WEST VANCOUVER FIELD HOCKEY CLUB

Home of North Shore Field Hockey

Welcome to Spring League!

Spring League starts soon! We would like to take this opportunity to thank you for choosing the West Vancouver Field Hockey Club. We are committed to delivering quality sport programs that teach skills in a safe and supportive environment - and we can't wait to get started this Spring!
Inside this Welcome Newsletter you will find lots of useful tips, tricks and reminders to help your season go smoothly. *Have a great season!*

Page 2 - *Spring League, what's it all about?*
Page 3 - *Spring League calendar*
Page 4 - *7 tips for a parenting win*
Page 5 - *Code of Conduct*
Page 6 - *What do I need for Spring League?*
- *Choosing a field hockey stick*
Page 7 - *Play safe*
Page 8 - *Q & A*
Page 9 - *Follow us this Spring League*
- *Staff contacts*

Spring League - so what's it all about?

Our focus for Spring League is skills development and physical activity within a fun and social environment. Spring League is about discovering the joy of playing field hockey just for the joy of playing! These are our priorities:

- **Progressive skills development** within a supportive environment
- **Teaching Values** such as teamwork, fairness and learning to work together. We create teams in a non-tryout system so players can remain with the same team from U6 to U18, strengthening their sense of belonging and teamwork every year
- **Providing links to our other programs** for those players interested in further developing their skills and playing more competitively

We align our Spring League priorities with the principles of "Sport for life", to encourage physical activity and long-term athlete development. For more information, check out the Sport for Life page on our website at www.wvfhc.com.

In previous years, we surveyed players, parents and coaches to find out what words came to mind when they thought of Spring League. Below is a summary of the responses – "Fun" was the top response and mentioned by almost every participant. These responses confirm our philosophy – we believe that Spring League should be a fun environment where playing with friends can be enjoyed year after year.

Important Info

Dates to Remember!
April 1– Practices start for U9 - U18 age groups. Weekend sessions run April 5 tbc till June 21 tbc. No weekend games on the Easter and May long weekends (April 19-20 May 17-18)
April 11– U7 - U8 Boys & Girls sessions start and end June 20 . No session April 18 and May 16
April 14– U6 Boys & Girls sessions start and end June 16. No session April 21 and May 19
Photo nights May tbc

What else is going on during Spring League?

U13, U15 & U18 – High Performance program – weekly skills development led by professional club coaches. For more information check out "High Performance" on wvfhc.com
Become a Junior Coach or Umpire - If you are 13 years of age or older, why not join us? Mandatory pre-season clinics are being held in March for both positions. For more information check out "Coaching" or "Umpiring" on wvfhc.com

Player and field Protocols

- **Do not come to the field if you are feeling unwell.**
- **Warm up off the field and enter the field only at the beginning of your scheduled time**
- **Exit the field promptly at the end of your scheduled time**
- **Respect other players, coaches, managers, officials**

SportsEngine App

We use the free SE App for all team communications in Spring League. Any user issues please refer to our help page in Resources/ registration support at www.wvfhc.com

7 tips for a parenting win this Spring League

1.Get Involved - children notice when their parents support what they do and are involved with them. Help your team's volunteer coaches and managers by stepping up to help with the safety officer role. If you are not sure what this is, ask your manager.

2.Ask your child what they enjoy or want to get out of Spring League – it might be starting a new sport, learning a new skill, trying a different position or having fun with their friends outside. Whatever it is, keep this in mind during the season. A negative sport experience can arise when a parent has a different motive for seeing their child in sport than that of their child. What is most important to your child should be most important to you

3.Watch your etiquette – Let the coach lead the sessions, and don't overwhelm your child by adding your instructions. It can confuse players to hear someone other than the coach and your words may counter the coaches' strategy and tactics, undermining team performance

4.Model respect for officials and coaches - If you disagree with an official's call, honour the game and stay silent. Our Spring League umpires are often children themselves, they are learning how to umpire. After a session, thank the officials for doing a difficult job and thank the coaches for their commitment and effort. Encourage your child to do the same

