



Auburn Hockey Club

**Parent/Guardian  
EDUCATIONAL GUIDE TO HOCKEY**

**Adopted from  
New York State Amateur Hockey Association**

# Structure

## **National:**

A National Governing Body (NGB) is a group that is responsible for providing a structure for players. It is the nationally recognized body that makes the rules for a specific sport. USA Hockey is the NGB for the sport of ice hockey. It is responsible for developing rules, regulations, policies and procedures for ice hockey in the United States.

## **District/Affiliate:**

A District/Affiliate is the recognized governing body and signs an agreement with USA Hockey. The District/Affiliate must develop a governing structure that is approved by USA Hockey. The District/Affiliate government is designed to answer questions on how the local associations in the District/Affiliate operate and work together.

## **Local:**

A local association must get the approval of the District/Affiliate to run and operate a USA Hockey program.

Players are registered with the local association. The association has the duty to set rules that pertain to the size and goals of that Association. The rule of thumb for all associations when setting rules is that you must follow the National and District/Affiliate rules; you can make them stricter, but never more lenient.

# Philosophy of the Game

## **The USA Hockey mission statement:**

To provide an improved grassroots foundation for the growth and development of USA Hockey, designing programs aimed at increased participation, improved skills and a responsible environment for the conduct of youth hockey.

- A safe and healthy environment
- An opportunity for all who wish to play
- Fair and equal opportunity for all
- An opportunity to learn the basic skills without over emphasis on winning
- An opportunity for those who wish to advance
- Qualified adult leadership

The New York State Amateur Hockey Association wants you to have a positive experience in sportsmanship, growth and development, for the development of your child. The parental involvement needs to engage in behavior that will support and encourage that development.

Your child will go through unique development and physical growth with each age group. This will help in the total physical, emotional, mental and social development through the years of child development.

## **Sportsmanship**

So what is sportsmanship?

A commitment to playing by the rules, respecting yourself, teammates, opponents, coaches, and officials and showing respect for others.

Sportsmanship comes from:

- Parents/ Spectators
- Administrator
- Coaches
- Players
- Officials

A growing problem in youth sports today is the common attitude that winning is everything. We believe attitude can contribute to players, coaches, and parents displaying a lack of good sportsmanship.

In any contest, the competitors should do their best to win. Striving to win is a healthy part of the competition. Winning or losing is only a result, DOES IT MATTER?

Satisfaction should come from playing your hardest and doing your best. To parents supporting that, winning isn't everything; it's how you play the game. If you have done your best and played within the rules, and respected your opponents, you are never a loser.

Remember sportsmanship is not a matter of imposing standards of behavior that comes from outside the arena of a sport.

## **Growth and Development – Parent Involvement**

Each age group represents a distinct and unique stage with a wide range of individual differences. Specific strategies should be developed that will promote positive interaction between coaches, parents and children.

### **Age group 6 – 12 Year Old Athletes**

#### **Physical:**

- Basic motor skills develop
- Activity patterns are in short bursts of low to moderate intensity
- Growth is fairly steady
- Wide range of physical abilities
- Learn skills quickly

#### **Social:**

- Enjoy working with others towards common goals
- Peer interactions become increasingly important with increased age
- Tend to have short attention span
- Small group challenges conducted with more success

#### **Emotional:**

- Identify with strong role models
- Athletes want to please parents and coaches
- Respond to positive reinforcement

#### **Strategies:**

- Focus on skill
- Praise high energy
- Focus on the physical requirements of the sports
- Teach fairness
- Be sensitive to your child's concerns
- BE POSITIVE!

Parents should remember that their child would likely respond to a positive approach with encouragement and understanding. This has a tremendous influence your child's success and enjoyment.

### 13 – 15 Year Old Athlete

#### **Physical:**

- A period of rapid physical development marked by increase in height, weight and muscular strength
- Hormonal changes occur
- Wide difference in skill, strength and size with girls advancing two years sooner than boys
- The greatest increase in cardio-respiratory endurance occurs

#### **Social:**

- Move away from parental control but still dependent on parent values
- More interested in peer approval
- Image is very important
- Often insensitive to individuals outside peer group

#### **Emotional:**

- Changes in attitude
- Moodiness increases
- Insecurities run high
- Often feel alienated and self-conscious

#### **Strategies:**

- Reinforce skill acquisition
- Encourage participation in sport camps
- Don't criticize too frequently or too harshly
- Don't push too hard
- Praise participation and effort
- BE POSITIVE!

Be sensitive to the athletes needs. Don't embarrass your children in the presence of their peers. Choose appropriate moments for constructive criticism.

## 16 - 20 Year Old Athlete

### Physical:

- Skeletal maturity occurs
- Strength and endurance continue to develop

### Social:

- Initiate independent and responsible behavior
- Conflicts with parents decrease
- Social identification with teammates
- Sets personal goals

### Emotional:

- Develops increased sensitivity to diverse skills and backgrounds
- Understands that participation provides the opportunity for enjoyment challenge and self-expression.
- Concerns for the future
- Motivations to stay in the sport become solidified

This a critical time that will determine if the child will remain in the sport. Your role should be to support, encourage and provide freedom. A sense of control over their lives is critical to self-esteem.

## Skill Development

Skill development comes in time with level and age. Many factors affect skill development:

- Understand the scope of skills that are appropriate for the child's age
- Understand progressive skill development is necessary for children to play and enjoy the game
- Encourage a sense of commitment to learning hockey's fundamentals skills  
Better Skills = Better Hockey
- Realize that sportsmanship, enjoyment, recreation, and competition are the major focus of the skill progressions for youth hockey
- Understand that skill progressions allow each player the opportunity to develop according to their own ability and maturation level
- Realize that setting long range goals and training plan will gradually develop the basic technical, physical and mental skills required for playing

## **Safe Environment**

Our number one concern is to make the sport safe. Safety is everyone's responsibility.

### **Parents:**

Play an active role in ensuring a safe playing environment. Parents should encourage players to follow the rules and avoid aggressive actions with potential injury.

### **Coaches:**

Are the first lines of defense against injuries? Coaches are very important in limiting or decreasing the risk of injury.

- The coaching education program should include safety as part of their certification program.

### **Players:**

Need to know that a majority of injuries in hockey occur because of contact either with players, the boards or the ice.

Avoid the dangerous tactics of:

- Delivering a hit to the head
- Checking from behind
- Dropping head near the boards
- Leaving your feet to give a check
- Using your stick as a weapon

### **Officials:**

Keep the game safe within the rules.

