

NOVEMBER
2020

USABH MAGAZINE

INSIDE

TURN BACK TIME

The Lynn Seahawks

HOCKEY IS FOR EVERYBODY

An inside look at the Women's Ball Hockey League and the Challenger League for Players with Exceptionalities

PLUS

Celebrating the 50 Year History of Mylec

EMPowerplay
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COVER STORY

The **EMPowerplay** Project

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT



Season's Greetings to our Ball Hockey Family!

I would like to first extend to everyone our best wishes for a safe, happy and healthy holiday season! (Yes, the holidays are already here!). I hope this finds all of you well. When it comes to USA Ball Hockey, so many developments have taken place.

There are a couple of huge announcements that I am excited to tell you about. The first is that we have officially opened registration for the 2021 calendar year. To some of the old-timers in ball hockey, this is a monumental event. For decades, we have been on a quest to finally find the vehicle to uniting our sport to play under one consistent set of rules, certify our coaches, certify our referees, insure our players and to provide a safe and educational experience for all. That day is finally here. Thousands of hours have been put into this monumental task and I am proud to say that it is now officially here. There has been decades of groundwork laid to get to this point. Credit to that history goes to people like Ricky Laperriere, Jamie Cooke, Chris Housser, Jason Kelly, George Tarantino, JJ Deviney, Mark Madden, George Gortsos and of course Ray LeClerc, the father of this sport. I could continue to name all the people that have helped to put USABH in the position to reach this incredible milestone, but there would be thousands on that list. Congratulations to everyone from the past and present that have made this incredible event happen.

My second announcement pertains to the growth of the sport. We have officially partnered with The EMPowerplay Project. The EMPowerplay Project is an emerging youth sports initiative whose mission is educating, motivating and ultimately empowering kids (and young adults) through the participation of sports. EMPowerplay facilitates the implementation of state-of-the-art ball/dek hockey rinks across the country, ultimately enabling the introduction and growth of ball/dek hockey to millions of kids nationwide. In other words, if you've always wanted to own your own rink and run ball/dek hockey leagues but have no idea how to get started, EMPowerplay are the people to set you on the path and guide you to make that happen. Believe me, it's way more possible than you think. Check out the press release of our partnership on our website or go to empowerplayproject.com.

Enjoy the second edition of the USABH Magazine!

Best wishes,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Banks". The signature is fluid and cursive.

Chris Banks
President
cbanks@usaballhockey.com



EMPOWERPLAY

By: Craig Stanton

**USABH & EMP PARTNERSHIP
AIMS TO GROW HOCKEY**

USA Ball Hockey is firmly setting their sights on the future of the sport and committed to growing the game on the domestic (and global) sports stage. Along with new leagues and a comprehensive new registration format, a long term vision is being implemented to grow the sport.

As part of USA Ball Hockey's (USABH) overall expansion growth planning they have joined forces with the emerging youth sports initiative, The EMPOWERPLAY Project (EMP), to dramatically expand the landscape of Ball/DEK hockey in the United States. The strategic partnership, known as The EMP/USABH Alliance, will escalate USABH's efforts to support communities by organizing programs that develop players, coaches, officials, and facilities with the goal of competing at the highest level in world competition.

The objective of the strategic partnership is multifold but will initially focus on growing awareness and participation of Ball/DEK hockey in conjunction with developing a network of standardized, state-of-the-art, cost-effective, sanctioned rink destinations throughout the country.

USABH is endorsing EMP rinks and its ideology to all existing teams and leagues as well as all future USABH affiliate franchises and teams. EMP, in addition to including and promoting USABH to EMP rink development partners in



need of programming support as well as a one-stop resource for registration and coaching, bring a wealth of experience and execution in branding, marketing, strategic planning and corporate sponsorships to the partnership.

“The EMP/USABH Alliance will exponentially help us raise the bar and grow ball hockey in America,” said Chris Banks, President USABH. “Their passion resonated with our leadership and along with setting a rink standard for all levels of USABH participants, we will greatly benefit from their expertise in branding, marketing communications and development.”

What is EMPowerplay

EMPowerplay is an emerging Youth Sports initiative, who through various project partners and philanthropic partnerships, facilitates the implementation of state of the art multi-sports rinks across the country – these projects are made possible through the generous donations of both private donors, EMP, as well as the many initiative collaborators who graciously donate land, resources and time.

