

Hockey 101

An Introduction to Canada's Game



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Continuing the Tradition

Generations of Canadian families have grown up playing hockey. These families all share fond memories of their time on the ice and all the benefits that came out of it. Canadians love hockey so much that we petitioned to make it our country's official national winter sport.

Why invest so much into hockey? The benefits to kids are numerous: learning skills that enhance agility, strength and dexterity, a healthy and positive setting to meet others, sportsmanship and teamwork, learning how to take risks but most of all to have fun and to continue the tradition of Canadian Hockey.

To carry on this tradition and to help foster the growth of young Canadians and to create new memories we have created this tool guide for kids new to hockey. We want to help educate you as a parent on everything from how to fit your equipment properly to fair play rules. We will make sure that you know everything you need to help make your child's hockey experience as enjoyable as it can be.



Our partnership with Hockey Canada, the leading authority on all things amateur hockey, allows us to produce this informative guide for parents and kids.

Hockey Canada has been the sole governing body for amateur hockey since 1994.

It links players, coaches and others involved in local minor hockey associations across Canada to all other provincial, national and international hockey bodies.



Encouraging and Motivating

Over the last few years there has been a shift in hockey parenting. Emphasizing fun while playing hockey is the new rule. More and more people have recognized the need to put fun back into hockey instead of taking the game too seriously. After all that's what hockey is – a game.

Hockey is a great way for kids to learn self confidence, discipline, team play and sportsmanship while having fun. Your job as a parent is to make sure they are learning and having fun. The best way to do this is to encourage and motivate your children in positive ways.

Below are a couple of tips for making hockey for parents and kids alike memorable.

- ◎ **FUN** - Always remember to emphasize that hockey is a game and games are fun.
- ◎ **Speaking highly of others** - Whenever talking to your child about other team members, coaches or other teams always remember to speak highly of them. Not only praise your child's performance, but praise the team's performance in general and the coach for taking his or her time to coach and teach your kids. If you show respect for others in the organization your children will learn to show respect as well.

- ◎ **After the game** - One of the most important things to remember after practice or a game is not to bombard your kids with questions. Interrogating them will just add stress. Never talk to kids about what they did wrong. Wait for your kids to start talking to you if there is something they want to mention about what went right or wrong with the game.

- ◎ **Learn the game** - Familiarizing yourself with the rules of the game and basic strategies will help you understand referee calls and take any frustrations you might have out of the game.

- ◎ **Mentally prepare yourself** - Make sure in your own mind that you are 100% clear that hockey is about having fun, meeting friends and learning new skills. Putting your child in hockey does not mean you are prepping them for hockey scholarships or the NHL.

- ◎ **Get Involved** - The best way to motivate your kids is to show them how much you want to be involved! If they see that you are excited about the game then they are going to be excited about the game. That means volunteering with the team, playing pick up with your kids or even just watching a hockey game on TV together.

- ◎ **Help your kids handle their feelings in a positive way** - Kids can get upset and frustrated easily if a game is lost or they feel they didn't play well enough. Help them out by remaining positive and suggesting that they be positive as well. It's good to remind them that there are future games, ways to learn how to play better and that it's just a game.



Fair Play



Fair play is an universal concept that forms the foundation of all sport. Fair play does not change the rules of the game. Fair play goes far beyond scoring and winning, it is about the development of skills and character, on and off the ice, that lead to a life long enjoyment of sport and recreation. Fair play allows all athletes the same opportunity to develop skills, the chance to display those skills in an atmosphere of respect, and to develop an appreciation for the efforts of all participants.

All involved in the game must be proactive and a good role model in the promotion of the values of fair play. The following are recommended fair play codes for players and parents.

Fair Play Codes

Players

- ⦿ I will play hockey because I want to, not because others or coaches want me to.
- ⦿ I will play by the rules of hockey, and in the spirit of the game.
- ⦿ I will control my temper - fighting and "mouthing off" can spoil the game for everybody.
- ⦿ I will respect my opponents.
- ⦿ I will do my best to be a true team player.
- ⦿ I will remember that winning isn't everything - that having fun, improving skills, making friends and doing my best are also important.
- ⦿ I will acknowledge all good plays/performance - those of my team and of my opponents.
- ⦿ I will remember that coaches and officials are there to help me.
- ⦿ I will accept their decisions and those they respect.