- The Officiating Education Program stresses a strict enforcement of the rules in the area of safety

There are many different committees and programs for the safe environment of the sport

Below is a list of some:

- Safety and Protective Equipment Committee
- Risk Management Committee
- Star Program
- USA Hockey rules for safe play
- Coaching Education Program
- Officiating Education Program
- Code of Conducts for all
- Zero Tolerance Policy



- Heads-Up Hockey

## **Fun and Enjoyment**

Skill is important but FUN is essential, and when you have fun you have enjoyment.

- Be POSITIVE at all times
  - i. Encourage your child
  - ii. Enjoy the game
  - iii. Applaud good play
  - iv. Avoid coaching from the stands
  - v. Remember coaches and referees are human and therefore imperfect
  
- Allow the coach to be creative

Parents have the biggest influence over the sport. Though parents often mean well, but their lack of exposure can emphasize incorrect behaviors that over time lead their child to a lack of interest in the sport. A good parent will be supportive of a coach and child, but a good coach cannot overcome a coaching parent. This puts the child in a position not to listen to his/her coach and listen to the parent. Then, over time, the child's develops a lack of interest; no interest no FUN.

### **Overview:**

- Be sensitive
- Accept rough play as a part of the game
- Don't criticize anyone (Players, Coaches, Officials, Other Adults)
- Enjoy the game together
- Praise the high energy and enthusiasm that a child has
- Parents must remember that with support, means quicker development
- We want the child to have pure enjoyment with the development and self-motivation of the sport
- Parents need to be good role models
- Safety is everyone's responsibility
- Time and hard work give the child skill

## **Boundaries: Everyone Has a Role**

Parents

Administrator

Coach

Player

Official

Everyone has a role, as in life; unspoken boundaries exist between each role.

### **Parent:**

The parent has the biggest influence of the game. Your role as a parent/spectator in the game of ice hockey is to be a positive supporter of the players, officials, coaches and most of all “the game.” You should support your association by volunteering to help with your local activities, know the rules of the game and most of all respect the game and its participants.

Remember parents and spectators mean well, but their lack of involvement and exposure with youth sports can cause them to emphasize incorrect behaviors.

### **Administrator:**

Most administrators are volunteers. Administrators are the leaders within your association. They organize the program of ice hockey for your child and his/her team and develop guidelines and rules that allow for fair and equitable development for all players.

### **Coach:**

A coach has the authority over the players. Part of the authority of a coach comes from the nature of the sport. In a team sport especially, many of the decisions, by the nature of the game, must be made on behalf of the team by the coach. The coach is an integral part of a team effort. Coaches have a major influence on the life of a player.

A coach gives up personal time to teach and guide kids to learn the game. They also need to have the proper certification and education to coach.

### **Player:**

A player may be your child, but on the ice, he or she is a player, first and foremost. There are rules to be followed, and skills to be learned. The most important thing we should be concern with is that they have FUN.

### **Officials:**

The main official in the game is the referee on the ice. They call the shots. They keep the game within the rules. So why respect an official? Since sportsmanship is grounded first of all in the nature of the activity, even our attitudes towards officials should reflect an understanding of sport. In organized sport officials are “part of the game.” They are part of the tacit agreement that makes the game possible. One cannot have a sport contest without rules and the enforcement of rules; in an organized contest officials are interpreters and enforcers of the conditions of competition. Officials are guardians of the spirit of the game. For that reason, respect for officials is closely related to respect for the game. Officials enforce not only the explicit rules but also the traditions and customs of the sport. We should respect them for preventing the breakdown of the world of playful competition into a chaotic clash of self-serving individuals wills. Officials in sport are somewhat like police, somewhat like parents enforcing habits of etiquette and good manners. Officials are seriously engaged in learning their game and attempting to be as good as they can be. We should respect officials for their excellence, their desire to be as good as they can be, their love of the game, and their essential contributions to the event in which we’re all participating in.

But remember that a referee is the on-ice official, but not the only official. We also have off ice officials, which play a major role with any game. They are Penalty Box Attendant, Scorekeeper, and Timekeeper.

### **Overview:**

- Every role plays a significant part of the game
- Communication is very important
  - Administrator to Association
  - Parent to Administrator
  - Administrator to Coach
  - Coach to Player
  - Player to Parent
  - Parent to Official
  - Official to Payer

- Respect for each role makes the game happen

## Conflict Resolution

### Anger Management

Conflict is a part of everyday life. It is not good or bad. What makes conflict good or bad is our response to it. Despite the many variations of conflict we all experience in daily life, addressing conflict at any sporting events is a difficult issue. We all have been in situations that we label as not within bounds of good sportsmanship. We all have gotten angry about something as it relates to our child's participation. Maybe it was another parent's reaction to the game or your child's performance, the referee calls, the coach's decision, or another player's behavior or performance.

To manage this we have to break it down, Conflict and Anger

What is conflict?

Opposing points of view

What is anger?

The underlying emotion of all conflict

How do we control Conflict?

- Avoidance – You give in or walk away
- Confrontation – Power to resist negative process
- Communication – The best way to control our anger. We can control our Negative reaction by communication with ourselves

Anger is easy to read, difficult to deal with, what causes it?

- Threats to self or your child, self-esteem and self respect
- Fear
- Powerlessness and loss of control
- Confusion and frustration

How do we control anger?

- Perception – Are you perceiving all the information
- Assessment – What are you getting upset about?

- Evaluation – What are the options with dealing the situation?
- Decide – What would be in the best interest of my child?

With the sport?

- Educating everyone about the game
- Sportsmanship
- Safety
- Respect for each other
- Understanding the roles of a parent, coach, player, official

## **Relationship Between –**

### **Parents and Administrator:**

Conflict between both:

- A complete lack of knowledge regarding the administration of the sport and how they think it is impacting their child.
- They feel a loss of control; they feel that someone else is controlling their child
- Confusion

Role between Parent and Administrators:

- Foster development, physical, social, and emotional growth
- Understand the skill progressions
- Be positive
- Criticism of coaches, officials, players should always be voiced privately or in writing
- Secure coaches and officials that are USA certified and develop them
- Conduct the affairs of the organization with the best interest of the youth
- Respect the rights of the parents
- Be positive role model for the parents in the stands

### **Parent and Coach**

Conflict between both:

- A threat to your child's self-esteem

- Loss of control
- Fear
- Frustration

Role between Parent and Coach:

- Watch for the skill development of your child
- Understand that the coach may understand more about the game than you do
- Fear of injury is always a possibility, but the coach is not trying to hurt anyone
- Understand that it is frustrating to watch them develop and that skill comes with time and practice
- Learn as much knowledge about coaching and the game as you possibly can
- Learning is an ongoing thing
- Be Positive to all the players on and off ice
- Respect the officials, players
- Be prepared
- Enjoy the time and the children
- Have FUN and they will have fun

