



MINNESOTA HOCKEY

RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION MANUAL



What will youth hockey bring out of your kid?
Strength. Responsibility. Thrills. Hockey helps boys and girls make big strides.



RECRUITMENT AND RETENTION

Mission Statement:

**TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS FOR
RECRUITING NEW PLAYERS
AND RETAINING EXISTING
PLAYERS THROUGH
COMMUNICATION,
EDUCATION
AND THE PROMOTION OF THE
GAME OF HOCKEY**

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Association Recruitment and Retention Coordinator Roles & Responsibilities

The following document lists all the District R&R Coordinator roles and responsibilities that they are either directly responsible or must ensure appropriate processes are in place for the activity. Minnesota Hockey recommends they hold a Board Seat.

PRIMARY ACTIVITIES

1. Promote Hockey

- Done year round – provide better hockey awareness and publicity with in the community as wells grow the association hockey player numbers.
- Publicity within the community (e.g. local paper, parades, etc.)
- Recruiting (e.g. Intro to hockey programs, recruiting flyers, etc.)
- High School Girls & Boys Hockey Interaction (e.g. jersey nights, HS clinics, player mentors)

2. Team Planning/Forecast

- Forecast teams for the following season (usually in spring). If team/player number issues, work on alternatives, options, recruiting to address the issues.
- Provide final team counts for each age division and level of play to District Director (usually by mid-September). Numbers are used to determine league formation.
- Establish goals for team numbers. Also principles/rules for how level of play will be determined, moving players up early, cooping with other associations, etc.

3. Liaison with High School Coach

- Try to establish periodic meeting with HS coach to review player numbers, program development plans, HS player involvement with association hockey.

4. Goalie Development/Promotion

- Encourage/identify enough goalies so that each age division has enough goalies.
- Help facilitate goalie development – assoc goalie clinics, identify potential goalie coaches, etc.

5. District Hockey Liaison for the Association

- Attend District Coordinator meetings (Sept, Mid-Season, April). Represent your association with input towards issues, plans, etc.
- Hockey issues/concerns should be escalated through you.

6. “Try Hockey”/”Intro to Hockey” Programs for Minimal Cost & Risk

- This is the single biggest success factor for associations that have seen large growth in hockey –
- Allow new potential players to try it without having to commit large sums of money for gear or commit to a full season. Without this option many kids don't even try.
- Clinic can be as simple as one day, to multiple sessions. Time of year varies.
- For more details, contact Other associations that provide this type of program.

7. Promote as “Mainstream” Winter Sport for kids

- You’d be surprised – many families aren’t aware that hockey is an option, or think of it as a niche. This factor is often underestimated.
- Personally or get teams to put as much positive press on hockey stories with in the community newspapers, players participate in parades, etc.

8.Players Getting Friends to Sign-up

- Especially effective when kids are signed up for the first time.
- Offer reduction in registration as incentive in bringing a friend to play hockey.
- Text friends or attach videos or stories to facebook or twitter.

9.Jersey Fridays

- Pick Friday(s) during the school year and have all players (or entire association) wear their jerseys to school. Provides great visibility for playing hockey, and will hopefully create additional new interest.

10. Activities with High School Hockey Teams

- Hockey clinics with the youth programs.
- Jersey nights for select home HS game(s) – usually free entry when they wear their jersey.
- Player mentor programs

11. Word of Mouth

- Challenge every parent to be a hockey recruiter. This is typically the best way to get the word out.

12. Keep list of kids/parents that express interest in playing hockey.

All hockey coordinators should have a comprehensive list of hockey players in their association. During/after registration, confirm that all have reregistered. Those that have not follow-up with them to find out why. Some just weren’t aware of registration, some for financial reasons, some moved. Those quitting for bad experiences, use those reasons for improving the program.

District Recruitment & Retention Coordinator Growing Hockey In Your Community

The list includes various activities that associations/coordinators have done to promote and grow girls hockey within their community and is recommended they hold a full board position at the District Level.

