

NHL, NHLPA unveil hockey's Declaration of Principles

Stakeholders pledge to develop, promote, support positive change in sport's culture

by NHL Public Relations @PR_NHL / NHL.com

NEW YORK/ TORONTO - The National Hockey League Players' Association (NHLPA) and the National Hockey League (NHL) today unveiled hockey's Declaration of Principles - developed by and for hockey stakeholders - to advance policies, programs and initiatives, while inspiring fans, players and communities to create the best possible experience for the entire hockey community. This joint statement advocates the game of hockey as a powerful platform for participants to build character, foster positive values and develop important life skills that transcend the game.

Including the NHL and the NHLPA, 17 hockey organizations from around the world have joined together: American Collegiate Hockey Association (ACHA); American Hockey League (AHL); Canadian Hockey League (CHL); Canadian Junior Hockey League (CJHL); Canadian Women's Hockey League (CWHL); College Hockey Inc.; ECHL; Hockey Canada; International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF); National Collegiate Athletic Association (NCAA); National Women's Hockey League (NWHL); North American Hockey League (NAHL); U SPORTS; United States Hockey League (USHL); and USA Hockey.

Thank You Hockey

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Over the last two years, hockey's leading governing bodies have gathered to discuss the state of the game and collaborate on cultural and structural changes to positively impact the sport. An important recommendation from the group was the formation of a Declaration of Principles - a set of commonly shared beliefs that articulate a vision of delivering the best possible hockey experience for participants and their families. The Principles are meant to serve as an internal compass to help guide decisions and shift behaviors of hockey organizations, as well as players, parents, coaches, fans, partners and all those who represent and care for the sport of hockey. Those who love hockey know that it requires teamwork and perseverance, instills integrity and a sense of humility, strengthens character and brings communities together.

Earlier today, the Declaration of Principles was launched on the TODAY Show on NBC when NHL players Marc-Andre Fleury, Seth Jones, Connor McDavid and Ryan McDonagh appeared on set, along with Hockey Hall of Famer Pat LaFontaine. A media conference followed in New York with Jones, Erik Karlsson and Kevin Shattenkirk in attendance, along with representatives from the 17 hockey organizations assembled.

"The Declaration of Principles represents the hockey world speaking with one voice: our game teaches life lessons that can guide a meaningful future," NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman said. "While not everyone who plays the game will have an NHL career, every player at every level -- and the family and friends of every player -- can enjoy rewarding experiences and share a common commitment to respect, inclusiveness and sportsmanship."

"We believe it is important for the NHLPA to take a leadership role together with the NHL in the development of youth and grassroots hockey," said Mathieu Schneider, NHLPA Special Assistant to the Executive Director. "Hockey is a fun game, which imparts important values, facilitates camaraderie among participants, and instills important life lessons that all Players can carry with them in their daily lives."

As part of the group's reaffirmation to the game, the hockey organizations have collectively issued a set of eight key principles - the Declaration of Principles - aimed at rededicating the game at every level to the group's core values and beliefs.

Declaration of Principles

We believe every leader of the sport has the responsibility to inspire stakeholders in an effort to deliver a positive family hockey experience. Hockey participation offers families value beyond making an individual a better player or even a better athlete. The game of hockey is a powerful platform for participants to build character, foster positive values and develop important life skills. These benefits are available to all players, desirable to every family and transcend the game.

Today, guided by our common values, we jointly pledge to the following Principles.

We Believe:

- 1. Hockey should be an enjoyable family experience; all stakeholders - organizations, players, parents, siblings, coaches, referees, volunteers and rink operators - play a role in this effort.***
- 2. Hockey's greatest value is the role it plays in the development of character and life skills.***
- 3. All hockey organizations - regardless of size or level of competition - bring value to players and families in their ability to deliver a positive family experience.***
- 4. Physical activity is important for a healthy body, mind and spirit.***
- 5. There are significant benefits of youth participation in multiple sports.***
- 6. Hockey programs should be age-appropriate for all players, accounting for each individual's physical, emotional and cognitive development.***
- 7. There is great value in all forms of hockey, both on and off the ice.***
- 8. All hockey programs should provide a safe, positive and inclusive environment for players and families regardless of race, color, religion, national origin, gender, age, disability, sexual orientation and socio-economic status. Simply put, hockey is for everyone.***

We believe in our ability to improve lives and strengthen communities globally through hockey. We believe that living by these Principles will provide a healthy, balanced and enjoyable experience for all and inspire impactful service beyond the rink.

Coinciding with the announcement of the Declaration of Principles, a new website was launched where hockey stakeholders, fans and anyone interested can learn more about the initiative at www.thisishockey.org. A new TV spot, 'Thank You, Hockey' - produced by The Vault, New York - was also released online and will be aired on NBCSN in the United States and on Sportsnet in Canada throughout the hockey season.