



## **Huntsville Havoc Skates into 20<sup>th</sup> Season at the Von Braun Center** *Investments into Von Braun Center Propst Arena continue showing returns.*

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**Huntsville, Ala. (October 26, 2023)** – Huntsville’s professional hockey team, Huntsville Havoc, opened their 20<sup>th</sup> season on the road with back-to-back wins against the Birmingham Bulls and the Evansville Thunderbolts this past weekend, marking the first two career wins for new head coach, Stuart Stefan. The first home game for the 2023-2024 season at the Von Braun Center (VBC) Propst Arena is scheduled for Friday, October 27 at 7:00 p.m. versus the Pensacola Ice Flyers.

"Twenty years of Havoc hockey has been a testament to the power of community and the spirit of Huntsville," said Havoc owner Keith Jeffries. "The team’s success, both on and off the ice, reflects the dedication and energy of this city. We owe it all to our faithful season ticket holders, devoted fanbase, and hardworking staff. Becky and I are deeply grateful to have had the privilege of sustaining a successful sports organization here."

Huntsville Havoc is a member of the SPHL which is comprised of ten teams and features a 56-game regular season schedule. The team wrapped up the 2022-2023 season with 34 wins and 19 losses, finishing 3<sup>rd</sup> in the SPHL President’s Cup semifinals.

"Having the Havoc as a partner of the VBC and being their home rink is fantastic," commented VBC Executive Director Steve Maples. "Huntsville has a strong hockey-base and fans never fail to show up in support of our team year-after-year which shows in their attendance numbers. Every afternoon of a home game, you can feel the excitement within the building growing as the lights on Propst Arena turn red and fans begin lining up outside ready for the doors to open – those nights are truly some of the best of the year! This season, we’re excited to showcase Propst Arena’s new sound system that was installed just in time for the home opener."

Of last season’s 56 regular season games, 28 were played at Havoc’s home rink in the VBC Propst Arena. With a seating capacity during hockey games of 6,050, the Havoc earned league best attendance numbers breaking their own single-season SPHL attendance record for the fourth time, closing out the season with an estimated economic impact of over \$14.7M.

"Huntsville sports fans have been infatuated with hockey for decades, and their love of the game led to our distinction as hockey capital of the South," said Mayor Tommy Battle. "Havoc games promise fast-paced, exciting play. The team knows how to heat up the ice and keep us on the edge of our seats. We can’t wait for another exciting season at the VBC."

Providing the community with a state-of-the art facility continues to be a priority for VBC and city leadership. During the last three years, the VBC Propst Arena has been showcased three times on national television. Once,

through ESPN's SEC Network during the SEC Gymnastics Championships, later during *Lee Greenwood's All-Star Salute*, and again during *Still Playin' Possum: Music & Memories of George Jones* earlier this year.

Since 2010, over \$23.8M has been invested into upgrading and renovating the VBC Propst Arena which was originally built in 1975. Upgrades include:

- 2010: New seating installed, and the lobby and concourse areas expanded (to include modern concessions, bars, additional restrooms and the addition of a cook-to-order café with outdoor balcony seating)
- 2019: New full color-tuning LED lighting system installed within the arena bowl
- 2019: Static signage around balcony upgraded to digital ribbon-boards
- 2021: Expansion and renovation of the arena's backstage (this award-winning project was the first major renovation to the arena backstage since it was originally built and resulted in six dressing rooms, two private star lounges, four spacious locker rooms, a catering and media room, office space, commercial-grade laundry room, and more)
- 2022: Renovation and upgrades to the arena's exterior (included a new roof, new paint and a new full color-tuning LED lighting fixture along the outside and inside of the lobby, as well as around the circular exterior of the building)
- 2022: Installation of new large digital boards in arena lobby
- 2022: Purchasing new walk-through metal detectors
- 2023: Installation of upgraded sound system
- 2024: *Two new digital scoreboard/video boards will be installed*

These renovations are part of an ongoing effort to continuously improve the facility for efficiency and customer satisfaction.

For more information about the Von Braun Center and Huntsville Havoc, visit [www.vonbrauncenter.com](http://www.vonbrauncenter.com).

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### **About Von Braun Center**

The Von Braun Center is a multi-purpose facility located in downtown Huntsville, Alabama. The VBC offers multiple venues for presenting cultural, educational, entertainment, sporting and social events. Venue spaces include the Propst Arena, Mark C. Smith Concert Hall, Mars Music Hall, South Hall, East Hall, and Saturn Ballroom. Additionally, the VBC has an on-site restaurant and rooftop bar Rhythm on Monroe, and is home to Huntsville Havoc, Broadway Theatre League, Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, and Arts Huntsville. With over 170,000 square feet of flexible meeting space the VBC is able to accommodate events of all types and sizes.

### **About Havoc Hockey**

The Huntsville Havoc, celebrating their 20th anniversary this season, are one of the foundational teams of the SPHL. Demonstrating consistent performance both on and off the ice, the team has led the league in attendance for the past seven years, methodically surpassing their own attendance benchmarks. In terms of on-ice accolades, the Huntsville Havoc have secured three President's Cup championships, with victories recorded in 2010 and consecutive wins in the 2017-18 and 2018-19 seasons. Moreover, since the 2014-2015 season, they have maintained a consistent presence in the playoffs. Their sustained success and dedication to the sport underscore the Havoc's esteemed position within the SPHL and the broader hockey community.