- 1. Attend the Minnesota Hockey Recruitment and Retention Meetings .**
 - Help with the developing ideas
 - Research possible changes needed
- 2. Develop a District Recruitment and Retention committee consisting of one member from each association that will be the Association Coordinator**
- 3. Bring to the District Committee all information and materials provided by USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey.**
 - Hand out information discuss how to implement.
 - Be available to help each association with promoting recruiting
- 4. Positively promote the game of Hockey through all avenues available to you in your area.**
- 5. Discuss problems and challenges in your area and bring them back to Minnesota Hockey Recruitment and Retention committee.**
- 6. Collect and share successful programs with Minnesota Hockey and their associations**

BEFORE YOU BEGIN

- **Dedicated players coordinator is a must. It will take 2-4 years to make a difference.**
- **Form a recruiting committee**
- **Follow-up with players that did not sign up from the previous season**
- **Establish realistic annual goals for recruiting**
- **Talk to other people that have had success**
- **Develop a plan**

Building a Successful Hockey Program

By Minnesota Hockey

I. Before you begin...

1. You need a committed Association Recruiting Coordinator
2. Support for building up the program from the board
3. Setup building strategy and goals for the upcoming year and reassess yearly.
4. Recruit additional committed volunteers to help achieve your goals.

II. Recruiting

1. Pull together a recruiting committee (core team of 3-4+ members).
2. Get as much local press on hockey as possible – local paper, association newsletter, etc.
3. Typically your most effective recruiter is by word of mouth.
4. Keep a list of all parents/players mentioning interest in playing hockey.
5. Establish an “Intro to Hockey” program (target at beginners)
6. Distribute hockey registration flyers to schools the first week of classes
7. Assuming Mites/Mini Mites is very low cost ... stress in your flyers that these age levels are inexpensive (dispels the concerns of the high cost of the sport).

III. “Intro to Hockey”

1. Preparation
 - Kids participating are to use all protective hockey gear. You can start out getting donations or kids loaning equipment. Best if you can get a sponsor and buy a bunch of cheap equipment. If using own equipment ask to verify it fits properly.
 - As soon as possible, coordinate with Ice Arena for securing ice time. Recommend hitting times that fall in-between sports (e.g. March/April, July/Aug). Pick a night that may have least amount of conflicts (e.g. Sunday nights in the summer). If can't get the ice time donated, try to see if they will list it as open hockey so you do are not liable for the cost.
2. Promoting the program
 - Promote via association news letter, posters at the rink, flyers to schools, local paper, directly market to traveling/in-house athletics (e.g. soccer, softball, etc)
 - Use energetic, experienced coaches
 - Get Girl's & Boy's High School Hockey players involved
 - Keep a database of all contacts that mention an interest. Make sure you do direct follow-up. Secure their registration and check to lock-in commitment.
 - Emphasize it as a cheap no risk way to try the game of ice hockey. Everyone will be beginners (minimizes intimidation).
3. The clinic
 - This program is more about selling the kids on the game of hockey than it is on teaching.
 - Be very organized: welcome table, name labels, welcome letter/FAQ, plenty of coaches
 - Coaching ratio:

4-6 years	2:1
7-10 years	4:1
12 & older	6
 -
 -
 -
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 -
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- Use at least 2-3 fun activities/games to each hour to reinforce some of the skills (scrimmaging, freeze tag, relays, puck tag, slide under stick to touch cone, etc.). Keep skill development focus simple (e.g. avoid backward skating). Like to start out early with practice falling. Do it in a fun way – have coaches demonstrate, can do a contest to see who gets the most snow on their body. Emphasis that it is okay to fall, shows they are trying hard and eliminates falling phobia in a fun way.
 - Be flexible with moving kids between groups as appropriate.
 - Try to keep parent out of the player boxes.
4. Making the sell
- If possible have the main organizer available to address any questions or concerns before/during/after session. Dispel hockey myths as much as possible.
 - Try to get them registered for the upcoming season before the final session (establish a discount if possible)
 - Establish a new/used equipment purchase/loaner program.

