PROCESS DECK · B2C PATRON APP

Rinkside: find ice, run your team.

My role: solo designer and founder

June 2026 – now

THE PROBLEM

Skaters can't tell what they can actually book

Problem statement. Adult recreational skaters need to see **which sessions they can actually book right now**, because every system studied hides availability behind a login or shows it with no way to act on it.

1 Availability is invisible or inert.
Hidden behind logins, or shown with no way to book.

2 No single source of truth.
Rinks publish conflicting times and say "call to confirm."

3 The casual skater is designed out.
Members-only drop-in, season-only pricing.

4 Team schedules rely on a volunteer.
A captain retypes ice times by hand.

RESEARCH

Methods, participants, and four pain points

Methods

- Hands-on booking walk-throughs of real rink systems, documented with screenshots (July 2026)
- Interviews
- Survey

Participants (anonymous)

- Interviews: 3 players, 2 captains, 3 parents, 1 casual skater
- Survey: 8 valid responses, all adult league and drop-in players

0 of 3
rinks let a first-time mobile user finish a booking

13+
taps, across 3 domains, to reach checkout

3.1/5
booking friction, the highest score in the survey

4 of 8
drove to a session that was full, cancelled, or different

Small sample, adult players only.

IN THEIR WORDS

Four quotes that shaped the direction

“It would be great if I could see all the availability for local rinks in one place, like when I want to get movie tickets.”

Adult league player

“Convenience with registration would supersede commute time.”

Parent

“The demand for registration is so high that spots fill up immediately and there's so much traffic on the website that it will crash more times than not.”

Parent

“Almost didn't go — the sessions were full.”

Casual skater

COMPETITIVE AUDIT

Everyone builds for the rink. Nobody builds for the skater.

1. No booking service shows more than one rink.

2. Even the best system doesn't show only bookable sessions. It listed expired sessions as selectable.

3. No ice-specific booking service combines the official schedule and attendance. A general sports app does, but only across its own venues.

Five systems audited hands-on on a phone (July 2026). Wider vendor research is desk-based and unverified. Feature matrix on the next slide.

COMPETITIVE AUDIT · FEATURE MATRIX

Capability	Community-Pass	rec.us	EZ-Facility	Sports-Engine	Bench-App	Rinkside
Aggregates rinks	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
Availability before login	✗	✗	~	✗	—	✓
Live spot count	✗	✗	~	✗	—	✓
Only bookable sessions	✗	✗	✗	✗	—	✓
Single session, no membership	~	✗	✗	✗	—	✓
Mobile-first	✗	✓	~	~	✓	✓
One authoritative schedule	✓	✓	~	~	✗	✓
All-in price	✓	~	~	—	—	✓
Push alert on change	✗	✗	✗	~	~	✓
Waitlist auto-promotion	✗	~	✗	✗	~	✓
Team roster & attendance	✗	✗	✗	✓	✓	✓
Team schedule auto-filled	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗	✓
QR / digital check-in	✗	✗	~	✗	✗	✓
Operator dashboard	✓	✓	✓	✓	✗	✓

✓ works · ~ compromised · ✗ absent · — not applicable.

PERSONAS

Two people the design is built around

Easton, 31

Adult league and drop-in player. High tech comfort.
Wants: his team schedule and RSVPs fast, last-minute drop-in ice, no surprises.
Frustrated by: a captain typing every game by hand, so games sit as “To be determined”; RSVPs that need nudging; no way to know drop-in availability without calling.
Based on 3 player interviews, 2 captain interviews, and a team-app study.

Maria, 38

Busy parent of 1–2 youth skaters. Tech comfort ranges from a fridge calendar to Outlook.
Wants: to sign kids up without hunting across organizations; to know right away if a session is full or cancelled.
Frustrated by: separate websites for each organization; sign-up sites that crash; messages that reach only one parent; wrong locker room info.
Based on 3 parent interviews.

Names and ages are made up; frustrations are real.

JOURNEY MAPS

Same task, as-is vs. to-be: 13+ taps → 5

An adult player wants ice time this week.

As-is · 7 stages
Trigger → Discover → Investigate → Navigate → Authenticate → Select → Book
Ends with: “So I just can't do this. I'll call tomorrow.”

To-be · 6 stages
Trigger → Discover (1 tap) → Decide (2) → Book (2) → Attend → Repeat
Navigate and Authenticate are deleted. Account asked for only at payment.