Parents

- ⦿ I will not force my child to participate in hockey.
- ⦿ I will remember that my child plays hockey for his or her enjoyment, not for mine.
- ⦿ I will encourage my child to play by the rules and to resolve conflicts without resorting to hostility or violence.
- ⦿ I will teach my child that doing one's best is as important as winning, so that my child will never feel defeated by the outcome of a game.
- ⦿ I will make my child feel like a winner every time by offering praise for competing fairly and trying hard.
- ⦿ I will never ridicule or yell at my child for making a mistake or losing a game.
- ⦿ I will remember that children learn best by example.
- ⦿ I will applaud good plays/performance by both my child's team and their opponents.
- ⦿ I will never question the officials' judgement or honesty in public.
- ⦿ I will support all efforts to remove verbal and physical abuse from children's hockey games.
- ⦿ I will respect and show appreciation for the volunteer coaches who give their time to coach hockey for my child.
- ⦿ I will show respect for my team's opponents, because without them there would be no game.
- ⦿ I will not use bad language, nor will I harass players, coaches, officials or other spectators.

- Excerpt from: *Safety Requires Teamwork*
HOCKEY CANADA



Preparation

Before you leave the house to hit the ice, remember to check these points off your list:

- ⦿ Ensure all equipment is in your hockey bag before you head out. There is no equipment or protective gear that can be “left out just once”. It is also unhygienic to borrow fellow teammate’s equipment.
- ⦿ Double check to make sure your skates are sharp. If the blades are too dull it will greatly affect the player’s ability to stop, turn and in general skate properly which can cause accidents and injury.
- ⦿ Make sure you have a large water bottle full for the game or practice. Hydration is key to keeping players alert and safe on the ice.
Eat a healthy meal earlier in the day with lots of good carbohydrates. This will prevent feeling tired and lethargic on the ice.

Training

For hockey players under the age of ten off ice training is not a huge priority. However it is never too early for young hockey players to start practicing stick control, skating, weaving and working on overall agility and speed. The important thing for young hockey players is having fun, which in the long run makes them much better hockey players and associate the game with positive memories. Below are a few tips on how to start honing some hockey skills.

- ⦿ Getting out with your kids on weekends for a leisurely skate at a local rink is a prime opportunity to have fun and start practicing some skills. Playing different games on the ice are a great way to have fun and learn skills. Different activities such as ice tag, putting together a mini obstacle course and of course starting an impromptu game of pick up. Use your imagination! This is a great opportunity to bond with kids!
- ⦿ Getting kids into routines when they are young is key for when they are older hockey players. Teaching kids how to warm-up and cool down before games and practices is important in preventing injuries such as pulls and strains.
- ⦿ Teaching kids about nutrition before games and practices is key when they are young. Just like instructing kids on how to properly stretch, teaching them proper eating habits now will stick with them later in life.

Keeping Your Equipment Clean

Most Canadians know how bad hockey equipment smells when it is not properly taken care of- it smells really bad. Not only does equipment smell bad but can be a breeding ground for bacteria. Here are some helpful hints on the proper methods of taking care of your equipment so that you can avoid that “hockey bag” smell.

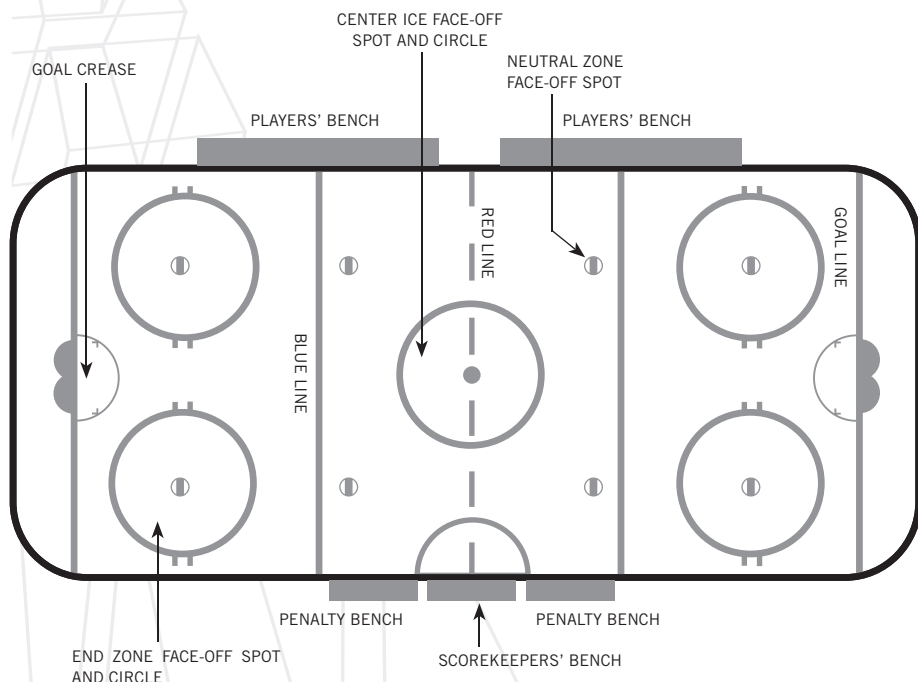
Immediately after every game and practice, equipment should be hung up to dry. Moisture allows bacteria to grow so air drying after every use is essential. This will assist in preventing athlete infections and in prolonging the life of the equipment. (Never place leather equipment over any source of direct heat, as cracking will occur.)

