

SAC Saints aim for a three-peat at the 2026 MacPherson by competing in two hockey tournaments in NH and NY

The St. Andrew's College Saints will be aiming for a three-peat when they host Aurora's longest-running and most prestigious hockey tournament from Friday, January 30 to Sunday, February 1.

The 42nd Annual MacPherson Hockey Tournament held at the La Brier Family Arena on SAC's 126-acre campus in north Aurora will feature eight teams.

Six hail from the United States: Culver Academies (Culver, Indiana), Pittsburgh Penguins Elite 18U (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania), Victory Honda (Plymouth, Michigan), Bishop Kearney Selects (Rochester, New York), Brunswick School Bruins (Greenwich, Connecticut), and Northwood School (Lake Placid, New York). Two Canadian squads round out this international tourney: Greater Ontario Junior Hockey League U18 and SAC.

The Saints, who won the tournament in 2024 and 2025, will start their three-game, round-robin schedule by hosting Victory Honda on Friday, January 30 at 9:30 a.m.

SAC Head Coach David Manning discussed the keys to beating the spirited Michigan squad: "They play on the edge. We'll need to be disciplined and stay with our game. We want to play in the offensive zone. We beat them earlier in the season, but teams have evolved at this point after dozens of games."

After taking on Victory Honda, Coach Manning's crew will take on another familiar foe on Friday at 7 PM.

"Northwood is well-coached and they like to get under our skin. They play a heavy style of hockey and have a physical team."

Coach Manning reflected fondly on his team's annual trips to Northwood which is situated at the Olympic Training Centre in Lake Placid, New York.

"Our families love going there. It's pretty idyllic and picturesque. We get there early before we play Northwood and the players explore the village. The players also take in the history at the Olympic arena through the pictures and plaques. It's amazing to see the images from "The Miracle on Ice" in 1980 and it's surreal that this little village has hosted two Olympic tournaments. The boys appreciate Lake Placid for what it is—a winter sports mecca."

The Saints will compete in Northwood's 46th annual invitational tournament as the team's final warm-up for the MacPherson tourney. SAC will face off against the host school on January 19 after preliminary games with Mount Saint Charles on January 17 and South Kent School on January 18 in Lake Placid.

Prior to the games at the Northwood tourney, the Saints (25-8-1 overall and 5-3-1 in the Prep Hockey Conference) will compete in a tournament on January 9, 10, and 11 in New Hampshire.

Coach Manning, who was on the team bus en route to New England when we spoke, mentioned that the Saints will use the opening game against Frederick Gunn School (Washington, Connecticut) to shake off the cobwebs.

"We'll be coming off the Christmas Break so we'll be getting our feet under us. We've played them in the past. We'll need to keep the game manageable from the start. We've played a lot of close games so far this year so that will be good preparation for us for these tournaments and the playoffs."

The long-time Head Coach expressed his satisfaction with the Saints' results so far in the 2025-26 season. SAC has accrued a .750 winning percentage after 34 games and Coach Manning noted some reasons for his team's success: "We've been able to hang around

in our games so far. We have a more balanced lineup this year and a solid 4-man D. The team has a comfort level with playing close games.?

The Saints' comfort level will be tested further on Saturday, January 31 when they play their third round-robin game of the MacPherson tournament against last year's finalists, the Bishop Kearney Selects, at 11 a.m.

Semifinals for the 2026 MacPherson Tournament will commence on Saturday, January 31 at 6:30 p.m. and the championship Final will take place on Sunday, February 1 at 1:15 p.m.

SAC captured the 41st Annual MacPherson Tournament championship in 2025 with a thrilling 3-2 OT victory over Bishop Kearney.

SAC power forward Alex Carscadden fired the overtime winner, much to the delight of over 1,000 spectators in attendance at the La Brier Family Arena. It was the second consecutive year that the Saints hoisted the MacPherson trophy at centre ice.

By all accounts, SAC's powerhouse squad would be favored to make it a three-peat in 2026.

By Jim Stewart