EMP was founded by established entrepreneur Kelly K, (President/ CEO, kcz cb2o), an influential branding, creative and business development individualist with comprehensive know-how and award-winning initiatives across a myriad of environments including media, music, entertainment, sports, social and consumer products. A few years later Kelly connected with the like-minded Craig Stanton, a highly respected, visionary, strategic communications executive, whose background is working with Fortune 50 companies and sports luminaries on landmark global product launches, initiatives and media campaigns. Craig helped build the Ice Hockey In Harlem charity for over 30 years and sits on their Board of Directors.

Their ideology is based on the facts that the Youth Sports Industry is broken and millions upon millions of kids are getting left out of the programming, or simply cannot afford to take part. EMP’s sole mission is educating, motivating and ultimately empowering kids through the participation of sports and for the EMP/USABH Alliance, DEK/Ball Hockey is at the core of that initiative.

“The EMP/USABH Alliance will exponentially help us raise the bar and grow ball hockey in America”

- Chris Banks, USABH President

“Our goals of putting a hockey stick in every kid’s hands and helping to nurture inclusivity within the game and youth sports in general aligns well with USABH” said Kelly K, Founder and CEO of EMPowerplay. “We are thrilled to be teaming up with USA Ball Hockey and embarking on this journey together”.

EMP’s rink formula is Repurpose + Reuse

= Community Goodwill & Unrecognized Revenue. Real and sustainable growth exists for the countless older or unused rinks, tennis parks, shopping centers/ strip malls



and baseball parks throughout the Nation and North America. Within the current marketplace there are countless unrecognized revenue streams waiting to be captured, by simply repurposing under-utilized land, parking lots, square footage, etc.

The DNA of an EMP rink is multipurpose and modular by design, making for a cost-effective asset investment for any public and or public-private project. A simple transition that not only creates much-needed 365 sports and recreation solutions but impactfully helps to build vital community goodwill through an initiative like this. Though some timelines

vary, average projects run 10-12 weeks in duration - from green light to completion.

USABH/EMP Alliance

The USABH/EMP alliance came together for a myriad of reasons: both USABH and EMP are intrinsically involved in developing hockey and youth sports throughout North America and each are committed to both the growth (of the sport) at the local level as well as the development of the overall program on an international scale.

There is much in the way of symmetry between USABH and EMP,, but most importantly, the collective mission for inclusivity and introduction (to hockey/youth sports/the EMP incubator for related technology for those that cannot play) --- It's all about access. Create it for those either unaware it exists or no means to get it.

THE EMP/USABH alliance will soon be launching "Grow The Game Day" – a nationally sponsored series specifically created as a nationwide/touring event that 'introduces' the sport as well as the collective mission/ideology, EVERYWHERE – including intrinsic and extremely important tertiary/secondary markets. In fact these markets are where EMPowerplay sees itself building the majority of its facilities around the country.

While rink implementation is seeing significant growth in some bigger cities as well, the smaller markets will make up the bigger part of the story and this is where USABH membership thrives.

EMP project partners have identified a number of additional sites throughout the U.S. where these multi-sport rinks will be constructed. Plans are in motion to launch 30 rinks throughout the states of Washington, North Carolina, Texas and Arizona and more during the next 3 years alone, including the twin rink EMP/USABH ALLIANCE Destination in Southern California, scheduled to open in 2021. EMPowerplay continues its regular and ongoing discussions with NHL teams around the country as the initiative's footprint continues to flourish across the U.S. and Canada.

With EMPowerplay's encompassing formula, cities, townships and private facilities throughout the Nation can now meet the demands of the populous for their sports needs while introducing the greatest sport on earth to the millions of people who for whatever reason, never had the opportunity before.

For EMPowerplay and its project partners this isn't about creating the next superstars of DEK or ice Hockey - on the contrary, it's all about helping nurture the next wave of character-driven citizens and potential future leaders.



NATIONAL BALL HOCKEY LEAGUE

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LIGHTNING MADE AND THUNDER BALL

By: Ian Gordon



The Stanley Cup Champion Tampa Bay Lightning are a prime example to the idea that hockey knows no boundaries. Though Tampa Bay might not freeze into an outdoor rink in the not so chilly Tampa winters, the Lightning are still finding ways to share their love for this wonderful game with their community. Through their Lightning Made hockey program, the current NHL Champions have stretched their endeavors into every nook and cranny of the world of hockey, as exemplified by their Equip the Thunder Ball Hockey Program.