All equipment including the hockey bag should be washed/cleaned on a regular basis and periodic spraying with an alcohol based equipment disinfecting spray is also recommended. Cleaning can be done at home or through professional cleaning services.

Hockey Rink



A hockey rink is an ice surface specifically designed for the game of hockey. It is rectangular with round corners and surrounded by a wall, called the boards, approximately a metre high but varies from facility to facility.



Age Divisions

The age divisions for Hockey Canada are as of December 31 of the current playing year.

Initiation - 5 & 6	Bantam - 13 & 14
Novice - 7 & 8	Midget - 15-17
Atom - 9 & 10	Juvenile - 18-19
Pee Wee - 11 & 12	Junior - 20 & under



Equipment

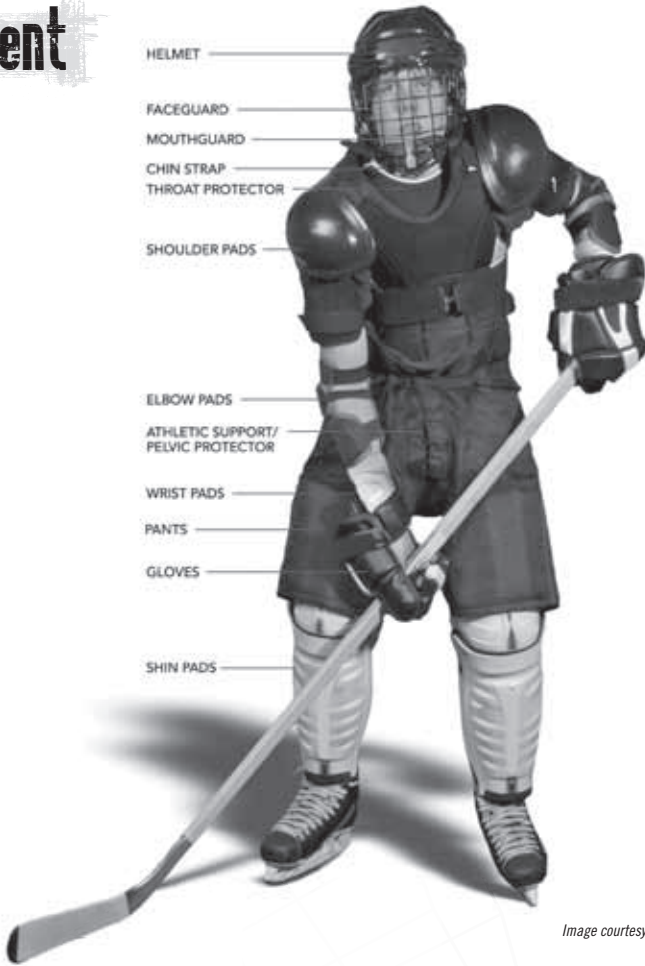


Image courtesy of Hockey Canada

Importance of Fitting Properly

Properly fitting equipment is essential to the safety of all players, as well as maximizing mobility and player performance.

Hockey Helmets

Your body can not function without your brain. Your hockey helmet is one of your most important pieces of equipment. To make sure that your hockey helmet is properly fit make sure the helmet is snug and comfortable. Adjust the chinstrap so that it gently makes contact under your chin when fastened. Obtain the correct head size, measure around your head with a flexible tape measure directly where a sweat band would rest.

Hockey Cages and Face Shields

The traditional cage face mask is strong and durable. It provides excellent ventilation and breathing with adequate vision. The face shield protects the face and provides excellent vision both straight ahead and peripherally. Hockey Canada requires all helmets and face shields to be CSA certified.

Mouth Guards

Mouth guards not only significantly reduce the incidence and severity of injuries to the teeth and mouth, but they may act as a shock absorber against more serious injuries like jaw fractures and concussions.

Shoulder Pads

Your shoulder pads are your first line of defense in the event of an impact. Properly fitted pads will provide protection for the collar bone, chest, ribs, back and upper arms. It is important that the shoulder pads achieve this protection while still allowing a full range of motion. For example, lifting the arms above the head should not push the shoulder pads uncomfortably high around the player's neck.

Neck Guards

The neck guard is mandatory in all minor and female hockey, not necessarily in Junior. It must be BNQ certified. Its intent is to protect against skate blades not impact from sticks or pucks. It should cover the entire throat area and fit snugly and comfortably.

Elbow Pads

Elbows are an extremely vulnerable part of your body that is why it is necessary to protect them. Like the shoulder pads your elbows should fit comfortably into the center of the elbow pad cup. A good elbow pad will provide forearm protection by extending down to the cuff of your hockey glove.