5. Avoid the car ride home talk - let your child set the terms for post-session conversations. Forcing a conversation soon after a competition, when emotions may still run high, is often less successful than waiting until your children indicate they are ready to talk. Ask questions such as *"What did you learn today?"* or *"What was the most fun today?"* Be proud of their effort, and steer clear of the *"you did great, but..."* conversation. You are the number one source of emotional support for your children in sport - this should be unconditional and not dependent on how well you think your child may be playing or competing

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6. Recognize your coaches' commitment - Your child's coaches have made a commitment that involves many hours of preparation beyond the time spent at sessions. Respect their commitment and imagine yourself in their place before approaching them to discuss any issues you may perceive. Offer to help the coaches however you can. This may be anything from helping out at practice, taking players to the bathroom, collecting or cleaning equipment, or taking attendance

7. Don't put your child in the middle - don't share any disagreement with the coaches' decisions or actions with your child. If your child has an issue with the coach and can maturely articulate it, encourage your child to approach the coach directly, Otherwise, if you disapprove of how the coach handles a situation, seek a private meeting to discuss the matter

8. Emphasize effort and personal improvement over outcomes - Children can experience anxiety and reduced motivation to stay in sports when there is too much emphasis on winning and losing. Instead, focus on effort and personal improvement. Helping your child understand that you value them trying hard above all else, and reinforcing when they are getting better, is especially important when they are young and still learning about how to compete

CODE OF CONDUCT

Remember children's field hockey is a time for them to develop their technical, physical, tactical and social skills. Winning isn't everything. Please play your part and observe our FieldHockey BC RESPECT Codes of Conduct at all times.

Please review the Parent and Player codes of conduct on our website, www.wvfhc.com. We don't require you to sign and return these – but we do encourage you to take this opportunity to talk about fair play and respect in sport as a family.

For more info see "CRC & Conduct" in our Club Manual on wvfhc.com.

What do I need for Spring League?

Choosing a field hockey stick

Before you head out onto the field to start practicing your stick handling, you have to choose the right hockey stick, which can be a difficult decision. The stick's feel and performance are more important than the color and style.

Weight: The hockey stick's weight is usually chosen based on personal preference or position. There are two different types of sticks that field hockey players use: wooden and composite. While wooden sticks are durable (for young athletes) and more affordable, they are becoming less common. Composite sticks are common and more powerful. U11 and older players should be looking to purchase a composite stick. Younger players can use wooden or composite sticks.
Size & Length: The size and length of the stick you use completely depend on each player's body height. Field hockey sticks range from about 28" to 38" long, and having the proper stick length can drastically affect your game. If your stick is too long, you may end up undercutting the ball or making hard contact with the ground, causing the stick head to fracture. If your stick is too short, you may be bending down too much which can cause serious long term back problems. When choosing the perfect stick for you, there are two simple ways to check a stick in the store:

> *1) Place the base of the stick on the ground and make sure the stick is straight. Hold the stick with two fingers at the top of the handle and check to make sure the top of the stick is right along your hip bone.*
> *2) Hold the stick upside down and insert the head of the stick in your armpit. The stick should end near your knee and fall no more than two inches below the bottom of your knee cap.*

Play sport safely

At WVFHC we want our members to exercise and have fun – and to do it safely. Sports may also come with injuries, both the obvious, like broken bones, and the not so obvious, like tendinitis. These less apparent injuries are called overuse injuries, often resulting from too much athletic play. Overuse injuries are more difficult to diagnose and treat because they are subtle and usually occur over time. When repetitive traumas affect the tendons, bones, muscles, and joints, an overuse injury develops.

Why do injuries occur?

There are various reasons why an injury might occur, including improper training, improper technique, equipment failure and/or anatomic or biomechanical issues of the athlete.

How can I tell if I'm playing too much?