## **Parents and Officials**

Conflict between both:

- Parents feel threats to their children
- Fear, for their inadequate officiating
- Powerless to do anything
- Frustrated by the officials' lack of ability or the lack of " Perceived Calls"

Role between Parent and Officials:

- Understand that in some cases, the official is learning too
- Understand that injuries happen, skates trip and some lose their balance
- Understand, you, as the parent, cannot do it for them, here or anywhere else
- Conduct the games in accordance with the rules
- Know the rules
- Respect the players and the coaches
- Be impartial

## Parents and Players

Conflict between both:

- Powerlessness
- Confusion
- Frustration

Role between Parents and Players

- Understand your feeling of powerlessness with regards to the other people in your child's life
- Get as much education as you can to support your child and coach
- Respect yourself, your coach, your teammates, and your opponents
- Understand that you have to learn the game, learn the skills, its rules and practice with an open mind
- Listen
- Accept that the officials can make mistakes too!
- Winning is not the point, having fun is. Enjoy, it is still only a game.

## Overview:

How to deal with a problem issue:

- Listen with respect
- Make sure you understand where they are coming from
- Ask questions
- Don't challenge or interrupt
- Summarize their points
- Acknowledge your emotions and theirs
- Turn confrontation into problem solving
- Don't take a position
- Don't polarize yourself
- Ask, "What do you want to accomplish?"

Dealing with a behavior issue:

- Find a quiet place to discuss the behavior
- Raise the problem and describe how it makes you feel
- Talk about it
- Be specific, respectful and brief
- Speak for yourself

- Invite cooperation
- STOP, LISTEN, and LEARN
- Be patient and tolerant



## **PARENTS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Do not force your children to participate in sports but support their desires to play their chosen sport. Children are involved in organized sports for their enjoyment. Make it fun.
- Encourage your child to play by the rules. Remember, children learn best by example, so applaud the good plays of both teams.
- Do not embarrass your child by yelling at players, coaches or officials. By showing a positive attitude toward the game and all of its participants, your child will benefit.
- Emphasize skill development and practices and how they benefit your young athlete. De-emphasize games and competition in the lower age groups.
- Know and study the rules of the game, and support the officials on and off the ice. This approach will help in the development and support of the game. Any criticism of the officials only hurts the game.
- Applaud a good effort in both victory and defeat, and enforce the positive points of the game. Never yell or physically abuse your child after a game or practice – it is destructive. Work toward removing the physical and verbal abuse in youth sports.
- Recognize the importance of volunteer coaches. They are important to the development of your child and the sport. Communicate with them and support them.
- If you enjoy the game, learn all you can about hockey – and volunteer.

## **SPECTATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Display good sportsmanship. Always respect players, coaches and officials.
- Act appropriately; do not taunt or disturb other fans; enjoy the game together.
- Cheer good plays of all participants; avoid booing opponents.
- Cheer in a positive manner and encourage fair play. Profanity and objectionable cheers or gestures are offensive.
- Help provide a safe and fun environment; throwing any items on the ice surface can cause injury to players and officials.
- Do not lean over or pound on the glass; the glass surrounding the ice surface is part of the playing area.
- Support the referees and coaches by trusting their judgment and integrity.
- Be responsible for your own safety – be alert to prevent accidents from flying pucks and other avoidable situations.
- Respect locker rooms as private areas for players, coaches and officials.
- Be supportive after the game – win or lose. Recognize good effort, teamwork and sportsmanship.

## **ADMINISTRATORS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Follow the rules and regulations of USA Hockey and your association to ensure that the association's philosophy and objectives are enhanced.
- Support programs that train and educate players, coaches, parents, officials and volunteers.
- Promote and publicize your programs; seek out financial support when possible.
- Communicate with parents by holding parent/player orientation meetings as well as by being available to answer questions and address problems throughout the season.
- Works to provide programs that encompass fairness to participants and promote fair play and sportsmanship.
- Recruit volunteers, including coaches, who demonstrate qualities conducive to being role models to the youth in our sport.
- Encourage coaches and officials to attend USA Hockey clinics, and advise your board members of the necessity for their training sessions.
- Make every possible attempt to provide everyone, at all skill levels, with a place to play.
- Read and be familiar with the contents of the USA Hockey Annual Guide and Official Playing Rules.
- Develop other administrators to advance to positions in your association, perhaps even your own.

## **COACHES' CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Winning is a consideration, but not the only one, nor the most important one. Care more about the child than winning the game. Remember, players are involved in hockey for fun and enjoyment.
- Be a positive role model to your players. Display emotional maturity and be alert to the physical safety of players.
- Be generous with your praise when it is deserved; be consistent and honest; be fair and just; do not criticize players publicly; learn to be a more effective communicator and coach; don't yell at players.
- Adjust to personal needs and problems of players; be a good listener; never verbally or physically abuse a player or official; give all players the opportunity to improve their skills, gain confidence and develop self-esteem; teach them the basics.
- Organize practices that are fun and challenging for your players. Familiarize yourself with the rules, techniques and strategies of hockey; encourage all your players to be team players.
- Maintain an open line of communication with your players' parents. Explain the goals and objectives of your association.
- Be concerned with the overall development of your players. Stress good health habits and clean living.
- To play the game is great; to love the game is greater.

## **PLAYERS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

- Play for FUN.
- Work hard to improve your skills.
- Be a team player – get along with your teammates.
- Learn teamwork, sportsmanship and discipline.
- Be on time for practices and games.
- Learn the rules and play by them. Always be a good sport.
- Respect your coach, your teammates, your parents, opponents and officials.
- Never argue with an official's decision.

# **GAME OFFICIALS' CODE OF CONDUCT**

## **Penalty Box-Scorekeeper-Timekeeper**

- Act in a professional and businesslike manner at all times and take your role seriously.
- Strive to provide a safe and sportsmanlike environment in which players can properly display their skills.
- Know all playing rules, their interpretations and their proper applications.
- Remember that officials are teachers. Set a good example.
- Make your calls with quiet confidence; never with arrogance.
- Control games only to the extent that is necessary to provide a positive and safe experience for all participants.
- Violence must never be tolerated.
- Be fair and impartial at all times
- Answer all reasonable questions and requests.
- Adopt a “zero tolerance” attitude toward verbal or physical abuse.
- Never use foul or vulgar language when speaking with a player, coach or parent.
- Use honesty and integrity when answering questions.
- Admit your mistakes when you make them.
- Never openly criticize a coach, player or other official.
- Keep your emotions under control.
- Use only USA Hockey-approved officiating techniques and policies.
- Maintain your health through a physical conditioning program.
- Dedicate yourself to personal improvement and maintenance of officiating skills.