The Lightning Made Equip the Thunder Ball Hockey program, led by Josh Dreith, strives to grow the game of ball hockey by providing schools and community centers with a free program to teach and spread the game across Tampa and the surrounding area. For the Equip the Thunder program, the Lightning Street Team visits Elementary and Middle Schools in the Tampa area to take over the P.E. classes for the day.

As a part of their school visits, Lightning Made staff, through the help of many Tampa Bay Lightning alumni, including Jassen Cullimore and Matt Garon, run clinics where they teach the students the fundamentals of ball hockey, facilitate their learning and practice of specific



skills like stick handling, passing, and shooting. At each clinic, the coaches break the kids down into groups and rotate them through a handful of skill stations to learn and practice each skill before putting it all together in a full scrimmage.

In addition to working with public, private and charter schools, Lightning Made's Street Team also visits RCMA in Wimauma, FL. The Redlands Christian Migrant Association is a non-profit, voluntary organization, which focuses on the well-being and care of impoverished immigrant children all throughout the state of Florida. Providing high-quality childcare and early education for children of migrant farm workers and other rural, low-income families.

As a parting gift to each group they visit, the team leaves each student their very own hockey stick and a ball, so they can practice and play to their heart's desire. In the last 5 years the program has visited 850 schools and given out 180,000 balls and sticks.

Through their outreach, the Equip the Thunder Program has done their part to help spread and grow the game of ball hockey beyond their school takeovers by facilitating the start of after school leagues, intramural programs for kids, and even offering tournaments. They have started an all-girls charter school league as well as 4 additional leagues in different counties, some of which feature up to 30 teams or more. Additionally, they are always running additional clinics outside school visits for programs like the Girl Scouts, JCC and other community organizations.

The tournaments run by Equip the Thunder occur approximately 5 times per year and feature teams from around the area that are involved with the organization through many of their leagues or school visits, as well as local independent teams. Though they are only at an introductory level, there are plans to increase the level of competition in the future.

In addition to all of the programming, leagues and tournaments put on by Lightning Made, they have also committed to help place 10 outdoor ball hockey rinks across the Tampa area in order to give their students and other players a place they can go play on their own and have completed 6 of them to date.

For more information about Lightning Made, Equip the Thunder, or any other hockey programs from the Tampa Bay Lightning Organization, please contact Josh Dreith at: jdreith@viniksportsgroup.com or visit their website at: <https://www.lightningmadehockey.com/page/show/5038893-ball-street-hockey>



LADIES' NIGHT

By: Jennifer Free

MURRYSVILLE WOMEN'S LEAGUE

Just outside of Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania every Thursday evening, carloads of women roll into the parking lot of the Murrysville SportsZone for a night of ball hockey. For once though, they aren't there to cheer on their kids and husbands; they are there as players of the only all-women ball hockey league in the Pittsburgh area.

The league was organized by hockey mom and long-time Pittsburgh Penguins fan, Jen Free. Free recognized the opportunity to fulfill an unmet need for a women's league in the male-dominated sport by reaching out to the local rink where her sons play. "There were limited opportunities for young girls to learn the game when I was growing up. With hockey having such a huge presence in Pittsburgh, that's changed a lot over the years and girls are playing the sport

as early as age four and throughout high school and college. Beyond that, there's not much out there for women, most notably a lack of Learn to Play opportunities for adults, which severely limits the sport's expansion and continues to widen the gender gap."

Free worked with rink officials to figure out the logistics of a new league and went to work building interest from there. She promoted the startup league via social media and gauged interest via local, neighborhood-specific Facebook groups. Interest quickly grew from just a few dozen names scrawled on a notepad to over 150 Facebook group members in just two weeks.

Missy Smith, a 4-year member of the Steel City Bombers, (the only all-women's ball hockey tournament team in Pittsburgh) caught wind of the league and already had a full roster ready to submit when she showed up at the first practice. "I couldn't be more excited for a women's league in Pittsburgh! Women's hockey is something special. I've been playing for just over 6 years now, and the relationships that I've built are ones sure to last a lifetime. The bond that you and your teammates create in an all-women's sport is indescribable. We end up playing for each other, rather than for ourselves, and that's what team sports are all about."