Most of the time, you'll know you are hurt because you have some pain. However, there might be other signs that you are playing too hard and should talk to a parent, athletic trainer, or doctor right away:

- Can't put weight on a certain body part
- Favor one side of the body
- Pain
- Can't sleep
- Shortness of breath/trouble breathing during activity
- Headaches during or after activity
- Dizzy or light-headed
- Unusual weakness

If you begin to have pain associated with play tell your athletic trainer, parent or coach. You should not be told or encouraged to play through pain.

How can I prevent overuse injuries?

- Perform a proper warm up and cool down routine to prepare the body and help it recover
- Incorporate strength training and stretching into your training
- Wear properly fitted protective equipment
- Don't play one sport year-round. Take one season off each year to help muscles recover and prevent overuse
- Play different positions or sports to minimize overuse

For more information visit www.stopsportinjuries.org

Q & A

Q: *What team is my child on?*
A: Team rostering is done once registration closes - by the previous team, player transfer requests, etc. Late registrants will be slotted into teams as space is available. Note - we try and work with friend/school groups but will limit the number of kids from one school on each team.

Q: *When will they practice?*
A: Practice slots can only be determined once we have approved field allocations and then team managers and coaches opt for their preferences.

Q: *Why do I have to register with Field Hockey BC?*
A: FHBC registration provides insurance for every player as well as supporting Field Hockey Canada and the sport nationally.

Q: *When are the games?*
A: League games - U11-U18 game days are determined by the GVJFHL
Girls - U11, 12, 14, 16 games will be on Saturdays; U13, 15, 17 & 18 games will be on Sundays (assuming field space is available)
Boys - U12, U16 games will be Saturdays; U14, 18 games will be Sundays
U9 & U10 games will be scheduled once fields are confirmed

Q: *What if I can't make my team practice night? Can practice times be changed?*
A: Team practice times are chosen by the coaches/managers and work for them. If you decide to drop out of Spring League, please request a refund by emailing info@wvfhc.com.

Q: *What if we can't make a game?*
A: We do hope that families and players will make efforts to attend games but in the case of a conflict, please let your coach/manager know or respond on SportsEngine so that teams are aware of how many players to expect for a game and if they may need to call up players in order to have a full team. (Games that are defaulted for not enough players may result in fines for the Club)

Q: *Why am I not receiving team notifications?*
A: Have you opted out of email notifications in SportsEngine? Go to our website under Resources and follow the instructions on how to correct this. If you are stuck, email info@wvfhc.com for help.

Q: *What do I do if I have an issue?*
A; For issue resolution please follow this pathway -
Coach/Manager ----> AGC ----> SL Coordinator ----> Junior Committee ----> GM/TD/Board

Q: *What is the pathway for athlete development?*
A: The player pathway is detailed on our website and we will be holding an information session during spring league for those interested in learning more.

Follow us this Spring League!

For the latest news, events & info, find us under "**wvfhc**" on Instagram, Facebook & Twitter

Post your favourite photos & videos and tag us: **@wvfhc #springleague2025**

A Last Note

Spring League is a **HUGE** operation and we could not do it without the hours put in by our coaches, managers, age group coordinators and many, many other volunteers. At the field, please show your gratitude to all those who make this incredible program happen.

We wish you all the best for 2025 Spring League!
WVFHC Junior Committee

For more information on parenting in sport today, check out these websites:

- Active for Life - activeforlife.com
- I Love to Watch You Play - ilovetowatchyouplay.com
- Positive Coaching Alliance- www.positivecoach.org

Any questions:
info@wvfhc.com

Spring League Head Coordinator
Melissa Darowski
melissa@wvfhc.com

Staff Contacts

Charlotte Burns General Manager **charlotte@wvfhc.com**
Matthew Sarmento Technical Director **matthew@wvfhc.com**
Annabel Pringle Administrator **annabel@wvfhc.com**
Isabelle Roux Head Coach Development **isabelle@wvfhc.com**