- Respect your supervisor and his/her critique of your performance.

## **ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY**

In an effort to make ice and inline hockey a more desirable and rewarding experience for all participants, the USA Hockey Youth, Junior and Adult Councils and the InLine Section have instructed the Officiating Program to adhere to certain points of emphasis relating to sportsmanship. This campaign is designed to require all players, coaches, officials, team officials and administrators and parents/spectators to maintain a sportsmanlike and educational atmosphere before, during and after all USA Hockey-sanctioned games.

Thus, the following points of emphasis must be implemented by all Referees and Linesman:

### **PLAYERS**

A minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (Zero Tolerance) shall be assessed whenever a player:

1. Openly disputes or argues a decision by an official.
2. Uses obscene or vulgar language at any time, including any swearing, even if it is not directed at a particular person.
3. Visually demonstrates any sign of dissatisfaction with an official's decision. Any time that a player persists in any of these actions, they shall be assessed a misconduct penalty. A game misconduct shall result if the player continues such action.

### **COACHES**

A minor penalty for unsportsmanlike conduct (Zero Tolerance) shall be assessed whenever a coach:

1. Openly disputes or argues any decision by an official.
2. Uses obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous manner to anyone at any time.
3. Visually displays any sign of dissatisfaction with an official's decision including standing on the boards or standing in the bench doorway with the intent of inciting the officials, players or spectators.

Any time that a coach persists in any of these actions, they shall be assessed a game misconduct penalty.

### **OFFICIALS**

Officials are required to conduct themselves in a businesslike, sportsmanlike, impartial and constructive manner at all times. The actions of an official must be above reproach. Actions such as "baiting" or inciting players or coaches are strictly prohibited.

Officials are ambassadors of the game and must always conduct themselves with this responsibility in mind.

### **PARENTS/SPECTATORS**

The game will be stopped by game officials when the parents/spectators displaying inappropriate and disruptive behavior interfere with other spectators or the game. The game officials will identify violators to the coaches for the purpose of removing parents/spectators from the spectator's viewing and game area. Once removed, play will resume. Lost time will not be replaced and violators may be subject to further disciplinary action by the local governing body. This inappropriate and disruptive behavior shall include:

- Use of obscene or vulgar language in a boisterous manner to anyone at any time.
- Taunting of players, coaches, officials or other spectators by means of baiting, ridiculing, threat of physical violence or physical violence.
- Throwing of any object in the spectators viewing area, players' bench, penalty box or on ice surface, directed in any manner as to create a safety hazard.

# Hockey Issues

## **Parents Expectations of Their Child**

The question you have to ask yourself, what do I expect from my son/daughter?

The answer to this question is the most important decision you will ever make on behalf of your child.

Some decisions that make sense to the sport:

- FUN is essential
- Skill development is important
- Never push your child
- Let the rink be a positive place

At Practice:

- Skill improvement is important
- Allow the coach and players to be creative
- Here is where the game is really learned

In the stands:

- Encourage
- Enjoy
- Applaud
- Avoid coaching
- Remember coaches and referees are human and therefore imperfect

At home and in the car:

- There is more to life than hockey
- Do not coach your child on the way to and from a game
- Encourage fun and teamwork
- Emotional control
- Never second-guess a coach
- Never second-guess your child
- Listen to them and be supportive

**Overview:**



- Parents lead by example
- Parents play a very important role in the success of their child
- The bottom line is informed parents will be able to make decisions about their child's involvement based on an understanding of the sport and their child's individual needs.

## **Substance Awareness**

### **What is a drug?**

A drug is any chemical substance that produces physical, mental, emotional or behavioral change in the user

### **Why do young people use drugs?**

Young people use drug for many reasons, including the belief that alcohol and other drugs can solve problems, pressure from friends and the enjoyment of drugs effects. Young people must also contend with the social acceptability and accessibility of such drugs as alcohol and tobacco.

Youths may experiment with drugs because of curiosity or peer pressure, they may engage in occasional use for enjoyment or because of the drug's availability. Reasons for continued drug use include dependence and fear of withdrawal.

### **What are the danger signs?**

Symptoms of teen alcohol and other drug use not always clear-cut. Many of the signs can be confused with normal adolescent behavior or with health problems. However, it is important to be alert and to know that a combination of the following characteristics may be cause for concern:

- Has your child's personality changed noticeably? Dose he/she experience sudden mood swings and unpredictable behavior?
- Does your child seem to be losing old friends and spending time with a new group about which you know little or that is known as a party bunch
- Is your child unable to account for large sum of their money, or have objects or money mysteriously disappeared from home?
- Is your child reluctant to talk about alcohol and drugs?
- Does your child lie about alcohol and other drug use, as well as lying about other activities?
- Have you ever found drug paraphernalia or beer bottles/cans cans in his or her room?
- Has your child lost interest in his/her physical appearance?
- Has your child admitted to trying alcohol or other drugs just once, but denied regular use?
- Are you hearing rumors about your child's partying, goofing off, or drinking and during?
- Have you noticed alcohol or other drugs in the home missing, misplaced or mysteriously disappearing?
- Does your child show signs of depression, loneliness, paranoia or withdrawal?

### **How do I talk to my child about alcohol and other drugs?**

- Initiate active discussion centered on media's portrayal of attitudes about alcohol and other drug. This includes the attitudes projected in advertising, television programs, films, magazines and music.
- Make your position on alcohol and other drugs use clear to your children so that they know where you stand, even if you have no indication they are involved. Base your discussion on issues of their health and well being.
- Help your children understand the reasons for your expectations. You love them and you are concerned about their well-being.
- Let your youngsters know you trust them. Allow your children the opportunity to prove they can live up to your expectations. Praise them for good judgment when appropriate.
- Try to reach agreement with your spouse about handling the issue of alcohol and other drug use. There should be consistency and mutual support in your communications with your children on this subject.
- If you suspect alcohol or other drug use, avoid unproductive accusations and name-calling. Sit down with your children when they are not drunk or stoned and calmly discuss the evidence of their use. Talk clear that you love them. Keep the discussions on a rational level.
- Consider seeking professional counseling. This may help to reopen communication between parent and child by providing a neutral ground for expression of feelings. A counselor who works primarily in the field of alcohol and other drugs problems may be the most beneficial.
- Be a good role model. Your own use influences your child's use.

