

# Breaking Barriers: Madeleine Ruddy's High School Hockey Career

By EILEE MATSUYAMA | Illustration by ANUSHRI RAMURTHY

Madeleine Ruddy ('24) made Kent Denver history in 2020 when she tried out for the Ice Hockey team, which, before she joined, had never had a female player before.

Ruddy initially started her career on ice by figure skating, but after seeing a poster advertising free hockey lessons for girls at the rink, she decided to try it out. Since then, she's stuck with the sport and never looked back.

Ruddy didn't necessarily want to make history by joining the team; she just wanted to continue playing the sport she'd loved since she was a kid.

"There was no reason I shouldn't have been able to play on my high school team because it's the sport I love and want to spend most of my time on," she said.

You can always see her signature ponytail peeking out from her helmet on the ice. Watching her play is highly inspirational, but it wasn't always easy for Ruddy. She referenced her third KDS hockey game, where she could feel the opponents targeting her as a female player.

"They were checking me from behind and saying many derogatory things towards me," she remembered.

Experiences like these did not stop Ruddy. She believes the adversity strengthened her and is grateful for her supportive teammates.

"I remember the team supporting me and understanding how it is a bit more difficult for me as a girl," she said, adding that though her teammates recognize that her experiences on the ice are a bit different from theirs, "they treat [her] more as an equal, which [she] definitely appreciate[s]."

Ruddy's grit has inspired more girls to join the KDS Hockey team. Ava Buese ('26) says that Ruddy has been a great teammate and senior to look up to. Buese speaks for the hockey team when she says she will miss Ruddy next season and is "so thankful to have been on a team with her."



By Carol MacKay