IV. Retaining players

1. Track closely all players that do not sign up from the previous season. Follow-up with them to find-out why they are not signing up.
2. Promote a list of key success factors that teams should be doing to make seasons fun and successful: Making it fun is a priority, early team building get-togethers, over-night tourney, get all parents to do some form of volunteer work for the team, etc.
3. If possible offer specific girls programs for girls to play in the girls programs. Most will enjoy it more (social aspect) and develop confidence to participate more quickly. Many quit or do not even sign-up if they have to play on a mostly boys team.
4. During the season keep a pulse on teams and parents/players by frequently polling people on how things are going
5. Involve the High School Boys & Girls hockey players:
 - Setup a free clinic with the high school
 - “Jersey” night for one of the girl’s or boy’s high school games
 - Mentor program or girls or boys player helpers on the youth teams.
6. Providing treats afterwards is a bonus.

V. Improving the playing level of your program

1. Promote off-season clinics in January/February. Provide them with recommended alternatives based on cost, value, target development areas (e.g. power skating, all round, stick handling, etc.)
2. If numbers allow, setup a summer youth program. This is not meant to replace formal clinics. Targeted as fun pond hockey like environment. Should be less structured and targeted at having fun and being creative (they get plenty of structure during the regular season). 50% or more should be some form of game/scrimmaging. For those doing other formal clinics, this is a chance for them to exhibit what they have been learning.
3. Establish a goal of having two teams per level so the you can run tryouts for A/B teams so kids can skate at the level appropriate for their development. Keep co-op teams with neighboring communities an option.
4. Coordinate your strategies with the High School coach.
5. As much as possible try to keep kids playing at the age division they belong.

Recruitment and Retention Reading Program
SAMPLE ANNOUNCEMENT FOR A J.V. AND VARSITY HOCKEY GAME
(CAN BE READ DURING THE WARM UP AND FLOW INTO THE TEAM
INTRODUCTIONS)

Good afternoon hockey fans and welcome to XXXXXX ice arena. Today's game features the "XXXXX" from "XXXX" and your "XXXX" hockey team.

We'd like to take a moment to recognize our XXXXXX Boys/Girls Hockey teams for the community service they completed earlier this month in coordination with February's "I love to read month."

The reading program was part of Minnesota Hockey Pilot Program. The entire JV and Varsity teams visited XXXXX and XXXXXX elementary schools to read to kindergarten and 1st graders. The reading program promotes the importance of reading and community service. Minnesota Hockey has initiated this community service reading program as a statewide initiative to promote reading and introduce elementary students to youth hockey.

Congratulations to all of our high school boys/girls hockey players for their community service and elementary students for participating in the reading program. Thank you?!

Now, let's meet the visiting team from XXXXX...

Recruiting & Retention Pilot Program Implementation Plan

The Minnesota Hockey Recruiting and Retention Committee has outlined the vision of the recruiting pilot program, using the Brady Brady series of books, and has secured a point person to develop a pilot program, including sample materials. The pilot program will be utilized within Minnesota Hockey District 3. Upon receipt of feedback from the pilot program participants, appropriate changes will be implemented and the finalized program will be rolled out throughout the state of Minnesota to attract and retain youth hockey players.

Upon finalization of the program, including materials, Minnesota Hockey will describe and promote the recruiting program to District Directors. District Directors and Representatives are then to promote the program to their respective youth hockey association representatives. The program may also be promoted by the District Directors and/or Representatives of Minnesota State High School Hockey Coach Association. The District Recruiting and Retention Committee consist of representatives of each youth hockey association. The representatives are to promote the recruiting program to their respective youth hockey association for consideration to be included within their recruiting and retention initiatives.

To implement the program within their youth hockey association, the associations will contact the District Recruiting and Retention Committee contact person to obtain the program materials. The associations will be required to establish a program coordinator(s) to take the lead to implement the program for their association. There are several prior approvals from Minnesota Hockey and within the school district that are required prior to implementing the plan. Minnesota Hockey requires each association to submit completed Individual Membership Registration Forms (IMR) for each participant of an event(s) hosted by a Minnesota Youth Hockey Association. Additionally, the school district approval process will vary by school district and specific schools therein that will require each association to collaborate with the school district and high school to ensure a successful implementation of the program. Upon receipt of approval by the school district to proceed with the program, the youth hockey association coordinator will communicate the program throughout the association and collaborate with the elementary principals and teachers, high school hockey coaches (boys, girls, varsity, junior varsity), junior gold coaches or even local college hockey coaches. The high school Athletic Director may also be a contact person to work with the coaches and coordinate the student volunteers to ensure community service hours are credited to the student volunteers. Please refer to the following flow chart describing the proposed implementation plan.