### **Protective factors of substance abuse and use**

#### **Family**

- Prenatal care
- Valuing and encouragement of education
- Ability to manage stress
- Positive time with children
- Avoidance of excessively authoritarian or permissive behaviors
- Clear expectations of behavior
- Encouragement of supportive relationship with caring adults beyond the immediate family
- Shared family responsibilities

#### **Peers**

- Establishment of healthy friendship with peers who don't use tobacco, alcohol or other drugs
- Sense of competence and personal power
- Orientation toward goals
- Involvement in activities free of tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
- Involvement in positive groups

#### **Schools**

- Reasonable expectation of students

- Encouraging students to set and achieve goals
- Encouraging pro-social development
- Opportunities for leadership and decision-making
- Encouraging active involvement of students
- Involvement of parents
- Opportunities for activities free of tobacco, alcohol or other drugs

### **Community**

- Community norms and laws which favor the abstinence from tobacco, alcohol and other drugs
- Access resources – housing, child care, job training, employment and recreation
- Involving youth in pro-social activities
- Respect for authority

### **Effect of substance use and abuse on athletic performance**

Substance Abuse has no place on the ice. Playing under the influence of a controlled dangerous substance is like driving under the influence of alcohol. While driving you lose control of your car, while skating you lose control of your body.

#### **Drugs and alcohol causes;**

- Impaired vision – you can not see clearly
- Lack of muscle control – your muscles do not listen to your brain
- Lack of judgment – you have a hard time telling right from wrong
- Lack of self control – you lose your ability to control your actions

Drugs and alcohol can leave you skating without the necessary skills that keep you from getting injured or causing injury to others. On or off the ice it makes no difference. Drugs and alcohol depress the brain centers for self-control and behaving with proper social manners. This can cause overly aggressive behavior.

Many substance abusers lose track of the amount of substance they have taken and they can poison their bodies. An overdose of drugs and/or alcohol can cause unconsciousness, coma, respiratory failure and even death.

**Overview:**

- Some of the main drugs within youth today are Tobacco, Marijuana, Over the counter drugs, Alcohol and Steroids
- Help is always available:
  - Student Assistance programs
  - Alcoholics Anonymous
  - Narcotic Anonymous
  - Counselors
  - Therapists
  - Teachers
  - Guidance Counselors
  - Local Public Health center
  - Employee Assistance Program
- Don't put off facing the reality

**Safety around the Rink****Injury Potential**

- The majority of injuries in hockey occur because of contact, either with other players, the boards or the ice
- These injuries are accidental and not deliberate

**Programs:**

- Coaching Education includes safety as part of their required certification program
- Officiating Education stresses strict enforcement of rules in the area of safety
- Parent Education designed to keep parents informed on safety issues
- Production of videos and printed materials that offer additional training for all participants of hockey
- Heads-Up Hockey targets players, making them aware of action they can take to make the sport safer
- Risk Management Committee conducts surveys of injury claims for patterns, checks venues for hazards and creates programs in an attempts to increase participant safety
- Districts, and local associations develop programs that address national as well as regional safety concerns

**Safety and Protective Equipment Committee**

This is a national committee comprised of experts in the field of ice hockey, medical treatment, equipment and other related areas.

The committee:

- Conducts survey and studies of hockey injuries
- Makes a sport by sport assessment of data received from;  
Centers for Disease Control  
USA Hockey injury reports  
National Electronic injury surveillance system data
- Establishes programs designed to make the sport safer
- Proposes new rules that may reduce injuries
- Interface with the hockey equipment vendors
- Consider new equipment to address safety concerns
- Produces video and printed materials that make hockey a safer sport

**Remember: Parent s play a role in safety too**

- Parents and players should take an active role in ensuring a safe playing environment
- Parents should encourage players to follow the rules and avoid aggressive actions with injury potential

## **Proper Equipment**

### **Content:**

Hockey players must have good protective hockey equipment to ensure effective performance and appropriate protection. Each piece of equipment can be assessed using the following three basic principles:

- **Proper Fitting**  
Equipment must fit properly and protect the areas it is designed to protect. If it does not fit correctly, it will not protect properly and may inhibit performance.
- **Protective Quality**  
All equipment should be of sufficient protective quality so that it protects effectively and absorbs impact.
- **Maintenance:**  
All equipment should be properly maintained to provide the necessary protective quality. Equipment must be hung to dry at room temperature after every session. Equipment should never be placed over an open heat source.

Paying attention to these details will make the hockey playing experience more enjoyable.

## **REQUIRED/RECOMMENDED EQUIPMENT**

The following list of equipment is required or recommended by USA Hockey. The equipment is to be worn at all practices, and games.

1. HECC (The Hockey Equipment Certification Council) approved helmet with wire face guard or full plastic face shield. Visors that cover only half of the face are not allowed except at the Junior Level when the player has reached the age of consent.
2. An approved, manufactured throat protector. A bib style is recommended because it protects a greater area. For goalies, a rigid plastic throat protector attached to the helmet face guard is also required.
3. Shoulder pads
4. Hockey suspenders
5. Hockey pants with plastic inserts
6. Elbow pads
7. Hockey jerseys
8. Hockey gloves
9. Athletic supporter (jock for boys and jill for girls)
10. Garter belt (usually supplied with athletic supporter)
11. Hockey socks
12. Shin guards
13. Properly sized hockey skates
14. Hockey stick of appropriate length. A good gauge is to have the player stand up in his/her skates, holding the stick upright. The end of the shaft should come to nose level. A taped knob on the end of the shaft keeps the hand from slipping off. First time players may like to try a straight blade.
15. Athletic tape for the blade and shaft of the stick.
16. Clear plastic tape or Velcro straps to wrap around parts of the equipment (socks, elbow pads, shin pads, etc. to make them more secure)
17. Extra helmet screws; small screwdriver and shoelaces are always handy
18. Face cloth or towel to wipe off the skates after the ice time
19. Long underwear, long sleeve undershirt and warm socks (or whatever makes the player comfortable) are recommended.
20. A plastic water bottle to allow drinking water through the mask
21. A hockey bag

The equipment does not have to be new, but whatever the child wears should be in good condition and fit properly. It is especially important that skates are the right size and are sharpened regularly during the season (every four to six hours of ice time).

## **Undergarments**

Choose an undergarment arrangement that will be cool and comfortable under your equipment. This will avoid irritation of the skin from the equipment. Underwear will absorb moisture from your skin.

What players wear under the equipment is a personal choice. A number of material combinations exist for underwear from 100% cotton to cotton/polyester and other blends of material.

Always wear a single pair of socks in your skates. As with underwear, a variety of material blends are available. Choose a blend that offers you comfort warmth and moisture absorbing abilities. For all underwear and socks, 50/50 cotton/polyester blends provide maximum ventilation and comfort.

### **Helpful Hints**

Always ensure underwear and socks are dry and clean to avoid chafing from your equipment and to maintain hygiene.

Avoid wrinkles in your socks when tightening skates.

