



From Idea to Ice: Innovating Hockey Safety with Pucktive

The Snapshot

Eddie Cobbold, Dal, BComm '2024, is co-founder of Pucktive, a startup with a mission to create the world's most comfortable, cut-resistant hockey apparel. Cobbold was inspired to take action after witnessing how quickly life-threatening skate injuries can happen.

Through Dal Innovates' Collide Discover, Validate, and Launch programs, he refined his idea and designed an innovative under-gear shirt that incorporates Kevlar and other high-performance materials, making it cut-resistant, lightweight, and something that players feel comfortable wearing.

The Idea

Eddie Cobbold vividly remembers the day his teammate, Jackson Carruthers, crashed to the ice after a skate cut his Achilles tendon. "We were all scared for him," says Cobbold. Jackson required surgery and was sidelined for six months.

Then in November 2022, Cobbold watched a frightening situation unfold where Edmonton Oilers player, Evander Kane, suffered a life-threatening skate cut to his wrist. "He was lucky to have medical staff on the bench to help him," says Cobbold. The quick response of the onsite medical team to control the bleeding helped save Kane's life.

Cobbold realized skate cuts are among the scariest injuries. The fast pace of hockey means that in an instant, razor-sharp skate blades can slice through flesh, tendons, and arteries. Furthermore, most amateur hockey teams don't have a medical team onsite.

Determined to find a way to help players better protect themselves, Cobbold says, "I started sketching and prototyping on my laptop; starting with designing a protective wristband for players."

The Challenge

"I had no idea how to bring the ideas in my head into a physical product," recalls Cobbold. Then, Emily Neil, a project manager from Dal Innovates, gave a class presentation on how Collide helps students gain entrepreneurial skills. "It was perfect timing for me. I had this idea and the Collide program was there to accelerate the process of creating a product and launching a business."



Pucktive Cofounders, Eddie Cobbold and Charlie Cobbold showing the novel design of their protective Hockey Tarp

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Collide Discover, Validate and Launch Alumnus



Cobbold signed up for Dal Innovates Collide Discover and started brainstorming numerous product iterations, from integrating more protection into jerseys to creating sleeves to fit over elbow pads.

Ultimately, he chose to go with a cut-resistant undergarment, Cobbold explains, "I wanted to go with an undershirt to build off what players were already using."

His next big challenge was determining the optimal design and materials to use. The Collide Validate program helped Cobbold test the market viability of his idea and he launched his start-up, Pucktive, with his brother Charlie Cobbold.



Player gears up wearing the Pucktive Hockey Tarp

After conducting extensive customer surveys, Cobbold learned that only 45 per cent of adult players wear neck guards, and less than 12 per cent wear wrist guards. When asked why, most respondents said they didn't wear protective neck and wrist guards because the ones on the market today are uncomfortable and feel too heavy.

Cobbold also gleaned that hockey players are very particular about their gear when it comes to comfort and fit.

"We had to make sure we offered them cut-resistant protection without hindering performance," says Cobbold.



Eddie Cobbold (left) and Charlie Cobbold (right) participate in Collide Launch

Collide Supports Success

Drawing on the lean startup methodology learned through the Collide program, the team adopted a more iterative approach to developing and testing their protective apparel. In describing Pucktive's design process Cobbold says, "We figured out the zones needing protection, the materials required, and how to disperse weight across the collarbone, so, when players put on our products it would be a seamless fit."

Pucktive's innovative under-gear shirt incorporates Kevlar and other high-performance materials, making it cut-resistant and lightweight.

“Our main goal is to bring cut protection to hockey players at all levels. So that we can give everyone the peace of mind that when they go and play hockey, they can enjoy it without the risk of a serious injury.”

- Eddie Cobbold, Cofounder, Pucktive Inc.

With the digital rendering complete, Cobbold needed an experienced manufacturer capable of producing a functional prototype that would meet the rigorous standards for comfort, stretchiness, durability, and protection.

That's when he recalls Nasil Nam, a Collide facilitator, suggesting that teams looking for manufacturers could post their design specifications in the business section of Alibaba. "Thanks to the guidance from Nasil and my fellow Collide colleagues, we successfully connected with a manufacturer and produced our prototype."

Then, to get market-ready, Cobbold completed the Collide Launch program. He took Pucktive's prototype, coined the 'hockey tarp,' to the Bureau de normalisation du Québec (BNQ) for skate-cut resistance testing. With a smile, Cobbold proclaims, "We were the first product to pass both the BNQ neck and wrist skate-cut resistance tests!"



The Impact

By incorporating a superior design with high-performance materials into the Hockey Tarp, Pucktive is committed to enhancing the safety and performance of players on the ice. "Our main goal is to bring cut protection to hockey players at all levels," says Cobbold. "So that we can give everyone the peace of mind that when they go and play hockey, they can enjoy it without the risk of a serious injury."

The Hockey Tarp is being market-tested and receiving overwhelmingly positive reviews. Cobbold says, "The feedback we've been getting is that the shirt is very comfortable, and players are saying 'it's so light' and 'this is the thinnest neck guard I've ever had.'"

Skate cuts happen in a flash and when they do, Pucktive's Hockey Tarp has you covered.