

TRY HOCKEY FOR FREE

A Step-By-Step Model To Attract New Players To Your Program

INTRODUCTION

Why have free hockey trial sessions? There is no better way to generate a life-long hockey player than to simply put a kid on skates with a stick.

A free trial provides the perfect opportunity to demonstrate that hockey is affordable, unique and convenient. Hockey is a blend of fun and exercise that can't be beat; the greatest selling point to parents will come with smiling, sweaty kids skating off the ice.

Below is a template, used by other associations, to run a highly successful "Try Hockey For Free," program.

1. IDENTIFY PROGRAM NEEDS

Ice Time

- A small section of ice during the Initiation / Mini-Mite program

Schedule

- Consistent time and day – this shows them that youth hockey can be convenient
- Four weeks is a good length

Sanctioning

- Contact Associate Registrar to get sanction for Grow the Game event

Timing

- Try to schedule when other popular sports finish
 - Soccer, Baseball, Football

Equipment

- Donated from families in association
- Purchase rental/lender OneGoal equipment sets, www.onegoal.com

Promote

- Association parents circulate information to friends
 - Emails & Flyers
- Partner with off-season sport associations to promote each others program
- Work with schools to get flyers to students

Coaches

- Get extra coaches
 - Aim for a 4 to 1 player to coach ratio
 - Get the best coaches in the association
 - Make it an honor to coach program
 - Short commitment
 - Get parents that skate for additional bodies



2. THE FIRST ICE SESSION

Volunteers

- Have extra; there is a lot to do in a short time prior to the skate
 - Check-in
 - Paperwork Questions
 - Equipment Checkout
 - Getting Dressed

Off-Ice Recruiter

- Distributes information and answer questions about your program during skate.

Practice Plan

- Fun Games
 - Tag, Relays, Races, etc...
- Finish with cross-ice game

3. NEXT STEP

More Recruiting

- Don't stop recruiting more participants
- Keep promoting through emails and flyers

Contact

- Follow up to make sure they are returning next week
- Find out what they liked and disliked

Help

- Help any family sign up for regular IP / Mini-Mite program if ready

Be Prepared

- Be ready for more participants
 - Extra volunteers, coaches & equipment

4. THE NEXT ICE SESSIONS

Practice

- Look at splitting up talent into two skill groups
 - More competitive
 - Increases fun for everyone

5. WRAP UP

Make It Easy

- Follow up with every family
- Help make transition to regular IP / Mite program easy
 - Send them registration material
 - Give them the proper contact person
 - Allow them to keep rental / lender equipment until they get their own
 - Put them in contact with the coach
 - Have a family already involved help them with the transition
 - Bring them into the association family
- Let new, interested families try hockey for free at anytime during the season

**For more information, contact Program Services at
(719) 576-8724 or growthegame@usahockey.org**