## **Athletic Supports**

Two types of athletic supports are available; a jock/jill strap or boxer short style. Each type incorporates a plastic protective cup.

The jock strap (for males), jill strap (for females) and boxers are fitted according to the individual player's waist size. It is important that a player chooses an appropriately sized protective cup and strap or boxer for effective shock absorption.

### **Protective Quality**

If the Jock or Jill strap tears in any way it should be repaired or replaced. One common area of breakdown is where the two straps meet the protective cup. Should these straps detach, the protective cup can be pushed out of position.

### **Maintenance**

The strap and protective cup should be hung up to dry after each session. The strap should be machine washed regularly. Be sure to remove the plastic protective cup before washing. If the plastic protective cup cracks, it must be replaced immediately.

### **Helpful Hints**

The Jill/Jock strap should fit like a pair of briefs; not too loose so that the protective cup moves around and not too tight to restrict movement or cause chafing and discomfort. The boxer short style must fit snugly, but not restrictive, to ensure the protective cup does not move out of place.

## **Shin Pads**

Shin pads are generally measured in junior (8 to 13 inches - 20 to 33 cm.) or senior sizing (14 to 16 inches - 36 to 41 cm.). Ensure that the cap of the shin pad is centered on the kneecap. The calf padding should wrap around the lower leg to offer maximum protection to this area of the leg. Also the protective padding above the plastic kneecap should overlap approximately 2 inches (5 cm.) with the bottom of the hockey pants. With the skate open, the player should ensure that the shin pad rests 1 inch (2.5 cm.) above the foot when the foot is fully flexed up and does not inhibit movement of the foot in any way. It is also recommended that the skate tongue can be positioned behind the shin pad for added protection.

### **Protective Quality**

A shin pad that is too short can leave exposed areas between the top of the skates and the bottom of the shin pad. A shin pad that is too long may cause discomfort and restrict movement in the ankle and knee areas.

The flexible position of the shin pad (the padded portion between the plastic knee and plastic shin guard) should allow maximum movement. However, since this is the least protected area on the shin pad, ensure that it properly covers the knee and the shin. Cracked shin pads must be replaced immediately.

### **Maintenance**

Proper drying by hanging of equipment after each session is essential. Remember, air dry only. To clean, simply mix a little laundry soap with water and use a soft scrub brush on the padding.

### **Helpful Hints**

Buying Velcro straps to fasten the shin pads to the legs is much less expensive in the long run than using tape. Remember to check the length of the straps with the shin pads on, to ensure a proper fit.

## **Hockey Pants**

Hockey pants are generally sized either according to waist size or in-group sizing (S, M, L, XL, XXL). Measure the waist to get the required pant size.

Pants should be fitted with shin pads in place to ensure the length of the pant leg reaches the top of the kneecap and covers approximately 2 inches (5 cm.) of the shin pad's top flair padding.

For female players, fit the hips first then check the position of the leg and kidney pads to ensure they cover these areas adequately.

The correct positioning of rib, hip, thigh and kidney padding is important to ensure protection of these areas. The padding around the waist of the pants should cover the kidney area (halfway between the hips and underarm). The padding on the rear of the pants should extend far enough to completely cover the bottom end of the tailbone. Thigh padding (plastic shell) and hip padding must fit over the appropriate areas to offer maximum protection.

If the pants have a belt, the belt should be positioned just above the hip bone with the pants on and allow for a snug adjustment without falling off the player's hips.

### **Protective Quality**

The traditional hockey pant is the most common pant, which features padding built into the pants. Purchase pants with as much padding as possible. Ensure all necessary padding is in place and protecting the appropriate areas in a full range of motion for the player.

If any pads, such as the thigh pad, crack, they should be replaced immediately as they are no longer effective. Tearing that occurs in the outer shell of the pants should be repaired immediately as this can affect the protective quality. The inside of the pants should also be inspected for tearing and repairs made as necessary.

### **Maintenance**

Proper drying after all sessions is essential. Pants should be hung in a well-ventilated area to air dry. Several times each season, all removable padding should be washed with a mild detergent and air-dried.

### **Helpful Hints**



Players should have a good range of motion while wearing pants. A good measure is to have the player fully squat wearing pants (and shin pads). If the player can comfortably squat and the padding remains in position, then the pants fit properly.

## **Hockey Skates**

Skates usually fit a half size smaller than street shoes. When fitting skates, the same socks should be worn when skating. Ensure that there are no wrinkles in the sock when placing the foot into the boot.

Loosen the laces so that the foot can easily slip into the boot and then slide the foot forward to press the ends of the toes against the front of the skate. With the foot in position, you should be able to place one finger between the boot and the heel of the foot. Prior to lacing up the skates, kick the heel into the boot's heel by banging the skate against the floor. Lace the boot with the first 3 eyelets snug, the next 3-4 eyelets loose, to prevent constriction of this area, and the last 2-4 eyelets very snug to maximize energy transfer to the boot.

Once the skates are laced up, there should be approximately 1.5 to 2 inches (3 to 5 cm.) between the eyelets. If they are further apart, a narrower boot is necessary. If the eyelets are closer, then a wider boot is required. Different skate brands are designed for either narrow or wide feet. A variety of widths are available. Next, walk in both skates for 10 to 15 minutes to ensure a comfortable fit. Remove the skates and check the feet for red areas or pressure points, which are signs of an improperly fitted skate. Note that all skates will generally require a break-in period. Any irregularities of the feet, such as bone spurs, may also affect the fit of the boot.

### **Protective Quality**

Skate tongues should be worn behind the shin pads to full protect the lower shin. Never wrap laces around the ankles as this can inhibit circulation and irritate the Achilles tendon. If the hard shell in the toes becomes cracked, the skates should not be worn as this could result in serious injury. Skates should be replaced if this occurs.

### **Maintenance**

Always dry skates by opening boots wide and pulling out removable liners after every session. Regularly check the blades for sharpness, bending of the blades, loose rivets, and cracked blade holders or blades.

If you are on the ice for more than three times a week, skates should be sharpened weekly. Skates should also be sharpened if there is a noticeable reduction in the player's ability to stop or turn. If the blades squeak when stopping, check for bending. Also, regularly check the skate boots, laces and eyelets. Repair or replace as needed.

Skate blades should be wiped dry after each use. Skate guards should be placed on the skate blades to avoid damage during transport or when walking on non -ice surfaces.

### **Helpful Hints**

Never buy skates too big to grow into as this can seriously inhibit proper skating development.

