

The Great Blizz Drops the Puck on the 2026-2027 Season at Four Massachusetts Rinks This Weekend

Special hockey program for athletes with intellectual, cognitive and developmental disabilities opens play September 19

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EINPresswire.com/ -- [The Great Blizzards of Massachusetts Special Hockey Inc.](#), known across New England as The Great Blizz, opens its 2026-2027 season this weekend with practices and games at all four of its home rinks, welcoming back more than 100 athletes and opening the ice to new players who have never skated before.

Opening weekend runs as follows:

Saturday, September 19: The Bog Ice Arena, Kingston, 7:00 a.m.; Tony Kent Community Arena, South Dennis, 11:20 a.m.

Sunday, September 20: Martha's Vineyard Ice Arena at the YMCA, Oak Bluffs, 10:10 a.m.; Lawrence Larsen Skating Rink at the Mike Eruzione Center, Winthrop, 3:10 p.m.

The season runs weekly through April 11 and includes travel to tournaments in Hallowell, Maine on October 24 and 25, and St. Albans, Vermont on November 21 and 22, along with other out-of-state and international events.



The Great Blizzards of Massachusetts



Founded in 2019 by Steve Nearman and Erick McCroskey with ten players at a single Kingston rink, The Great Blizz was the first organization to bring ice hockey to Southeastern Massachusetts and Cape Cod for people with intellectual and developmental disabilities, adding the North Shore and Martha's Vineyard in 2025. The program is open to ages 4 through adulthood, all genders, with no skating or hockey experience required. Equipment is loaned to every registered player, new families are offered a three-practice free trial, and no family is turned away over cost.



"Our goal has never changed," said Nearman. "Every player skates independently and plays real hockey, on a real team, with real coaches and real jerseys. No hockey player left behind."

The organization is run entirely by volunteers. Registration is \$350 for the season, roughly a quarter of what it actually costs to keep one athlete on the ice, with sponsors and donors closing the rest of that gap every year.

The Great Blizz thanks the supporters who made this weekend possible, including the Boston Bruins Foundation and Polar Seltzer, Keurig Dr Pepper, the Doug Flutie Jr. Foundation for Autism, Erik and Geline Trojan, Plymouth County Family Support, Accord Child Services, and the Bridgewater State University EXCEL Program. The program is also grateful to the community funders anchoring each of its four regions, among them the Martha's Vineyard Community Foundation, The Winthrop Foundation, the Lyndon Paul Lorusso Charitable Foundation and Rockland Trust, and to the many local businesses and individual donors listed at thegreatblizz.org/sponsors.

Players, volunteers, on-ice and off-ice coaches, and sponsors are all welcome. Families interested in the free trial can contact Coach Nearman directly or register at www.thegreatblizz.org.

The Great Blizzards of Massachusetts Special Hockey Inc. is a 501(c)(3) public charity (EIN 83-2248522) and a proud member of USA Hockey, Massachusetts Hockey and Special Hockey International.

Steve Nearman

The Great Blizzards of Massachusetts Special Hockey Inc.

+1 703-587-4321

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