



PAUL WALSH • Star Tribune

Garrison Keillor, waiting in line to get his ticket scanned, had a rare Saturday night off so he decided to go watch the Gophers play at Mariucci Arena.

## U hockey fan Keillor pines for the old days

On a week when **Garrison Keillor** was not tethered to hosting "A Prairie Home Companion," the most famous pontificator of all things Minnesotan said he took advantage of the downtime to amble over to Mariucci Arena and take in "the only sports event I really care about."

Keillor, a 1966 University of Minnesota graduate, said Sunday he went online and "scored a good single ticket" and watched his Gophers men's hockey team notch a narrow victory over the Connecticut Huskies.

"I'm an old U hockey fan going back to when I knew [legendary Gophers coach] **John Mariucci**, and I usually work on weekends with 'Prairie Home Companion,' so I can't see games during the regular season," Keillor, whose national radio show was on holiday break, told the Star Tribune.

"It's the only sports event that I really care about, and I've been shut out on account of work. ... I scored a good single ticket online and went: 24th row, right on the red line."

After scanning the Gophers roster, Keillor said, he waxed nostalgic for the days when the Maroon and Gold was dominated by skaters from the Iron Range and neighboring outposts.

"I was sort of surprised to see no Gophers from Eveleth, Virginia, International Falls, Baudette," he said. "It was mostly suburban kids, probably from families who can afford to send them to hockey camp in the summer. ... An era is passing. The old pond-hockey kids are gone, gone, gone."