Recruitment and Retention Reading Program

Try these read-aloud tips from the Reading is Fundamental website:

- Set the stage before you begin reading. Discuss what you will be reading and that learning to read is very important. Take turns reading aloud; for example, each of you can read a page in an easy reader.
-
- Defer questions until after you finish reading, if possible. This helps children get fully engaged in listening to a story.
-
- Ask a child to imagine what he or she might do in a situation similar to that faced by a character.
-
- Teachers can provide materials and activities that let children expand their understanding of a character, historical event, or situation.
-
- Talk about what you have read. Books often evoke strong feelings that need to be shared. Offer your reactions and invite a child to do the same.
-
- Stop reading at a suspenseful point in the book. This encourages a child to be eager for tomorrow's read-aloud time.

©2008 Reading Is Fundamental, Inc

Additionally, the Pizza Hut Book It! Program provides these following tips:

- Be sure to hold up the book to show the pictures to the entire group before moving on to the next page. Or, if possible, you want to hold the book up so the younger students can look at the pages as you are reading.
- Draw attention to the illustrations and features of the text
- Read slowly to allow the younger students to be engaged in the book
- To foster a positive experience in reading and an interest in books you may want to be enthusiastic when you read

Have fun and enjoy your event!

SCHOOLS

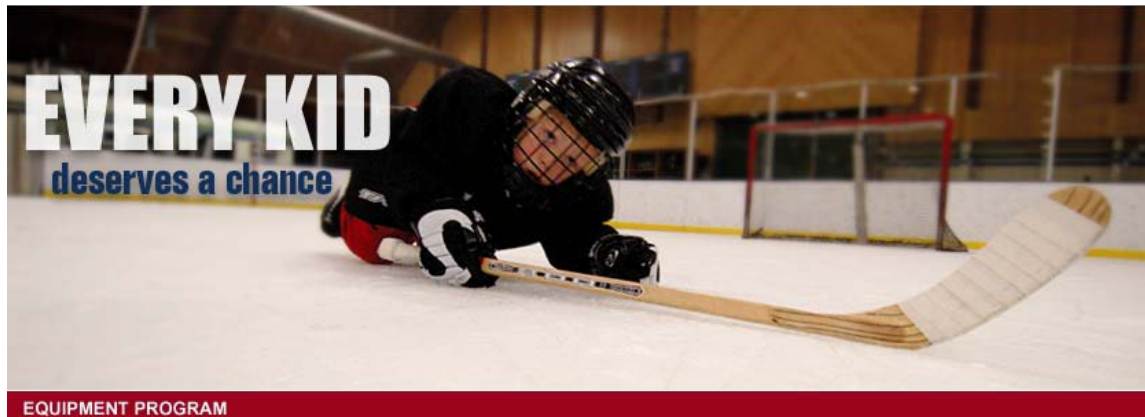
1. Handout flyers
2. Staff table at open house with jerseys/trophies
3. Have jersey day early in the school year and throughout the season
4. Set up a reading program using high school and college players wearing their jerseys to interact with the students and hand out information at the school at that time
5. Play floor hockey for a gym activity
6. Use Brady Brady books to read to school children about hockey – invite an Olympian to read at the school
7. Attend your school carnival and create a game with a hockey theme.

COMMUNITY

1. Staff an informational booth at City festivals
2. Attend Community events
3. Mail flyers to “try hockey” (any time during the year)
4. Place posters with Association contact information in local stores, schools
5. Participate in Parades, with floats and handout information flyers, kids on roller blades
6. Attend your school carnival have a game pertaining to hockey and one of prizes be Hockey coloring books provided by USA Hockey.
7. Place posters in fitness centers, YMCA, YWCA, etc.
8. Staff booth at Minnesota State Fair
9. Plan an event for Hockey Day in Minnesota and let the Wild Promote it.

