level."

Also gone are most of the tickets, in advance. So you'd better know a season ticket holder (sorry, I go to nearly all the games), a scalper, or find a desperate soul trying to unload an extra seat or two outside the Joe. Then there's those newspaper ads.

Landing tickets is only the beginning of what waits in store for both rookie and veteran fans.

For this veteran, although I still enjoy the sport immensely, going to games has gone from "special occasion" to "routine."

And having a routine is essential. If you want to find a parking spot, grab refreshments and get into your padded red-and-white seat before the puck is dropped.

**RULE NO. 1:** Never get caught in a pre-game traffic jam.

I always chuckle when I bypass chains of crawling cars on various arteries leading to the arena. Of course, many of these folks are jammed en route to the JLA parking garage. It never hurts to plan on getting to the general area no later than 7:15 p.m., 20 minutes before game time.

What I do, as a westsider usually coming in on the Jeffries (I-96) Freeway, is curl left onto the ramp to I-75, then quickly exit near Tiger Stadium, at Rosa Parks Boulevard. Don't merge onto the freeway, though.

Next, I jog up a block or so to



Street Scene reporter Tim Smith attends more than 30 Red Wing games a year and knows the ins and outs of the Joe Louis Arena.

Michigan Avenue, turn left, proceed to Washington Boulevard, make a right, and take that up to the Cobo Hall garage, where a parking slot costs \$3.

If you're arriving from the north suburbs, take I-75 south, to the I-375 bypass, on Jefferson Avenue, then make a right-hand turn and follow all the way to Cobo. Where the road ends is where the parking garage entrance begins.

Existence and downriver residents, you're on your own.

The real fun begins soon after making the long-and-winding walk through the halls of the renovated Cobo, and up the steep JLA stairs. Like I said before, try to get to the games early. A benefit of this is being able to step up to concession stand counters without a hitch. For around three bucks, a large soda and either a hot dog or slice of pizza can be had.

Beer drinkers who arrive early can down some suds and find little resistance in rest rooms.

**THEN ALL:** you have to do is be seated and enjoy the action.

If you are a true hockey fan, you'll stay seated most of the time, unlike those folks who make 12 trips a period.

Please turn to Page 4