Taps	Domains	Dead ends	Booked
13+ → 5	3 → 1	7 → 0	0/3 → 1/1

To-be numbers are design targets, not yet tested.

IDEATION

Eight concepts for one question

How might we…

- show a skater every session they can actually book today, in one screen?
- let someone try ice without a membership or season?
- collapse a 13-tap, 3-domain task into a handful of taps?
- make a team's schedule appear without anyone typing it?

The eight sketches

1 Chronological list ✓
2 Map first · kept as toggle
3 Calendar grid · dropped
4 “Tonight” card · kept as hero
5 Swipe deck · dropped
6 Search first · kept
7 Rink first · dropped
8 Personalized feed · v2

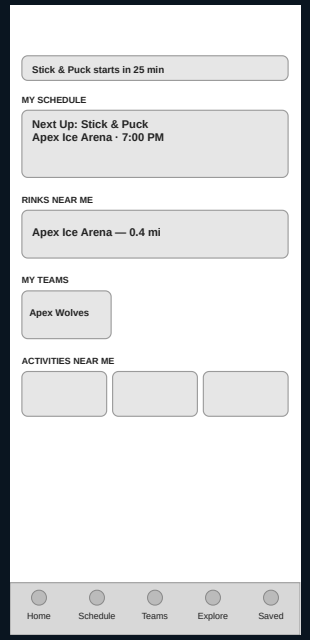
Picked: a chronological list, with a “Tonight” card on top, a map toggle, and search always in reach.
Dropped: calendar grid (unreadable on mobile), swipe deck (wrong for a utility task), rink-first (the model that failed everywhere).

INFORMATION ARCHITECTURE + WIREFRAMES

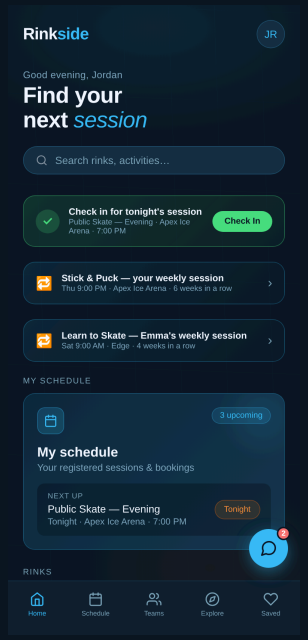
Home | My Schedule | My Teams | Explore | Saved | Profile

Nothing is more than 3 taps from Home.

