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UNH's Sled Hockey Program Gets Financial Boost

N.E. Players Sought for Current Season

By [Sharon Keeler](#)
UNH News Bureau

December 13, 2000

DURHAM, N.H. -- Thanks to the generosity of several area agencies and a New England hockey fan, the University of New Hampshire's Northeast Passage sled hockey program is off to a great start this season.

The program offers recreational and competitive instruction and opportunities for people to play the sport. Sled hockey is a variation of ice hockey for people with lower extremity disabilities. The game is nearly identical to ice hockey, except players sit on sleds attached to skate blades, and two shortened sticks are used for both propelling the sled and shooting the puck.

Helping give the program a financial boost this year is Chet Homer, of Kennebunkport, Maine, who donated \$7,500 to help pay for ice time, as well as a student hockey manager to work with a new competitive team. Susan Rowe, a UNH occupational therapy student, has been chosen for this position.

Homer is a former co-owner of the Portland Pirates ice hockey team, and owner of Shawnee Peak ski area in Maine.

In addition, the Greater Piscataqua Community Foundation contributed \$5,000 to purchase equipment, and the UNH Alumni Association gave another \$1,000.

According to Jill Gravink, UNH assistant professor of recreation management and policy and director of Northeast Passage, the contributions will help take the program to the next level. While Northeast Passage, a program which provides sports and recreation opportunities for individuals with physical disabilities, officially became part of UNH's Department of Recreation Management and Policy this year, it is still responsible for raising most programming costs.

"Hundreds of athletes with disabilities, as well as able-bodied athletes, participate in our programs," says Gravink. "These generous donations allow us to offer

additional ice times for recreational hockey, and move forward with our plan for a competitive team."

Gravink adds that sled hockey is a growing national sport, and "it makes sense that northern New England, with its great hockey tradition, should have its own team."

Two exhibition games are planned this season at the Whittemore Center on the Durham campus to increase public awareness of the sport: Sunday, Jan. 21, after the 3 p.m. UNH-Northeastern women's ice hockey game, and Sunday, Feb. 18, between periods of the 7 p.m. UNH-Boston College men's ice hockey game.

Both disabled and able-bodied athletes interested in recreational or competitive sled hockey are invited to participate in Northeast Passage's program. Ice and practice times are as follows:

- Friday, Dec. 22: Team Practice, Tri-Town Ice Arena, Hooksett, 5:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Jan. 7: Team practice, Salem Ice Arena, Salem, 8:30 p.m.
- Saturday, Jan. 20: Recreation, Whittemore Center, Durham, 8:30 a.m.
- Sunday, Jan. 21: Hockey exhibition game, Whittemore Center, Durham, after the 3 p.m. UNH-Northeastern women's ice hockey game
- Sunday, Feb. 4: Team practice, Jackson's Landing, Durham, 4:30 p.m.
- Sunday, Feb. 18: Hockey exhibition game, Whittemore Center, Durham, between periods of the 7 p.m. UNH-Boston College men's ice hockey game
- Saturday, March 3: Recreation, Jackson's Landing, Durham, 7:30 p.m.
- Friday, March 16: Team practice, Jackson's Landing, Durham, 7:30 p.m.
- Saturday, April 7: Recreation, Dover Ice Arena, Dover, 8 a.m.

For more information, contact Tom Carr at Northeast Passage at 603-862-0070.

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