The Murrysville Women's league is a combination of Learn to Play practices with skills and scrimmage sessions combined with a 10-game season. The vast majority of league has little to no playing experience. Nikke Williams of Monroeville, PA hadn't played an organized sport since high school but decided to check out the first open practice. "When I was invited to this group by a fellow hockey mom, I decided to





step out of my comfort zone and take a chance. My first night I was so nervous, but when I walked into the rink, I was greeted with enthusiasm, encouragement, smiles, and reassurance by some fierce, phenomenal, and fun ladies that were feeling exactly how I was feeling. I left that night with a feeling of empowerment of being a part of something that is fun, challenging, and exciting. You don't realize that something is missing from your life until you find something that makes you feel like you just belong."

The Murrysville Women's Ball Hockey League opened up its inaugural season at the beginning of September with 6 teams comprised of 84 women. Their goal is to continue to grow and to double their roster numbers within the first year. "We've received tremendous amounts of support from the ball hockey community in Pittsburgh and across the United States and are excited to watch the league grow and participate in a truly awesome sport."

Free's advice to anyone looking to start a women's ball hockey league in their area is simple. "Don't overthink it.

Just go for it. You don't need to have all the answers at first. You'll figure them out along the way. If you are enthusiastic about ball hockey, then that is all you need. Well, that and a hockey stick and an orange ball."

"I couldn't be more excited for a women's league in Pittsburgh! Women's hockey is something special...the relationships that I've built are ones sure to last a lifetime."

**- Missy Smith,
Steel City Bombers**



TURN BACK THE TIME

By: Dan Coldwell

LYNN SEAHAWKS

Hockeytown.

To most hockey fans, "Hockeytown" is associated with the Detroit Red Wings. However, tucked into the eastern part of Massachusetts in the town of Saugus, "Hockeytown" is known as one of the oldest dek hockey facilities in the United States.

Having produced countless star players in it's almost 50 years of existence, "Hockeytown" also produced one of the greatest dek hockey teams in U.S. history... the Lynn Seahawks. For over 20 years, the Seahawks were a powerhouse on the tournament circuit while traveling up and down the east coast and Canada.

But to get to know the Seahawks, you have to start with the name that is synonymous with this proud franchise... the captain and team architect, Dan Broderick. Dan took

over the team after it's first year of existence in 1980 and saw his vision of dek hockey come to life.

"They were universally admired. All of that trickled down from Dan Broderick. Dan selected certain types of players for the team. He had a vision for what he wanted them to be. They had a lot of class and were the team everyone wanted to play for. They became the destination team," says former Seahawks coach and Pittsburgh hockey icon Mark Madden.

Madden coached the team briefly from 1990-1992, winning 2 Can-Ams in his tenure. "They were fluid, fast and talented. The Seahawks never embarrassed themselves. They were very honorable. They played the game the right way."

Broderick was a star defenseman for the Seahawks during their entire run. Blessed with vision, hands, and

"They had a lot of class and were the team everyone wanted to play for. They became the destination team"
- Mark Madden

an elite hockey IQ... Broderick won numerous MVD and MVP awards, routinely finishing in the tournament Top 10 in scoring while manning the blue line.

Broderick built a team that had no weaknesses.

"We had great goaltending in Kevin Willis. We built the team from the goal out. We had a really good defense.





We had 3 lines that could score. A lot of teams might have that 1 big line, but we had 3 super lines that could really score. We also stayed together. Sometimes teams lose a tournament, and they would start replacing guys... we didn't do that. We had the same guys for a number of years. That was our identity."

"These guys were really good," says forward Bert Dissinger. "It was just so much fun playing with them. It was great. We were there to win. We won a lot. We probably have as many finals appearances as championships, but really not many 3rd or 4th place finishes."

From 1979 to 1991, the Seahawks made every Can-Am final, 13 straight to be exact, winning 6 of them. Their resume also includes tournament wins in the Leominster Nationals & International as well as winning in Long Island and Lancaster. "We didn't have any goons," Dissinger said. "We never got into any confrontations with anyone. I think we had the best goalie and defensemen. We could also score... in 1986 we averaged 8 goals a game in tournament play."

"I always felt the cornerstone of the Seahawks was defense and goaltending.



