



## DC Youth Ball Hockey

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### **Why should I play?!**

Ball hockey (also known as street or dek hockey) is just like ice hockey but played in shoes and with an orange ball. Long-played competitively in Europe, ball hockey is exploding in popularity across North America as a fun and less expensive alternative to ice hockey. Ball hockey is a great way for youth to be active, learn hand-eye coordination, and enjoy team sports.

#### **The short version: just tell me what I need to do!**

- [Register your child here](#) (this includes paying for the league and submitting jersey size)
- Save the season dates in your calendar
- Purchase an [annual membership](#) for USA Ball Hockey
- Obtain equipment (stick, helmets, shin pads, and gloves) prior to April 16
- Consider volunteering as a coach, scorekeeper, or more! [Click here to sign up](#)

#### **The long version: tell me more!**

### League Schedule & Logistics

#### **What is the schedule?**

Games are held each Saturday, beginning April 16 and ending June 18. Game times will begin at 9am and will be 1 hour in length. Game times and full season schedule will be published after registration closes.

Additionally each team will have a weekly 1-hour skills and practice timeslot on Thursday evenings. Each practice will be planned in advance by Division Director Mel Makstein, and practices will be run by each team's volunteer coach(es).

#### **Where will games be held? What is the rink like?**

Games will be held at the Rockville Sports Arena (60 Southlawn Ct, Rockville, MD 20850). It is located behind the ice rinks and is the farthest building back in the complex.



After the front desk, walk straight ahead and make a right. You'll see volleyball courts on your left and the hockey rink will be on your right.

The rink is full ball hockey tournament size with rounded boards and netting all around. It was renovated in late 2021. The flooring is a high-quality sport court.

**How many games are guaranteed?**

Each team is guaranteed 7 regular season games, plus playoffs. There are also weekly practices.

**What is the price of the league? What does it include?**

The per player cost is \$175, plus a required 2-month building membership (\$15) and a required USA Ball Hockey membership (\$25). The fee includes 7 guaranteed games plus playoffs, weekly practices, ref and rink fees, team jersey and end-of-season celebration. The league directors have done their best to keep fees to a minimum and are actively working on further partnerships and sponsors to further reduce the costs. If you know of any interested sponsors or partners that would like to support the league, please reach out to us!

**What if my child is unable to attend all of the practices/games?**

That's ok! We understand that you may be traveling or have scheduling conflicts. We encourage you to come to as many practices and games as possible in order to best learn and grow and to support your team.

**What are the COVID safety protocols?**

We encourage all players and staff to be fully vaccinated.

The league will be following CDC and local county guidelines. At this time, masks are optional for players, coaches and spectators.

If a player tests positive, we will notify any close contacts of potential exposure as soon as possible. We ask that all players, spectators and volunteers err on the side of caution and stay home if any COVID symptoms are present or if there has been a potential exposure.

**What is the building entrance fee?**

The Rockville Sports Arena requires an active building membership for all players, coaches, spectators, volunteers... everyone!. Various levels of building membership are available, and more information on how to purchase the membership will be shared after registration.



### **What are the age groups for the league?**

All players ages 5-18 are welcome. Each age division will be determined based on registrations, but we anticipate the age brackets will be 5-8, 9-13 and 14-18.

### **What is a USA Ball Hockey membership?**

A one-time annual [USA Ball Hockey membership](#) (\$25) is required to play. This membership includes our league [insurances](#) and you can read more about membership benefits [here](#).

### **How will the league handle communications?**

Our league registration software is called SquadFusion, and every parent will create an account during the registration process. Your SquadFusion account will be where you access your child's team schedule, weekly roll call, team chat, and more. Coaches and league staff will use SquadFusion to communicate to all players/parents regarding any and all league information.

### **What do you actually mean by “all skill levels”? What is the long-term vision for the league?**

If your child is brand new to the sport, he/she is welcome to join! If your child has previously played ball hockey or ice hockey, he/she is also invited! We will do our best to ensure that teams have competitive balance.

We will offer at least two (2) youth league seasons per year (Spring and Fall). Currently, there will be one division per age group, but as the league grows, we will continue to evaluate skill levels and offer additional divisions or seasons as needed.

We will also continue to offer free skills clinics throughout the calendar year, which is the perfect opportunity to invite a friend to try it out!

## **Ball Hockey Equipment & Rules**

### **What is ball hockey? How does it differ from ice or other types of hockey?**

Ball hockey is essentially the same as ice hockey but is played with an orange ball instead of a puck, and is played on foot (running) rather than on skates (skating). Additionally less protective equipment is needed. A few rules, such as a floating blue line, may differ from typical ice hockey rules.

### **What are the league rules?**



Our younger age groups will have modified rules, where the primary purpose is to have fun and gain new skills. While general ball hockey rules will be taught, they will not be strictly enforced.

For our older age groups, the league will follow the [USA Ball Hockey Official Rule Book](#). One rule unique to ball hockey is summarized as follows:

A Floating “Blue” Line will be in effect. Once the attacking team legally crosses the opponent’s blue line with the ball, the blue line is eliminated, and the attacking zone is now the area from the center line in.

### **What are the league equipment requirements?**

The league requires helmets, shin pads, and gloves. The helmet must have a chin strap. Full cages are recommended, but not required. Soccer shin pads are ok. If you’re interested in purchasing ball hockey specific ones, we are happy to send more information your way. For footwear, any athletic shoes will work on the sport court (tennis, volleyball, basketball, running, etc.).

### **What are the uniforms?**

Players will be provided a team jersey, and jerseys must be worn for all games. Players may wear any shorts.

## **Meet Our Staff**

### **Who are the league directors for DC Youth Ball Hockey?**

Chris Thorp is the Commissioner of DC Hockey Leagues, and Mel Makstein is the Youth Division Director.

Chris grew up in British Columbia, Canada and played recreational ice hockey as a kid and through university. When he moved to DC in 2013, he began playing in DC Hockey Leagues (DCHL), and became Commissioner of DCHL in 2020. He has also served as the Assistant General Manager for the 2020 USA Women’s master teams, and was the previous coach of the First Ladies, a local women’s ball hockey team. He and his wife Brittany have a one-year-old son named Jacob.

Mel Makstein has been playing ball hockey in DCHL since 2013. Typically a goaltender, she has recently made the switch to playing wing. She comes from an ice hockey background and goaltended for the Penn State Lady Icers from 2004-2008. She coaches soccer, ice hockey, and ball hockey. Kids are naturally drawn to her nurturing and high energy personality. She has three young children and loves to use them as guinea pigs to



develop new drills and obstacle courses. Mel's coaching style puts an emphasis on personal development rather than peer competition. She encourages each athlete to be their own biggest fan and loves to hear young athletes progress from "I don't know if I can..." to "I want to try!"

Both Chris and Mel are passionate about bringing ball hockey into the youth community. Their goals for the region focus on growing the game, especially for youth and women. Please don't hesitate to reach out to them directly if you have any ideas or questions !

## **How to Get Involved & Other Information**

### **Do you have volunteer opportunities for parents/adults?**

Yes! We need volunteers for team coaches, referees, scorekeepers, and just general help! If you would like to volunteer, please [fill out this form](#) and thank you in advance!

### **Where can I follow on social media / who should I tag?**

Follow our [Facebook page](#) and [Instagram page](#) to stay up-to-date on all the latest happenings!