OTHER SPORTS

1. Promote youth sports
 - Share names list with other sports.
2. Partner with other sports
3. Announcements at Boys & Girls High School games
4. Partner with local Park and Recreation
5. Promote youth sports participation
6. Place advertisements in the High School sport programs
 - Play field hockey during half time at football or soccer games
7. Help work at summer/fall softball, baseball, soccer tournaments
8. Partner with others sports in a poster to pass information on.



OneGoal starter equipment program

- Orders accepted until March 1st, 2009.
- For rinks, retailers, associations
- Everything a kid needs to get started (except skates and stick)
- Quantities are limited
- Click equipment form to get started

[Equipment Form](#)

[FAQs](#)

OneGoal Buzz

"Over half of the kids who took our first OneGoal class are still skating. We have had nothing but positive responses from the parents and players."

- Todd Finch,
Hockey Programs
Director Quad City
Sports Center

"Small" OneGoal Starter Kit

(Generally targeted for 4- to 6-year-olds)
Youth large shoulder, pant and elbow;
8" shin and gloves; x-small adjustable helmet

"Large" OneGoal Starter Kit

(Generally targeted for 6- to 8-year-olds)
Junior small shoulder, pant and elbow; 10" shin
and glove; small adjustable helmet

First-Timer Rental Kit Contents

OneGoal-branded kits include everything except skates and a stick. High-quality and conveniently packaged, this gear will light up a kid's face, at a price that will do the same for parents.

Equipment Kits

OneGoal has covered a substantial portion of the marketing and manufacturing expenses (offering this equipment at less than cost). Your cost is only \$70 each. Minimum order is 20 kits. Orders must be made in multiples of 4. Be sure to fill out your order form, as supplies are limited.

How

The focal point of OneGoal is onegoal.com: a website that shows families new to hockey the positives of the sport, and helps them get started. In addition, we've partnered with low-cost learn-to-skate programs to help kids experience the joy of the game. And now, to help overcome the initial cost barrier, special First-Timer Rental Equipment Kits are available.

Your Role

When you offer OneGoal First-Timer Rental Equipment Kits, you take vital, active role in making it easier for parents to give hockey a chance in their family. And by working with your local learn-to-skate programs, you become a recognized hockey leader in your area.

Vision

The OneGoal equipment kits are NOT FOR RESALE. OneGoal's vision is that this equipment is offered free. Our hope is that retailers will partner with associations to bring this program to beginners, giving thousands of families across North America one more reason to try hockey. From there, the fun and camaraderie of the game itself can turn first-timers into life-timers.

For questions please contact Christine Lucas:

P: 514-342-0366

E: clucas@onegoal.com

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RINK PROGRAMS

1. Develop Learn to Skate Programs– have coaches work with kids and make it a fun experience; talk with parents to answer questions; host a pizza party. Call participants a week after completion inviting them back. Have on hand HEP material and Minnesota Hockey Journals to hand out at these events.
2. Introduction to Hockey – Divide ice up for different levels. Utilize coaches who will give them a taste of hockey using fun drills and games. Ask local Play It Again Sports stores to assist with equipment and set up a system for parents who want to buy equipment.
3. Induce first year players with reduced cost to participate, make it free or use other incentives such as bring a friend who joins and your fee is half price.
4. Start a Recreational Hockey League to provide hockey for those who do not want to make it a full time sport.

MEDIA

1. Newspaper/Radio advertisements about games or tournaments
2. Use MN Hockey Corporate sponsors to lead the campaign advertisements
3. Place hockey posters in your community with association contact information
4. Use your local cable and television networks
5. Minnesota Hockey Web Page
6. Use Minnesota Olympians for television spots
7. Promote Hockey Day Minnesota
8. Join with other local sports for a combined poster with hockey information
9. HEP Materials
10. Minnesota Hockey Journal
11. Ask your local radio station to broadcast the available radio spots provided by Minnesota Hockey and add your association contact information. There are four Minnesota Hockey Public Service Announcement radio spots. Each spot features a notable hockey person from Minnesota (Darby Hendrickson, Natalie Darwitz, Todd Richards, Jason Blake). The spots are 30 seconds in length, however the last few seconds are left open so an association can tag the spot with information about their specific association's registration. Radio stations in the non-metro area will likely broadcast these spots for free or at very little cost. To receive this information email Mike Snee at MSnee@Minnesotahockey.org

POSITIVE RE-ENFORCEMENT IDEAS

1. Coaches – Keep using more positives. Try to be as patient as possible with the kids(learn to bite your tongue rather than bark at the kids).
2. Parents – On the way home don't talk about the bad plays that your child or others had. Discuss the good plays they had in the corner, the face off in the 2nd period or how good they looked coming onto the ice at the beginning of the game.
3. Hockey Players – Encourage your friends to play hockey. Ask second year Bantams to write a small article about their experiences playing youth hockey.