Frank McNulty scored so many big goals for them, he was absolutely devastating," Madden recalls. As competitive and tough as they come, McNulty was a fixture on offense for the Seahawks. "During the late 80's we had a really good run. At one point we won 4 tournaments in a row. That was sandwiched in between losing 2 finals to the Rams. At one point we made like 8 finals," said McNulty.

The Leominster Rams are arguably the most storied team in our sport and had one of the best players to ever walk on a dek... Chris Housser. The story of the Lynn Seahawks is also woven into the history of the

"It was just so much fun playing with them. It was great. We were there to win. We won a lot."

- Bert Dissinger

Leominster Rams. "The Rams were our rival," said Broderick. "They were "the" team. We played in a lot of International finals against them. We played a lot against Coram (Long Island), who were an excellent team, and the Long Island Dreamers, who were excellent too. But for us, the Rams were the major guys. They won more, but a lot of the games were very low scoring. There were 3-4 tournaments in a row when there wasn't even a penalty between the 2 teams. There was no animosity, not at all. We wanted to win. They wanted to win. But we became so close over the years... that when the Rams needed guys we would fill in and vice versa."

Dissinger agrees. "The Rams were always our nemesis. Most of the time the games were close. They won more than we did in Leominster. Those games were fast paced. I can't remember one time where we got into a fight."

"We were right behind them in tournaments won," Broderick added. "If it wasn't for them, we would be the team historically that most people talk about. Even to this day, our

13 Can-Am finals is still a record in Leominster. We may have the 2nd most tournament wins in Leominster. The Americans are getting there. I think we were in around 27 total tournament finals in Leominster.”

“Anytime you played the Rams you knew it was going to be a tough game,” said McNulty.

Through a historical lens, the Seahawks are arguably the 2nd best U.S. tournament team of all-time. They were outstanding at every position; anchored by star goaltenders Kevin Willis and Paul Ressel, stud defensemen in Broderick & Kenny Sowers, and a lethal offense full of playmakers and snipers that included Mike Reddy, Billy & Jimmy Connell, Bobby Taylor, Joe Shannon and McNulty.

“We tried to be as classy as we could be, win or lose,” said Broderick. “We had a reputation for

...to get to know the Seahawks, you have to start with the name that is synonymous with this proud franchise... the captain and team architect, Dan Broderick.

being a very good, clean team. For a team that could play with anyone and we were a big team back then, but our identity was we played hard. Our skill level was that we were a playmaking team. We were not a dump and run team. There were a lot of tournaments where we maybe had 20-25 pts spread across the 3 lines.”

History should look back at the Seahawks and admire both their accomplishments,

longevity, and how they played the game. They were what teams should strive to be and that started with the man who put the pieces together.

“This was Dan’s team,” Madden said. “Dan is the Seahawks. He is one of the greatest defensemen of all-time. He lived and died with them... they were his pride and joy. The rest of us played for Dan.”



NOTABLE MEMBERS OF THE SEAHAWKS DURING THEIR EXISTENCE

Kenny Sowers	Paul Ressel	Mark Madden
Billy Connell	John Broderick	Dave Dorsey
Dave Crawford	Kevin Broderick	Ted Long
Jon Pickard	Dave Costa	Drew Phillips
Larry Russell	Ray Dow	Rob Collins
Joe Shannon	Chris Bush	Steve Silveira
Bobby Taylor	Matty Iannello	Dave Raymond
Larry Blauvelt	Sandro Grutti	Gary Leavitt
Dave Almeida	Steve Witkus	Mark Aston
Jimmy Connell	Mike Reddy	Doug Sedille
Frank McNulty Sr.	Manny Nunes	Chris Molinari
Kevin McNulty	Jeremy Kelly	Rob Valley
Frank McNulty Jr.	Brian Capodilupo	Jeff Brine
Dan Broderick	Kevin Abcunas	Randy Smith
Kevin Willis	Billy Abcunas	Joe Lentini
Paul White	John Lundrigan	John Cravota
Ron Demers	Steve Seymour	Shawn McGee
Joel Spina	Mike Travassos	John Zermani
Bert Dissinger	Dave Forbes	J.R. Liwanag

If you have never seen the Lynn Seahawks play, you can click the link below to check out the “virtual” version of them in an EA Sports NHL20 simulation!

