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## **Roller hockey camp goal is to cover more than basics**

Skyhawks summer camp scores points among 7- to 12-year-old participants

Tyler Ochsner

Although kids frequently use parking lots as playing fields for competitive games, most summer camps take their participants to ball fields and courts to teach sports fundamentals.

Except for roller hockey, where a parking lot can become the entire playing rink. At Rainier Vista Community Park's lot, kids ages 7 to 12 joined three counselors for a roller hockey camp last week. The camp was put on by Skyhawks, a national sports camp providers, and offered T-shirts and rental equipment to each camper.

Orange cones and cars surrounded the outside of the roller hockey rink as campers - wearing inline skates, bike helmets, knee and elbow pads - slapped an orange rubber and plastic ball with a hockey stick. Their goal was to place the ball, which is used in place of a standard hockey puck, past the goalie and into a small net.

The 16 campers, which included 15 boys and one girl, were divided into four teams. Each team had a forward, defenders and a goalie.

"We are trying to teach them teamwork," said Alex Price of Olympia, who is in his first year as a camp counselor. "Campers are learning good hockey skills and how to get along with each other."

### Skills review

At the end of each 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. session, campers had the opportunity to sit in two organized lines in the parking lot and review the day's skills and fundamentals.

The first day, campers reviewed the rules of the sport and learned about skating and balance. They were taught dribbling and movement Tuesday. On Wednesday, the camp went over basic passing skills. Campers learned all about shooting Thursday. And Friday was considered tournament day as campers competed against each other in a friendly competition.

Before the review session every day, the campers scrimmaged against each other.

## Learning to scrimmage

"The whole day builds up to a scrimmage," said Seth Monson, an Olympia native who was the camp director. He is in his third year with Skyhawks camps.

"Each day gets better with the kids learning new skills. (Campers) incorporate the skills into the scrimmage."

One camper, Tovi Beale of Lacey, 10, said scrimmaging was his favorite part of the day.

"I like doing the scrimmaging," said Tovi. "I've been having a lot of fun. They have taught me more than I already knew."

Tovi will be in fifth grade at Evergreen Forest Elementary School in the fall. He also played roller hockey in a YMCA league.

## Integrating games

Like Beale, Katie Boyd, 11, was at her first Skyhawks camp. She had never played roller hockey before.

Katie, the only girl camper, enjoyed the camp because of the games that were integrated into each day's session.

"My favorite part is capture the flag," said Katie of Olympia, who is entering sixth grade at Washington Middle School after this summer. "Capture the flag on skates is interesting because you keep falling into people."

Jack Boyd, Katie's brother, remembered different lessons from the Skyhawks camp.

"I've learned how to skate backwards," said Jack, 8, who is enrolled in Centennial Elementary School. "I've also learned to skate without falling down."

## Teaching teamwork

Regardless of what the campers remembered most from the five-day camp, Monson hoped Skyhawks taught the kids a few different lessons and values along the way.

"We are teaching kids to have fun in sports, teamwork and hustle," said Monson, a recent graduate of Olympia High School. "We encourage girls and boys to come out. (Our goal is) to reach kids at their own ability and raise that level."

For Price, who also graduated from Olympia High School this June, the camp is a good way for kids to meet friends and get exercise during the summer.

"(The camp) is a good activity for kids to do and interact with other kids," Price said. "It is a good thing to do on a summer day."