

Hockey Equipment Information For Parents

There are, understandably, many parents who have questions about equipment. The following information is meant to answer a few questions parents may have. If you have further questions, please ask any of your coaches.

Skates:

- Your player's skates are the most important part of his or her equipment. It **does** matter what type of skates your child has. You do not need to spend over \$100 on a brand new pair of skates but you should get a "modern" pair with good ankle support. They do not need to be new. If your child skates with ankles bent in, it is either because his or her skates are not laced tight enough or the skates are too old and no longer provide enough support. Ask a coach to help you determine which problem you may have.
- Just as important as skates is the edge that is on their blades. Older skates in particular should be inspected by a knowledgeable skate sharpener to verify they have the correct curvature or "rocker". Skate blades that have been sharpened many times tend to acquire too much curvature making it difficult for your child to balance on them.
- Many people find skate lease programs desirable. Such programs allow you to lease skates for a year and during that year exchange them for no cost if your child outgrows his or her current pair. If you ask around you can locate the retailers that offer lease programs.

Sticks:

- Don't assume that because your child writes and/or throws left or right handed that she or he will shoot and pass the puck with the same dominant hand. If your child is just beginning hockey, buy a straight stick (one without curve) and observe which hand your child tends to use. After that you can purchase a stick with the appropriate curve.
- A hockey stick should be cut to length such that when placed on the ground standing straight up it reaches your child's nose when wearing shoes or such that it reaches your child's chin or mouth when wearing skates.

Gloves:

- Try to get the smallest gloves that still fit your child. Small kids with small hands using big gloves often find it very difficult to handle and pick up their stick. Try to get gloves with fingers that your child has the strength to open and close while wearing them.

Pads:

- At the beginner level don't feel that you need to get the top-of-the-line pads. In fact many times these expensive pads are more bulky than the budget versions and can hamper your child's ability to skate and maneuver.

Mouth Guards:

- The most common mouth guard problem with young skaters is that they are too big or long for the player's mouth. Mouth guards come long from the factory and must be cut back to fit. When fitting your child's mouth guard, pay attention to its length.

Label Everything!

You will undoubtedly lose something during the course of your child's hockey career.

Labeling your equipment allows for the person who finds it to get it back to you without having to go through lost and found (which frequently does not work).