[Lynn Seahawks vs Lowell Raiders](#)
[Montreal Red Lite vs Lynn Seahawks](#)

DUMP AND CHASE... YOUR DREAMS

By: Steve Scian and Cory Herschk

**THE GLOUCESTER TOWNSHIP
CHALLENGER HOCKEY LEAGUE**

Take a cruise and head fifteen minutes South of Philadelphia, a mile off of Route 42, and you'll be sure to find hundreds of hockey players in a small town called Gloucester Township, New Jersey. The GTHA Lakeland hockey rink is a hockey traffic jam night in and night out, like many of the rinks are in South Jersey. Most people know that the Gloucester Township Hockey Alliance is one of the largest youth hockey programs in the state of New Jersey. Those outside of GTHA have yet to learn about The Challenger Hockey League; a sweet spot that separates this organization from rest. The Challenger Hockey League is a safe and structured league, designed to address and adapt the sport of ball hockey to players with special needs. Since it's inaugural season in 2017, volunteers and organizers have been putting smiles on the faces of players whose ages range from 4 to 18. Open to both boys and girls, The Challenger Hockey League sees players travel from various towns with a wide range of disabilities and exceptionalities. With hopes of growing

larger by the year, the Gaffney family are humbled and blessed to see the number of participants doubling by the season.

Brian and Melissa Gaffney of GTHA, formed the league inspired by their own family dynamic. It all began with the thought that their son Drew, who is Autistic, would never have a chance to play hockey. The issue at hand; there wasn't a program that Drew felt comfortable playing in, allowing him to be himself. After brainstorming ideas, mapping out a plan, and recruiting volunteers, The Challenger Hockey League was built. It grants kids the opportunity to play the great game of hockey in a safe environment despite their exceptionality. "Our league typically runs from October through the end of December," says Melissa. "We meet once a week on Saturdays, for 10 weeks, for an hour and a half. Flyers go out by the end of August to local schools, doctors' offices and social media with all pertinent information listed," she explained.

A typical day starts off by making sure all equipment is on safely and securely. Then, players move into warm-ups, consisting of jumping jacks, stretching and other various movement activities. From there, they break off into small group stations that focus on mostly fine motor skills, team and confidence building, as well as communication skills. At the end of practice, players put it all together and play a small game of hockey! "Our Challenger League kids end the day with a high-five tunnel. Nothing could be better at that moment!" says Melissa. Each player in the league has a "buddy," or a volunteer instructor from the community. The Gaffney's are more than grateful for



having enough support allowing for 1-on-1 instruction. The “Buddy” is often found to be a local player from the GTHA organization, who wants to give back to the community, and put a smile on new friend’s face.

The rewards are more intrinsic than tangible. “We have our kids who didn’t know how to hold a stick at the start, able to take slap shots by the end of our 10-week session,” the Gaffney’s described. They continued, “Some victories are just getting a child with sensory issues to wear their full equipment! The smiles, friendships and even just the break mom and dad get for an hour or so are the things we love to see.” Many stories told involve how proud the kids are to tell people they play hockey. “I’ve had a mom tell me one of her son’s wrote an essay for college about our league, how it changed him as a person and how great it was for him to work with special needs kids,” Melissa shared. Perhaps the most heartwarming story is told about the likeable boy who witnessed one of the players being picked on at his school and immediately put an end to the bullying. Melissa continued, “These are the little things that make my heart full. Our players are learning from their ‘typical’ peers, and the volunteer mentors are learning something more precious than they know. Kindness and compassion. If nothing else, this is why we do it.”

Brain and Melissa became the 1st recipients of the GTHA President’s Award. An Award created to recognize the extra efforts and special contributions of someone in the organization who should be acknowledged and celebrated for their efforts. The Gaffney’s will tell you that a league such as The CHL certainly relies on the



community for donations, volunteerism and support. While players typically purchase their own gear, donations of equipment are welcome and very common, especially from former players, which allows the



underprivileged a chance to get into the game at an affordable price. Even the biggest of rivals are captured coming together to paint the portrait of kindness in South Jersey. Perhaps this is illustrated best by the Bellmawr Hockey Association, who donated \$500 and over 20 pairs of leg pads to the GTHA Challenger League last year.

