



THE KU REPO

LAWRENCE JOURNAL-WORLD

Roller Hockey Club looks for challengers on the Internet

Inline sport catching on at KU

● **Kansas University's** Roller Hockey Club, formed this academic year, is part of a new sport skating to high popularity.

By **MICHAEL DEKKER**
JOURNAL-WORLD WRITER

The challenge went out a few weeks ago — of all places — on the World Wide Web of the Internet: Kansas University's Roller Hockey Club is looking for some competition.

The response was sparse at first, but then skaters answered the call of their sticks and body pads.

"At the beginning of (this) fall we will have a lot of teams that we should be able to play," said Derek Moscato, a first-year graduate student and member of KU's relatively new roller hockey club.

"It is one of the fastest growing sports in the United States, no doubt."

Roller hockey, similar to ice hockey, is played on an asphalt, concrete or other hard surface, usually by five-man teams wielding hockey sticks and lots of body pads for protection.

A club team comprised of KU students formed last fall, and the message sent out over the Internet should result in a tournament of eight or more teams sometime this fall.

Moscato, a Niagara, Ontario, native, describes the sport as "high intensity."

"It's definitely the fastest sport you can play without an ice surface," he said. "Ice hockey has become extremely popular but most cities don't have ice rinks."

"Roller hockey is easily the next best thing. You can play it anywhere. It's huge in the Northeast, and it's huge in California."

Players use inline skates and a special puck that has rollers on its top and the bottom surfaces,



MIKE YODER/JOURNAL-WORLD PHOTO

Kansas University graduate student Bill Jensen rolls to the net Wednesday for a shot on goalie Damon Miller during a KU Roller Hockey Club practice at Deerfield Park. Miller is a KU freshman from Overland Park.

which enable it to travel fast across hard surfaces.

Like in ice hockey, play can get rough, but no direct hitting or slashing is allowed.

"There's a lot of pushing and shoving going on near the net," he said. "There's a lot of sticks flying around. You're going to be hitting the floor."

"Knee pads are essential. A helmet is a must."

Moscato says you don't have to

be large to play.

"We have some small guys, but they play heads-up hockey. If you're small, you have to have some finesse so you can get out of the way. If you have that aggressiveness, you can hold your own," he said.

The 14-member KU team, which doesn't have a sponsor, plays some matches in Kansas City. The KU club will be part of a four-team tournament this

weekend in Wichita.

Next year, an ice hockey team as well as a roller hockey team will be formed, said Bill Jensen, captain and coach of the roller hockey team and president of the club.

The club received \$7,000 funding from the university for next year, making it the second-highest funded club sport at KU, second only to the rowing team's total of \$29,000.