Home

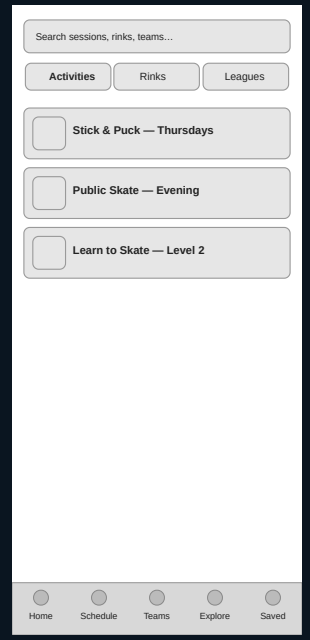


lo-fi

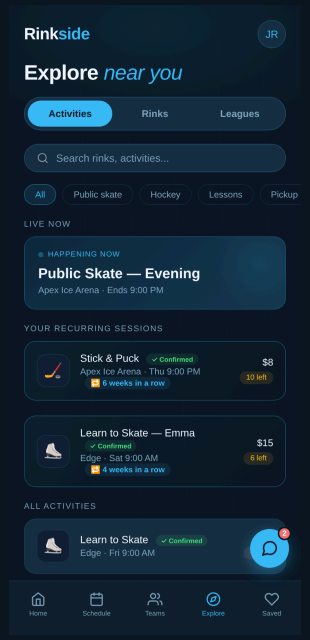


hi-fi

Explore

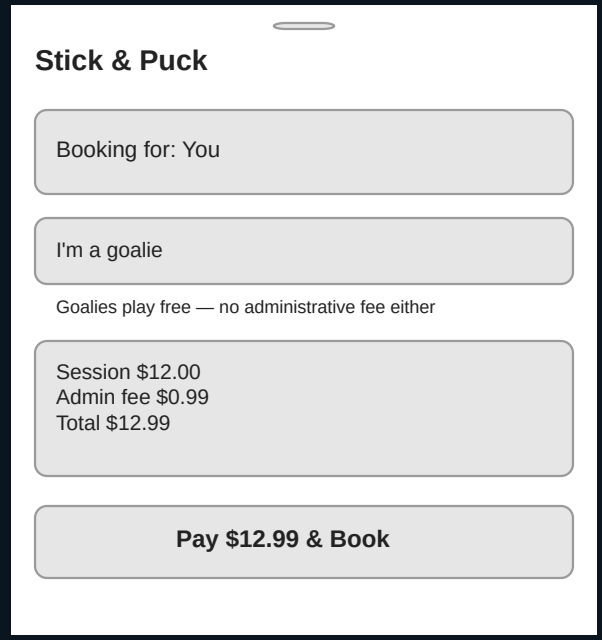


lo-fi

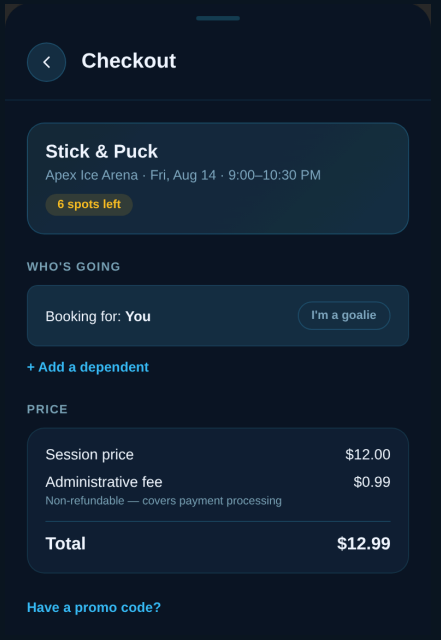


hi-fi

Checkout



lo-fi



hi-fi

ITERATIONS

What changed, and what caused it

Change	Cause
Dim text contrast raised from 2.65:1 to 6.63:1	Accessibility audit
Visible keyboard focus added	Accessibility audit
Checkout rebuilt with a goalie fee waiver	Research: goalies play free
Check-in: “show a confirmation at the door” became self-check-in	Research: none of 4 observed check-ins show a phone
Light mode shipped. The alpha has Light, Dark and Warm themes, all checked against WCAG contrast	2 informal testers: “too dark”
Notifications: text-only became a per-user choice	Interviews: 2 parents prefer text, 1 email

No usability round has produced before/after pairs yet.

ACCESSIBILITY

I claimed WCAG AA. The audit said otherwise.

Prototype audit (8 hi-fi files, Aug 2026)

- 4 high, 2 medium, 1 low issue, 1 positive
- Dim text: 2.65:1 → 6.63:1
- No focus styling → added

Built app, Oct–Nov 2026

- **Oct 14:** audited the built app
- **Oct 17:** fixed large text and rotation
- **Oct 23:** tested on my own iPhone (iOS 26.1) and Android phone (Android 17)
  - VoiceOver and TalkBack worked well
  - Color-blind filters passed (deuteranopia, protanopia, tritanopia)
  - Landscape worked
  - Largest text size found problems; **Nov 3:** fixed on iPhone and Android
- Headings: 1 → 92
- Power-play badge: 1.9:1 → AA

THE ALPHA

A 4-step launch plan

1 · Adult alpha
Friends-only, B2C, replaces the team app

2 · Rinks, free
Operator tools; players pay a booking fee

3 · Paid rink tiers

4 · Youth, tournaments

What changed from the prototype

- Native Android and iOS app, plus web, instead of clickable HTML
- Payments left out of step 1; booking happens on the rink's site, then “add to my schedule”
- Push-only notifications; schedule import from a link, calendar, or screenshot

Alpha being tested by two hockey teams. Results coming soon.

TAKEAWAYS

What I'd carry forward

Learned

- Friction deters first-time users more than committed ones
- Research can overturn my assumptions: “show at the door” matched none of 4 real check-ins

Surprised

- Parents already copy schedules between apps by hand
- My claimed WCAG AA compliance was false

Do differently

- Run real tests before the build started
- Keep personas evidence-based

Next

- Run the moderated and unmoderated sessions
- Finish the alpha with the first teams