USA Ball Hockey representatives have made their presence known in the Challenger League as well. Coach John Gallen (U16 Boys’ National Team), General Manager Nick Vaccaro (U16 Boys’ National Team) and General Manager Mike Malloy (U18 Boys’ National Team), have volunteered countless hours with this great program. “My favorite part of the Challenger League is that it further strengthens the fact that Ball

Hockey is a game that anyone can play and enjoy,” Malloy told us. He continued, “It has given us the opportunity to reach even more children and show the vast diversity and inclusion that makes our sport so great.” Additionally, local USA teammates from the U16, U18 and U20 boys’ and girls’ national teams can be found providing instruction and motivating players to dream big. Joe “JoJo” Melillo (U18 Boys’ National Team) enjoys being a role model for those in the program. “I love it. Seeing the smiles on their faces as they get to play hockey without the felling that they are at a disadvantage is extremely gratifying. It’s a different level, and it’s awesome,” says Melillo.

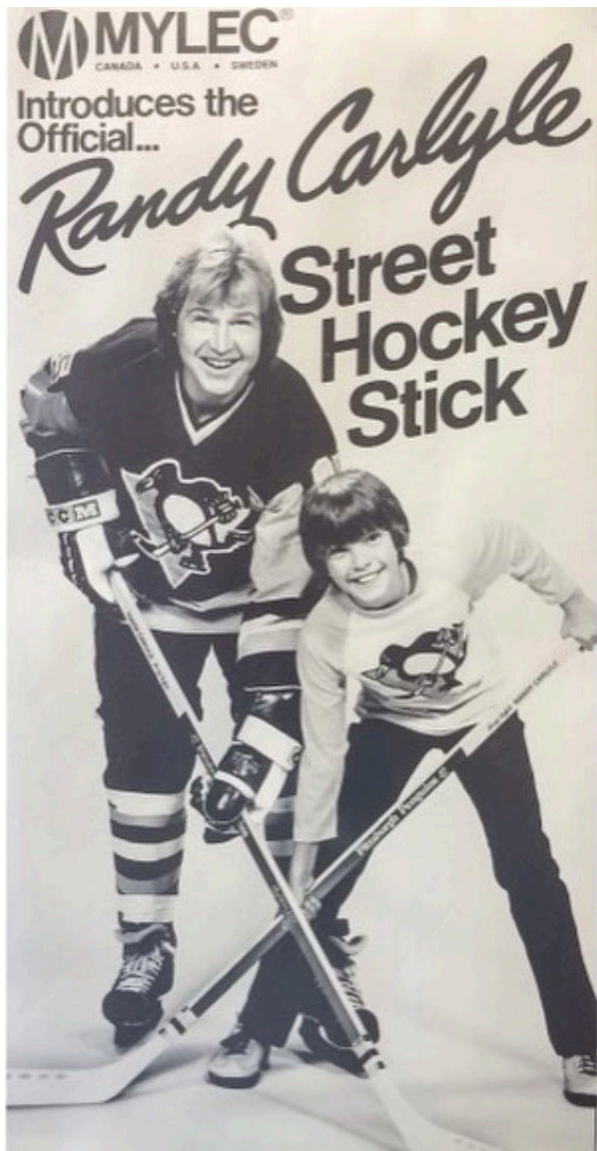
The Challenger League is certainly on the rise. With the love, passion and the support it has received from the community, it’s certainly expected to grow. “I think one of the most important things we can do is to give back,” says GM Malloy. “One of my favorite memories was when Brian had members of our USA Junior Ball Hockey teams come to help at their session before last Christmas. It gave them a chance to give back a little to the game that has given so much to them,” he reminisced. The Challenger League has not only given more children a chance to play, but it has also given more people an opportunity to strengthen the bond of the community and has made the Ball Hockey circle that much bigger. Keep rooting on these exceptional hockey players as they shoot for the stars, the net, and their future.

For more information on the league, email gtchallenger@outlook.com.

MYLEC

By: Carl Ellis

**PIONEER OF BALL HOCKEY AND
CELEBRATING 50 YEARS OF BUSINESS**



When I was a kid, my grandmother would take me to the local sporting goods store in Gloucester, Massachusetts. I would walk into the store and head directly to the hockey equipment. I knew exactly what I was getting. I remember walking quickly, with excitement and purpose. At the end of the aisle, I saw the prize I had come for. A black street hockey lefty blade with holes at the top and a Mylec decal. Perfect!