## **Shoulder Pads**

It is important that the shoulder pads completely cover the shoulders, upper back, chest and upper arms to just above the elbows. The protective caps should be positioned on the top of the shoulders and the arm pads should extend to meet the elbow pads. It is recommended that the back of the shoulder pads should overlap slightly with the pants. The upper arm pads should fit securely around the bicep and triceps muscle areas.

### **Protective Quality**

The plastic cups are designed to protect the shoulder and disperse any force over a large area through the full range of motion. Check all the straps and Velcro fasteners around the arms and the mid body to ensure they are intact and do not cause discomfort. Adjust length as necessary.

### **Maintenance**

Ensure that there are no cracks or tears in any parts of the pads. Repair and replace as necessary. Check and replace any missing fasteners or rivets. Always hang dry after every session.

### **Helpful Hints**

A player should have good range of motion while wearing shoulder pads. To test the range of motion, have the player lift arms slightly above shoulder height. In this position, ensure that the pads do not dig into the neck area.

## **Elbow Pads**

Most introductory and intermediate quality elbow pads can be used on either elbow. Note that some elbow pads are made specifically for left and right arms. Ensure pads are on the appropriate arms. Place the donut inside the elbow pad on the point of the elbow. Snuggly fasten all the straps of the elbow pad so that it does not slide when the arm is fully extended. The top of the elbow pad should meet the bottom of the shoulder pad's arm pad and extend down the forearm to where the top of the glove starts. The forearm padding should wrap around the entire forearm to offer maximum protection.

The elbow pad should not restrict movement of the elbow. With the elbow pads on, test the range of motion by bending the arm at the elbow and watching for any constriction or restriction of movement. If the player wears short cuff gloves, ensure that the elbow pads are long enough to meet the cuff of the glove.

### **Protective Quality**

Ensure that the elbow pad contains a donut pad or pocket where the point of the elbow rests. The elbow pad should have a plastic cup, which protects the elbow point. Several models may have this plastic shell on the exterior of the pad or it may form an integral part of the pad. Generally, this cup is not removable. Slash guards are rigid plastic pads, which protect the forearm area. The slashguard should be on the outside of the elbow pad.

### **Maintenance**

Occasionally check the straps to ensure that they provide comfortable attachment to the arms. Straps should not be substituted with tape as this may cause loss of circulation, discomfort and decreased protection. Proper drying, in a well-ventilated area, will help the donut pad from breaking down prematurely. Elbow pads may be washed in the same manner as shin pads.

### **Helpful Hints**

Frequently test the donut pad by pressing down with the fingers. If any cracks appear, or if the padding is hard or brittle, the pad must be replaced to avoid potential injury.

## **Gloves**

Ideal gloves are lightweight, flexible and offer maximum movement. Gloves are made from a variety of materials including leather and Kevlar. While leather gloves are more durable, they take longer to dry and are heavier to wear. Gloves should fit like

loose winter gloves over the fingers. The top of the glove should extend up the forearm to the bottom of the elbow pad to ensure full protection of the forearm area.

### **Protective Quality**

Ensure that the padding on the back of the glove and the hard shell components are of sufficient quality to protect the hand and the wrist area, which can be tested by pressing the back of the glove with the fingers. The compression should not be felt inside the glove. If the glove has laces in the cuffs, leave them in and do them up. Never remove laces. Laces prevent tearing of the side gussets of the glove.

### **Maintenance**

Ensure proper air-drying after ice sessions. Remember; never dry gloves over an open heat source. Gloves, which have lost finger pads or roll pads should be repaired or discarded. Ensure the palms of the gloves are soft and in good shape through proper drying. Replace worn out palms at a leather or shoe repair shop immediately to avoid injury. Watering palms can cause them to become brittle and break down.

### **Helpful Hints**

Whenever testing a pair of gloves, use a hockey stick to stick the handle on the spot for a few minutes. The gloves should offer freedom of movement in a variety of positions without chafing or restricting movement.

## **Mouth guards**

Mouth guards come in three types. Type 1 - “one size fits all mouth guard” - does not fit everyone. It usually causes players to alter the mouth guard by cutting it because it pinches the gums and prevents players from speaking and breathing freely. Type 2 mouth guards allow players to form them by “boiling and biting,” but they are commonly made in one size and they can be too big for the mouth. Type 3 mouth guards are form- fitted, are the easiest to talk and breathe with and provide the most protection.

### **Protective Quality**

Mouth guards help to protect the teeth from chipping and breaking, and also protect the gums and jaw. Some doctors also feel that mouth guards can reduce the chances of getting a concussion.

### **Maintenance**

Mouth guards need to be kept clean by placing them in a special container, and by brushing them with toothpaste. Keep the mouth guards away from heat. Players should avoid chewing on their mouth guards.

### **Helpful Hints**

Colored mouth guards are easier to locate in choking incidents, and they are easier to find if they are dislodged from the mouth. Mouth guards should be attached to the helmets.

## **Helmets**

Helmets must be HECC (The Hockey Equipment Certification Council) approved. All HECC approved hockey helmets will have a sticker indicating this approval. These stickers must remain on the equipment and be visible during play.

Helmets are generally measured in junior or senior sizing and may be found in head sizes 6.5 to 7.75 inches (16.5 to 20 cm.). They may also be found in-group sizes (S, M, L, and XL). Choose a size that fits snugly on the head, yet allows room for adjustment for final fitting. Using the adjusting mechanisms, which differ from model to model, the helmet, can be adjusted to fit so that when the head is shaken from side to side and back and forth, the helmet does not move and does not cause discomfort. The front of the helmet should fall just above the eyebrows. Select a size of helmet that provides these elements for a good fit. Adjust the chinstrap so that it is snug to the chin in order to provide proper protection. The chinstrap is not properly fastened if it hangs down. If the chinstrap is too loose it could cause the helmet to fall off on impact.

### **Protective Quality**

Ear guards are a standard component of many helmets. The ear guards protect the ears from impact injuries. If the helmet is purchased with ear guards, they must be left on to maintain HECC Certification. Any helmet with a break or crack in the outer shell must be replaced.

### **Maintenance**

Regularly check the helmet to ensure screws are in place and secure. Only use manufacturer's approved replacement parts on helmets. Helmets should never be painted nor have stickers affixed to them as this may weaken the structure and voids the HECC Certification. Any alterations such as: drilling extra holes, removing side straps, clamps or chin cup, will void the HECC Certification.

Always air-dry the helmet after all on ice sessions.

### **Helpful Hints**

Occasionally, check the inside padding of the helmet by pressing the thumb into the padding. If the padding retains its original shape, the helmet maintains its protective quality. If the padding breaks or cracks, then it is time to replace the helmet.