Shin Pads

Not only do shin pads protect shins but they also help prevent knee injuries. The lower leg is an extremely high contact area which must be shielded against injuries caused by collisions with sticks, pucks and skates.

Hockey Gloves

Gloves are another essential piece of equipment. They provide protection and help with stick control. One of the primary concerns with the fit of the hockey glove is to ensure that the gap between the glove and the elbow pad is minimal. The tightness of the glove is a personal preference and the tips of your fingers should not go completely to the ends of the glove. The glove should also feature a lock thumb system which will protect the thumb from being bent backwards.

Hockey Pants

Hockey pants protect your lower back and your upper legs from hits, sticks and pucks. Pants should be loose and comfortable but have the ability to be secured firmly by the belt around the waist. Approximately 90% of all players will be able to use their waist size as their guide for choosing the correct size pants. The bottom of the pants should overlap the top of the shin pad kneecaps by 1- 2 inches. This will ensure proper protection even when in a kneeling position.

Hockey Skates

A pair of hockey skates is also one of your most important pieces of equipment. Skates generally fit (1- 1½) sizes smaller than your shoe size. A good clean way to break in your new skates is to lace them up at home. You could also use a hair dryer to warm them, but be careful not to overheat any one area. You can wear your skates while you're doing your homework, reading or watching television. Just remember to have skate guards on.

Hockey Sticks

Skates might be one of your most important pieces of equipment but your stick is your most important tool. The best way to measure your stick is to stand in your stocking feet, without your skates on a flat surface. Place the bottom of your stick on the ground between your feet. Lean the stick straight up-and-down so that the handle of the stick touches the tip of your nose. The general rule is to mark the stick at this point and cut the handle on your mark.

A defenseman may want to use a longer stick to give them a longer reach for poking the puck away and a forward may want to use a shorter stick to help them stickhandle better.

Wood Sticks

Generally manufactured with a standard square shape these are generally the heaviest sticks. They have good value but have poor shaft consistency and may break easier.

Composite Sticks

Can be found in different shapes, weights and flexes. A composite stick should be purchased for improved shaft consistency, shot speed, shot accuracy and its lighter weight.



Simple Rules of the Games



Every good hockey parent knows that one of the most important things in making your child's hockey experience well rounded is to know the game yourself. That's why we are providing you with some of the basic rules and the who's who of the game.

1. Icing The Puck

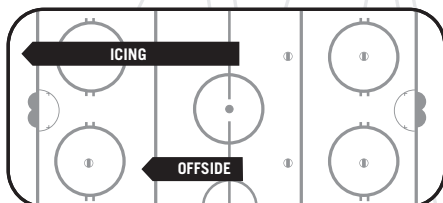
Icing is when a player on his team's side of the red center line shoots the puck all the way down the ice and it crosses the red goal line at any point other than the goal itself. When this occurs, play is stopped and the puck is returned to the other end of the ice for a face-off in the offending team's zone.

Icing the puck is not called:

- If a goalie plays the puck by leaving his net.
- When a defending opponent, in the judgement of the linesman, could have played the puck before it crossed the red goal line.
- When a team is playing short-handed because of a penalty or penalties.

2. Offside

A team is offside when any member of the attacking team precedes the puck over the defending team's blue line. The position of the player's skates and not that of his stick is the determining factor. If both skates are over the blue line before the puck, the player is offside. If he has only one skate over the blue line and one on it, he is onside.



On Ice Officials

In hockey, an official is a person who has some responsibility in enforcing the rules and maintaining the order of the game. There are two categories of officials, on-ice officials, who are the referees and linesmen that enforce the rules during game play, an off-ice officials, who have an administrative role rather than an enforcement role.

On Ice Officials

Referees

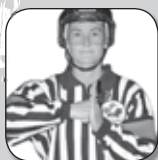
A referee is responsible for the general supervision of the game. He can be identified by his red or orange armbands. He is the only official with the authority to assess penalties for violations of the rules.

Linesmen

Linesmen are primarily responsible for watching for violations involving the red line and the blue line. Such infractions include icing and offside infractions. Linesmen conduct face-offs, break-up scuffles and other altercations that occur during the game.



Referee Signals



Boarding



Delayed Calling
Penalty



Hooking



Roughing



Bodychecking



Delayed
Offside



Icing the Puck



Slashing



Butt-Ending



Elbowing



Interference



Spearing



Charging



Goal Scored



Kneeing



Tripping



Checking from
Behind



High Sticking



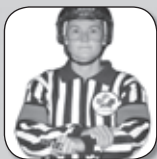
Match Penalty



Unsportsman-
like Conduct



Checking to
the Head



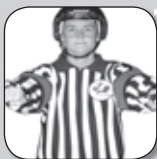
Holding



Misconduct



Washout



Cross-Checking



Holding the
Stick



Penalty Shot





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