Next it was on to the street hockey balls. There they were in three separate boxes, orange, pink, and yellow. I grabbed the yellow ball and on this occasion my grandmother allowed me to get the orange one as well. What a thrill! A Mylec blade and two Mylec street hockey balls! I'd get back to her house, replace my previous Mylec blade, which had been used so much that it now looked like a thin piece of plastic. I'd get those street hockey balls and start playing as if I was in the NHL.

When it comes to street hockey equipment the gold standard is Mylec. Many of us can remember those plastic blades, the multicolored street hockey balls designed for different temperatures, and of course the equipment: gloves, goalie pads, helmets, you name they have it. For 50 years now, Mylec has been providing the world of ball, street, and dek hockey with the equipment to play the game we all love and cherish.

50 years in business is a tremendous milestone and when I think of Mylec, I can't help but think of the term pioneers. Pioneers that helped shape this game. In 1974 a man by the name of Ray Leclerc, the owner of a plastic toy manufacturing company, created a mold of the original street hockey stick and the now famous No bounce ball. To see if his molded blade would work, Mr. Leclerc reached out to the local kids in Winchendon Springs, MA to try out the equipment. One of those kids was a young boy named Ricky Laperriere, who one day would become the owner of Mylec.



"Playing street hockey with Mr. Leclerc was my first introduction to the game. I fell in love with it and I remember asking my parents if I could play ice hockey. Now I still play two times a week and still love the game," said Laperriere. "When I worked at Mylec I learned so much about hard work and I really loved the company that I knew I wanted to spend my career and stay involved with the game of hockey." In 2005, with the support of his wife and son Anthony, Laperriere purchased Mylec and became owner.

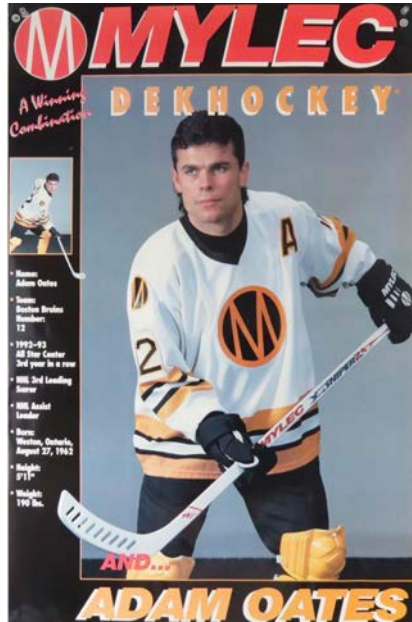
Mylec is far more than just a ball hockey equipment manufacturer. Mylec lives and breathes the game. The overall vision of Mylec is to help grow the game as much as possible and improve their equipment. For many of us, ball hockey has always been easily accessible and to Laperriere that is the key to growing the game. "We need more kids playing. Dek hockey is a sport that anyone can play. It's affordable and doesn't take much to get started. All you need is a stick, ball, some sneakers, and you've got yourself a game. I can't think of a better way to help introduce kids and anyone else to the game of hockey! Not to mention the benefits from social interactions and of course the exercise the game provides."

Mylec's dedication to growing the game is evident. When you visit their facility in Winchendon, which Laperriere and his family built in 2011, there are two dek hockey rinks. The National Dek Hockey Center, is the home of the Mylec Cup, but also the home of their grassroots programs, which run in the spring and fall. Laperriere's son Anthony along with Mike Stanton help run the Mylec Cup, which has become a staple tournament for youth players all over New England and beyond.

Mylec is an essential part of our game. They create the street hockey balls used in our leagues, our tournaments, and at the international level. Mylec has partnerships with the National

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Hockey League, International Ball and Street Hockey Federation (ISBHF), USA Ball Hockey, and proud sponsor of the upcoming National Ball Hockey League (NBHL). "We love supporting the game in any way that we can. We are excited and thrilled to be working with all these organizations that are helping to grow the



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COOL HOCKEY EVENTS HOLIDAY BASH

MENS NOVICE, WOMENS A/B, COED A/B
DEC 4-6 | PHILADELPHIA, PA



COOL HOCKEY EVENTS HOLIDAY BASH

MENS A/B, MENS C/D
DEC 11-13 | PHILADELPHIA, PA



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TEXAS / LOUISIANA NBHL TEAMS
DEC 12 | DALLAS FORT WORTH, TX



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USA NATIONAL TEAM CAMP

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JAN 1-3, 2021 | MT. PLEASANT, PA



SUPER BOWL BYE WEEK INVITATIONAL

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