



Objective

- Increase youth hockey participation among children ages 4-7 by providing free equipment to registered participants throughout Western Pennsylvania
- Properly equipping a child to play ice hockey requires a more significant investment compared to other sports. The goal of the Little Penguins Learn to Play Hockey program is to lessen the financial burden parents experience in order to introduce their children to the sport.

Roles

- Sidney Crosby
 - Financial support to supplement the cost of the equipment
 - Permission to use his name, likeness and number to promote the program
- Pittsburgh Penguins
 - Financial support to supplement the cost of the equipment plus administrative costs (i.e. postage, stationary, dasher board decals, in-arena banners, helmet stickers, automated voice mail reminders)
 - Execute the registration and fulfillment process for rinks, associations and participants
 - Promote program using traditional and new media
 - Provide customer service support throughout the program
- Reebok
 - Financial support to supplement the cost of the equipment
 - Forecast, order and ship equipment to Dick's Sporting Goods facility
- Dick's Sporting Goods
 - Pack equipment sets at warehouse for shipment to 6 Pittsburgh-area stores for distribution
 - Coordinate in-store redemption of vouchers and accounting with Reebok and the Pittsburgh Penguins
 - Produce equipment bag tags
- USA Hockey
 - Acknowledge the Little Penguins program as an association in the Mid-Am district
 - Provide registration tools
 - Promote the program in USA Hockey magazine
- Rinks & Associations
 - Provide regularly scheduled on-ice sessions with instruction following USA Hockey guidelines for a minimum of 10 consecutive weeks at a reasonable price (fees varied from \$75-\$250)
 - Display a "Little Penguins Learn to Play Hockey" dasher decal and banner within their facility

Rinks & Associations Registration Process

- Introduction letter sent in October to area rinks and associations from Pittsburgh Penguins team president

- Rinks and associations contact Pittsburgh Penguins director of amateur hockey within two weeks to express interest and ask for consideration to participate
- Interested rinks and associations sent an agreement to complete asking for details about their program
 - General amateur association and rink contact information
 - Program contact person information
 - Program instructor(s) contact information
 - Program start and end dates
 - Session dates and times
 - Registration fee information
 - Blackout date information (if any)
 - Proof of liability insurance for the rink and/or association
- Information for each participating program is compiled by the Penguins and verified prior to the press release announcing the program
- Upon completion of the registration process for participants, rosters were sent to each rink

Participant Registration Process

- Press release announcing the program and participating rinks issued in late November in anticipation of registration day in early December
- Dedicated website page contains detailed information about the equipment available through the program, online registration procedures, and pertinent information about each participating rink
- Links to a registration form for each rink activated the morning of the on-sale
- Participants click on the link for the rink of their choice and proceed to register for the program
- Initial registration form collects the following information:
 - Registrant's Name
 - Registrant's Date of Birth
 - Parent/Guardian's Name
 - Address
 - Phone Numbers
 - E-Mail Address
 - Summary of Registration & Service Fee
 - Pittsburgh Penguins collect all registration fees and then issue a check to the participating rink
 - A \$5 service charge is applied to cover the credit card processing fees
 - Credit Card Payment
- Once the initial registration is submitted, participants receive a confirmation e-mail with a link to complete their equipment order form along with a link to an equipment fitting guide
- The equipment order form must be completed within 1 week from the registration date and collects the following information:
 - Registrant's Name
 - Registrant's Date of Birth
 - Parent/Guardian's Name
 - Address
 - Phone Numbers
 - E-Mail Address
 - Rink of Registration
 - Dick's Sporting Goods Equipment Pick-Up Location (1 of 6 stores)
 - Equipment Sizes

- Helmet
 - Skates
 - Gloves
 - Shoulder Pads
 - Shin Guards
 - Elbow Pads
 - Pants
 - Equipment bag and stick are also included, however sizing is not necessary for these items
- Upon submitting the equipment order form, participants receive a link to register for USA Hockey
- USA Hockey registration confirmation forms are e-mailed or faxed to the Pittsburgh Penguins who then electronically claim the participants as part of the “Little Penguins” association
- Once all registration, equipment and USA Hockey membership forms have been processed and approved, participants received the following via mail:
 - Equipment voucher with pick-up instructions
 - Printed on security paper
 - Unique voucher numbers assigned to each participant
 - Little Penguins jersey
 - Little Penguins helmet stickers

Equipment Forecasting & Fulfillment

- Pittsburgh Penguins collaborated with Reebok to forecast equipment order for 4-7 year old participants
- Equipment orders were placed with Reebok in September to ensure the product would be available by mid-January
- The Penguins adjusted sizing requests for individual pieces of equipment prior to submitting the final list to Dick’s Sporting Goods for fulfillment to accommodate for shortages in particular sizes
- Participants were notified that sizing may have been adjusted slightly to match the available inventory
- Participants picked up their equipment at one of six pre-selected Dick’s Sporting Goods locations in mid-January prior to their first on-ice session
- Equipment exchanges were handled on a case-by-case basis through the Penguins due to limited inventory
- Participants were encouraged to independently purchase socks, pelvic protection, mouth guard and neck guard

Facts & Figures

- Participating Rinks – 21
- Average Participants per Rink – 28
- Total Participants – 598
- Registration was closed at all but 5 outlying rinks within 10 minutes
- 586 of the 598 participants have successfully completed USA Hockey Membership
- Participants must be between the age of 4-7 as of December 1, 2009 – the day registration took place
- Participants must be new to the game of ice hockey – participants who have played organized ice hockey are not eligible to register