TESTIMONIALS

1. Post Testimonials on the local web sites, in the arena or put them up at some of the local businesses
2. Post Testimonials on the Minnesota Hockey web site
3. Use recognized Minnesota players and Olympians
4. Post testimonials on social media such as Face book and Twitter.

WAYS TO KEEP COSTS DOWN

1. Use your ice time more efficiently with 2 or 3 teams on the ice for practice
2. Allow 3 to 4 teams at one site to have one weekend of scrimmages with the **District Director's approval**. These should not be counted as a tournament as defined in MN Hockey handbook. (No gate and no trophies awarded)
3. Team Fees – Keep the clothing cost down by getting a good heavy duty sweat shirt
4. Associations establish a tournament policy – 1 out of town and a maximum of 3 Tournaments. Limit the total of games teams can play per year.
5. Use more off ice training (dry land or outdoor ice {pond/pickup hockey})
6. Fundraising
7. Host an Equipment Swap and provide a list of Equipment Grant Programs to Associations

**2010-2011 XCEL ENERGY / MINNESOTA WILD
PLAY OUR GAME EQUIPMENT PROGRAM
INDIVIDUAL AND ASSOCIATION GRANT APPLICATION FORM**

Organization: _____ **Contact:** _____

Mailing Address (no PO Boxes): _____
City: _____

Zip: _____ **Daytime Phone:** _____

Email: _____

1. The purpose of this grant program is to increase the number of youth participating in the sport of ice hockey by making "starter" equipment available to as many potential new players as possible. Please explain how your request will support this goal (please attach separate page if necessary):

2. Please describe how your association will encourage and promote new participation through this grant (please attach separate page if necessary):

3. Please list all other financial resources available such as fundraising, charitable gambling etc. (Associations only):

Program Director Name:

Program Director Signature:

Association President Signature: (required) _____

Comments:

District Director Signature: (required) _____

Comments:

COMPLETED APPLICATIONS SHOULD BE SENT TO: PLAY OUR GAME EQUIPMENT PROGRAM, Mike Snee, 317 Washington Street, St. Paul, MN 55102. GRANT APPLICATION DEADLINE IS APRIL 30, 2010.

ASSOCIATIONS RECEIVING AWARDS WILL RECEIVE SETS OF "STARTER" EQUIPMENT IN YOUTH SIZES (HELMET/MASK, SHIN PADS, GLOVES, PANTS, AND ELBOW PADS). EQUIPMENT WILL BE DELIVERED TO GRANT RECIPIENTS NO LATER THAN SEPTEMBER 30, 2009.

ADDITIONAL APPLICATIONS ARE AVAILABLE AT WWW.MINNESOTAHOCKEY.ORG.

PLEASE CALL 651-602-5727 WITH ANY QUESTIONS.

FOR USE BY GRANT BOARD

DATE OF REVIEW _____ GRANT APPLICATION # _____

COMMENTS:

RECOMMENDATION / ACTION:

INITIALS

Minnesota Hockey: _____ Minnesota Wild: _____

RETENTION

1. Establish no check leagues for Pee Wee and Bantams
2. Place kids at the correct level of play (look at moving team down a level)
3. Keep the parents informed and happy
4. Address association rule changes to take the pressure off the kids to perform and bring the fun back into hockey
 - a. game number limitation
 - b. number of practices per week
 - c. travel limitation
 - d. limit number of tournaments
5. Refrain from Sunday morning practices for Mites and Squirts and avoid Wednesday evenings. Schedule ice around religious education and Church events in your area
6. Contact families of players who do not return to your program the following year
7. Provide teams for U16's and Junior Gold for those players who do not or cannot play high school hockey