

## Special Hockey Montgomery Vol. 6

November 15, 2006

Please read the announcement section below. It contains important announcements.

Thank you to John Wagner, Sean Byrd, Betty Levine, Mike Hickey and Carol Hyndman.

John and Sean are Special Hockey dads who went on the ice to help mentor our players. Betty got a few last minute extra mentors to help support our athletes. Mike and Carol went to THE warehouse and got all of the equipment our athletes need to play the game of ice hockey. (No, that wasn't a rummage sale!)

Practice begins at 10:40. Arrive at 10:10

ARC Rockville Ice Arena  
50 Southlawn Court Rockville, MD 20850  
301-294-8101  
(<http://www.rockvilleicearena.com>)

Wear a helmet. Ice is hard. (source/USA Hockey)

Questions? Comments? Announcements? Email me.

Kelly Thackston  
kcthackston@hotmail.com

### I. Announcements

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- B. International tourney in VA
- C. Bake Sale

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### **I. Announcements**

#### A. Parent's Team Meeting after practice Saturday

Steve Berk, Special Hockey Montgomery's lead coordinator, has announced a brief parent's team meeting.

Where: Ice Rink meeting room upstairs

When: 11:45 – 12:30 pm (immediately following practice Sat. Nov. 18)

Why: Discuss upcoming projects, organize, prioritize etc.

We need your help. Hope to see you there.

## B. International Tourney in VA

What: 2007 Special Hockey International Tournament in Arlington, VA,

When: April 18 – April 22, 2007.

Where: Capitals Ice Center, Arlington, VA

Who: Thirty teams

Want more info? A preliminary team handbook is available in pdf format. It is a 4.5 megabyte file. It includes information about preliminary events, opening ceremonies, player's dinner/social event, coaches game, team tours of the Caps practice facility, etc.

There is a link to the handbook at our team web site:

[http://www.usahockey.com/montgomery\\_spe/main\\_site//](http://www.usahockey.com/montgomery_spe/main_site//)

Additionally, you can email Niki Bouvier (nbouvier@verizon.net), our liason to American Special Hockey Association to request a copy via email.

**\*\*Athletes and families will be flying into the Washington area from out of town to participate. We need a tourney volunteer to help us prepare for this event. All athletes must be registered.\*\***

## C. Bake Sale

What: The MYHA PeeWee AA travel hockey team is hosting a bake sale

When: Saturday Nov 18, 2007 from 9am to 6pm.

Where: Ice Rink

Why: Raise money to help defray the costs associated with the tournaments, including an end of the year Canadian-American tourney in Lake Placid, NY.

What: cookies, brownies, goodies and whole pies you can purchase for Thanksgiving

Many of our mentors come from the MYHA teams!

## **II. Athlete of the week: Paddy Byrd**

Paddy Perseveres, Adapts to Take on the Ice

Six year old Paddy Byrd likes to be pulled along by his hockey stick to get momentum. Then he lets go and glides along on his own. The Special Hockey Montgomery athlete was the very first member of the team – in early 2006 it was Paddy and coach David Schwab and two other coaches.

Last Saturday Paddy had his best experience on the ice. "He successfully moved himself around on the rink and was paying attention to the other kids as

they practiced stick handling,” said Sean Byrd, Paddy’s dad. “We can’t wait to see how his skills will continue to develop.”

Paddy has done a ton of work to get to this point. “He started with learning to enter the rink, which was unfamiliar. And tolerating the acoustics,” Sean said. “The noise seemed to overwhelm him at first.”

Then he learned to tolerate the equipment – padding and helmet. He’s currently wearing mittens on the ice, but working on donning fleece gloves at home in preparation for hockey gloves later on.

You’d never know it now, but “Paddy’s first three or four forays onto the ice were very short – maybe five or ten minutes,” said Sean. “He would cry and not be able to ‘help’ his buddy pull him around. He tried to get off the ice.”

After a hard fall one week, Paddy came back the next week and “shuffled his ice skates to help keep his feet under his body as his buddy slowly pulled him around,” Sean said.

His parents, Sean and Teresa, say they’ve noticed other things, aside from confidence and agility on the ice, that Paddy has taken away from ice hockey. “We’ve seen the experience help Paddy deal with the ‘unfamiliar.’ ... Noises and strange places can add stress to an autistic person,” said Sean. “But Paddy is really doing well with so much sensory input.”

Last Saturday Paddy didn’t want to leave the ice. He went to check out the rink after he’d changed.

“To see Paddy go from crying from the cold, the unfamiliar clothes and pads, the confining helmet, the acoustics, the hard unforgiving ice, to actually skating himself around, albeit tentatively, and staying on the ice for 30 minutes and longer is amazing,” said Teresa Byrd. “We are so grateful to the volunteers who’ve made this experience possible for Sean and Paddy.”

