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# Women’s Ice Hockey on the Rise Heckle JAFA-opponents at their home game this weekend

Theme:  
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Co-authored by Critic Te Ārohi - the student magazine of the Otago University Students' Association

## Women’s Ice Hockey on the Rise Heckle JAFA-opponents at their home game this weekend

The Dunedin Thunder Women’s Hockey team is taking to the ice in a home game at the Dunedin Ice Stadium against the Auckland Steel this weekend, August 24th and 25th. The team, including five Otago students and coached by SPEX lecturer Michael Sam, currently sit at third on the table. Critic Te Ārohi spoke to players Kate Vernal and Neve Spooner about the sport's growing popularity.

The Women’s Thunder placed third in the league last year, the first time that they’d placed since coming into the league in 2020. Kate told Critic that they have built a “strong team environment and culture,” which has helped the team have success on the ice.

Neve emphasised how the Women’s Thunder’s success has come about amidst a rapidly changing environment in the sport. The growth has been “immense” according to Neve, and it has become “harder and harder” to make the top women's team as its popularity has skyrocketed.

This growth has got the team buzzing, and has encouraged supporters to show up to watch the team in larger numbers than ever before. “It’s being promoted a lot more [...] we have fans coming to watch the games [...] and way more younger girls are starting to become involved in learn-to-play and starting to play hockey at an early age,” said Neve.


“The league is expanding each year, and we hope that with increased exposure we can bring more fans to the games and create more interest in women's hockey, by either watching the sport or inspiring women to begin play,” said Never. Kate also encouraged more people to give the sport a go – this year, the league includes players who started as young as four to as old as forty.


Nationally, the uptake in women entering the sport has been spearheaded by the Ice Fernz, the New Zealand Women’s National Team. They’ll be playing in the Ice Hockey Federation World Championships, set to be hosted mid-April next year right here in Dunedin. The tournament will feature peak ice hockey nations such as Belgium, Australia, Hong Kong, Turkey, and Ukraine.


“Dunedin’s got the best ice, that’s all there is to it,” confirmed ice hockey die-hard Fox, who chose to study in Dunedin as an international student purely for the stadium. “The stadium’s awesome. You can go and pay like ten bucks and basically stand up against the glass and watch it all happen – can’t really do that anywhere else. If you’ve never been to [a game] give it a shot [...] It’s better than probably whatever else you’ll be doing on the night.”

You can show your support for the legends on the ice by attending their game this weekend. Tickets are only \$10 and are available online via the Dunedin Ice Stadium website or at the door.

Full article: [Women’s Ice Hockey on the Rise](#) | [News](#) | [Critic Te Ārohi](#)

  
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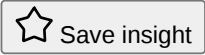
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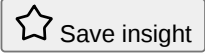
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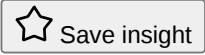
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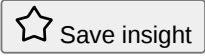
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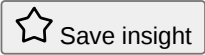
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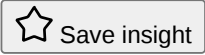
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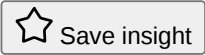
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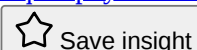
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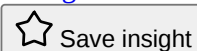


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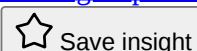
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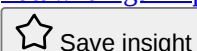
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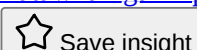


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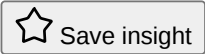
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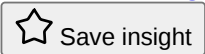
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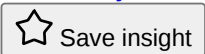
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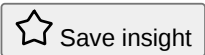
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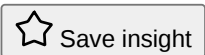
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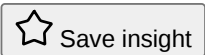
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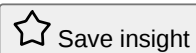
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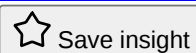
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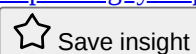
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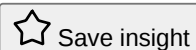
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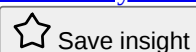
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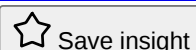
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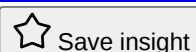
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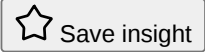
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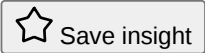
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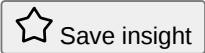
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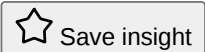
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