



Bring-A-Friend Try Hockey

A Step-By-Step Model To Host An Effective Event

As a team sport, hockey is by nature in part a social activity. Minnesota's community-based model further enhances that component by encouraging kids to play with their friends from school and the neighborhood.

Therefore, one of the most popular and effective events at increasing interest in hockey is bring-a-friend try hockey events. The underlying premise is to use current players as the primary recruiting force for the association. This type of event has been shown to be particularly effective in obtaining new girls players.

1. Format & Structure

Format:

- One hour on-ice component
- Provide lunch or a snack following the skating session
- Can offer additional activities such as a music, prizes, free t-shirts or meet and greet sessions with local high school players

Rental Needs:

- One hour of ice
- Two hours for party or conference room (if hosting additional activities)

Equipment:

- Minimum of skates, helmets, gloves and stick required
- Can provide full equipment for complete experience

2. Marketing & Communications

High School Involvement:

- Contact the local high school coach to outline the potential benefits to both organizations on the high school team's involvement
- Work together to organize and conduct the events

Communications:

- Each organization can communicate event details to internal groups via e-mails, phone calls and in-person announcements
- Provide an opportunity at the event for a question and answer session
- Offer handouts with information on a learn to skate or learn to play program
- Follow up with families after the event



2. Marketing & Communications (cont.)

Create an Incentive:

- Current players will be more likely to show up with a friend (or two) if they have an incentive for doing so
- Common examples include reduced fees, concessions coupons, discounts for local hockey stores or free apparel

Parent Presentation:

- Consider hosting a short parent presentation during the on-ice component to provide information on both organizations
- Keep it short as parents will want to watch their kids on the ice

3. On-Ice Experience

Practice Plan:

- Educate first time skaters on how to get up before going out on the ice
- Provide an unstructured time to start in which beginners can use props to get a feel for skating
- Use the majority of the time to conduct a station based practice that gives players a chance to learn basic skills and have fun
- Finish with a game!

Coaches:

- It is important to have more coaches than are present for a typical practice. Plan for as close to a 1:1 ratio as possible, including current players.
- If high school players are involved, encourage them to wear their game jersey on the ice and to help the new players

4. Volunteer Needs

Registration:

- Check-in table - must ensure waivers are properly filled out
- Help with equipment rental and fitting

Recruiters:

- Visit with parents throughout event and conduct presentation/Q&A
- Include coaches with an energetic and positive personality

Donations & Sponsorship:

- For food, families can host a potluck or work on securing donations
- Local businesses should be contacted about potential advertising and partnership opportunities