“I never thought I’d see my husband playing ice hockey with my son!,” she said. “It’s wonderful.”

There is another person who has been instrumental in helping Paddy make strides on the ice, Kimba Smittnaar, a behavioral therapist who works with both Paddy and his older brother, Liam. Employed by Monocacy Neurodevelopmental Center in Frederick, her services are paid for through the Maryland Autism Waiver Program.

Paddy is a student at Carroll Manor Elementary in Adamstown, MD.

He is enrolled in the Challenges II school, a program for kids with severe communication disorders. He learns many things other first graders are learning about, but has modifications to his school environment and materials to be successful.

He has an older brother, Liam, 8, who has autism and osteoporosis, which prevents him from participating in sports like ice hockey and a younger sister, Guinevere. He and his sister enjoy chasing and jumping on his trampoline. Paddy also likes to do crafts like coloring, building with Lincoln Logs and painting.

### **III. Spotlight: Coach David Schwab**

One of the original coaches of our team, David Schwab, says he has lots of free time. One thing's certain; this 35-year old Capitals fan has tons of energy. He's a hockey player (2 teams) and coach (2-3 teams) likes to golf, watches sports, goes to the gym, enjoys cooking and works full time for the FDA while getting his Masters degree in Information Technology.

He's passionate about hockey and has been since high school. "We started by playing street hockey after school in the fenced in tennis courts where my friends lived," said Schwab. "I immediately took to playing goalie after learning to skate, I borrowed some old goalie equipment from a friend and thus began my commitment to the game of ice hockey."

Schwab, a University of Maryland graduate, played his first year of competitive hockey for a Terrapin club team. He's currently tending goal for the Red Army, a Rockville IcePak league team and the DC Bulldogs, an area team for Hockey North America.

What is the draw? "The game itself is filled with nonstop action, talented athletes," he said. "And the competition aspect of the game is a lot of fun."

A friend of Paddy's dad (see feature story above), Schwab first inquired about Special Hockey for his friend's sons. That's when he learned of some ice time at the Rockville rink that was available for a start up Special Hockey team in Montgomery County. Paddy was joined on the ice by players from the Northern Virginia (NOVA) Special Hockey team. "Coach Bob Banach asked me if I was interested in coaching the new team and I told him that would be great," said Schwab. "Now that the program is growing nicely, we have so many good mentors and a good collection of hockey people that will eventually form a nice coaching/management team for this program."

Schwab sees challenges ahead. "From a coaching standpoint, there are always challenges presented when working with kids at different ages with varying degrees of ability," he said. "In the Special Hockey program, this is taken even further as many of our players are dealing with their own individual challenges."

Although it may be more difficult at first glance, our players are treated no differently than any other youth hockey player.”

He advises parents and players to stick with the hockey program and envisions it bringing families together locally and nationally.

He’s seen significant progress in the team so far. “We have gotten more ice time, increased our numbers of players and mentors and are even on the verge of coming up with a team name and colors,” he said. “I hope to help with the awareness of Special Hockey in the area and to get our players to the point where we are continuing to make progress both on and off the ice.”

#### **IV. Capitals Tickets Free**

Grab them while there here - Capitals tickets! Players and mentors can both request tickets. Send me your requests.

11/30 – 7:00pm (2 tickets)

2/6 – 7:00 pm (9 tickets)

3/27 – 7:00 pm (4 tickets)

4/3 – 7:00 pm (2 tickets)

#### **V. Practice Schedule**

\*\*Note Ice time is 10:40 –meaning a 10:10 arrival time. Please arrive early so players can meet their mentors.

##### Montgomery Special Hockey Schedule (Rockville Ice Arena)

11/18/06	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
12/02/06	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
12/09/06	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
12/16/06	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
01/06/07	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
01/13/07	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
01/20/07	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
01/27/07	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
02/03/07	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
02/10/07	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
02/17/07	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM
02/24/07	Saturday	10:40 AM	11:40 AM

#### **VI. Contacts**

Steve Berk  
stevenb@cuneolaw.com  
Lead coordinator

Niki Bouvier

nbouvier@verizon.net

Liaison to American Special Hockey Association (ASHA) and Montgomery Youth Hockey Association (MYHA). ASHA can help us with coaching, equipment and tournaments. Parent email. USA Hockey registration

Kelly Thackston

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Special Hockey Montgomery newsletter/parent information. USA Hockey registration.

Sutura Bobbo

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Coordinates registration of new and existing skaters, forms etc. USA Hockey registration.

Najma Khan

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Treasurer and fund-raising.

Carol Hyndman

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Equipment and uniforms (yes uniforms) coordinator.

Lynn Weintraub

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Coordinator for our many (and enthusiastic) mentors.

Andrea Golden

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Educates mentors and coordinates our outreach to the autism/special needs community.