### **Facial Protectors**

USA Hockey requires all minor and all female players to wear HECC approved full facial protectors, properly attached to HECC approved hockey helmets. Full facial protectors come in two varieties: wire cage or high impact polycarbonate shield (commonly known as a visor). The facial shield or cage must be compatible with the helmet. Not all masks fit every helmet. The facial protector should fit to allow one finger to be placed snugly between the bottom of the chin and the chin cup of the protector.

### **Protective Quality**

Any facial protector with a break or crack should be replaced immediately. Wire masks should never be cut or altered because the structure may weaken and the HECC certification is voided. Removal of the chin cup also voids the HECC certification and exposes the chin area to undue risk of injury.

### **Maintenance**

The adjusting screws on the helmet and the screws that attach the facial shield to the helmet should be checked periodically and tightened or adjusted as required. Any helmet with a clear visor should be protected between uses with the shield bag the generally accompanies the product. A visor that is scratched decreases the player's vision.

## **Throat Protectors**

The throat protector should be snug but not uncomfortably tight. Bib style protectors are worn beneath the shoulder pads and offer increased protection. The throat protector should completely cover the throat and with the bib styles, the upper chest area. All throat protectors must bear a manufacture logo on the material or label.

### **Protective Quality**

There are two types of throat protectors: bib style or collar type. The bib style provides more protection to the chest area. Each protector is generally made of ballistic nylon or similar material. Throat protectors are designed to protect the throat area from lacerations and cuts. They are not designed to protect against spinal injuries to the neck region.

### **Maintenance**

Dry the protector after each session in a well-ventilated area. The throat protector should be washed regularly in cold weather and hung top dry, away from direct heat sources.

### **Helpful Hints**

Keep all Velcro fasteners in good shape and replace if necessary.

## **Jerseys and Socks**

A hockey jersey should be large enough to fit over the upper body equipment and provide the player with a good range of motion. The length of the sweater should be sufficient to allow it to go over the pants and not ride up when the player is skating. The arms of the sweater should extend to the wrists. Ensure that the neckline of the sweater does not compress the back of the neck. This may result in chafing and/or injury.

Socks hold the shin pads in position. They should extend from the top of the foot to the top of the leg. Socks are tucked inside the back of the skates and inside the hockey pants. They are held up with either a hockey garter belt system or Velcro fasteners or clips attached to the Jock/Jill strap.

### **Maintenance**

Jerseys and socks should be washed after each ice session in cool water, to avoid shrinking, and air-dried.

### **Helpful Hints**

A clothes rack, which can be stored and set up easily, can be used to air-dry equipment. Never use a direct heat source to dry the equipment because of the potential breakdown of the fibers and the padding.

## **Hockey Sticks**

A properly chosen stick is essential to developing effective puck control and shooting skills. There are several key points to remember when selecting a stick:

### **1. Junior or Senior Sizing**

Junior sticks are made with narrower shafts and smaller blades for better control. It is strongly recommended that junior sticks be chosen with a straight blade.

Senior sized sticks are for intermediate and older players who have the ability to comfortably control a larger stick.

**2. Length**

As a rule of thumb, in street shoes, the stick should reach between the chin and the mouth of the player with the toe (forward part of the blade) of the stick on the ground. While wearing skates, the butt end of the stick should reach just below the chin.

The maximum stick length is 63 inches (160 cm.).

**3. Blade Lie**

This is the angle of the blade in relation to the shaft of the stick and affects the angle at which the stick rises from the ice. In a “ready stance”, with stick's blade flat on the ice, there should be no gap between the ice and the bottom edge of the blade. If there is a gap, select a different lie to remove this gap.

**4. Shaft of Hockey Stick Material**

Wooden shafts provide varying degrees of flexibility. Generally, the less flexible stick, the greater amount of strength required to use it effectively. Younger players should use sticks with greater flexibility than senior players.

**5. Aluminum/Composite/Kevlar Sticks**

Aluminum/Composite/Kevlar sticks offer a great consistency in flex ranges and flex points.

**6. Curve**

The maximum curve of the blade is ½ inch. (1.27 cm.).

The butt end of a hollow stick must be covered with tape or a commercially available butt end to prevent injuries. All aluminum sticks come with a wooden plug that must be inserted into the top of the stick and then taped.

**Maintenance**

Do not store sticks near any direct heat source because they will dry out more quickly. The taping of the blade of a stick is a personal preference. The tape is meant to act as a surface, which provides an increased degree of friction to aid in puck handling. Tape the blade of a stick from the heel to the toe, covering the entire blade.

Sticks with splintered blades or visible breaks must be removed from the ice immediately to avoid injury to players.

**Helpful Hints**

At practice, try another player's stick. Experiment with different lengths, lies and flexibilities to determine which stick best suits you. With aluminum sticks, do not interchange the different brands of blades and shafts.

**Goaltender Sticks**

Goaltenders should select a stick, which allows them to comfortably assume the crouch (ready) position with the blade of the stick flat on the ice. Be aware of different lies, which is the angle at which the shaft rises from the ice. And the length of the paddle (blade).

**Goaltender Pads**

Always fit goal pads while wearing skates. Kneel down into each pad making sure the kneecap is in the middle of the knee roll. The large vertical roll should be on the outside of each leg. After doing up all the straps, the pad should extend from the toe of the skate to 4 inches (10 cm.) above the knee. Kneepads add additional protection when the goalie is in a position where the pads do not protect a certain area of the knee.

The leg pads should have padding at the back of the leg, which fits under the straps. The top of the pads should extend approximately 3 inches (7.5 cm.) above the bottom of the pants. A proper fit is essential for good protective quality and comfort.

### **Maintenance**

Always store pads standing to prevent flattening of the padding. Air dry to prevent mildew as the pads dry out. Do not dry over an open heat source. Straps should be checked regularly and replaced if needed. Any cuts in the leather should be repaired immediately. Gently rub a leather conditioner over all leather areas to prevent premature breakdown.

### **Goaltender Catcher and Blocker Gloves**

For proper protection and fitting gloves should fit like loose winter gloves over the fingers. With the catcher and blocker on the hands, lower the hands to the side, the gloves should not fall off. The blocker should be of the proper size to ensure comfort, easy gripping and control of stick.

#### **Protective Quality**

The catcher must have a heavily padded cuff, which overlaps the arm pad top offer maximum protection. Routinely test the padding on the catcher glove by pressing the fingers into the padding. If the padding is lumpy or spongy, then it has broken down and requires replacement.

The bottom of the back pad on the blocker should never be warped, as this exposes the ends of the fingers to possible injury.

#### **Maintenance**

Use a leather conditioner on all leather components of your gloves monthly.

### **Goaltender Upper Body Protection**

The upper body protection padding for a goaltender is designed to protect the collarbone, entire chest and abdominal areas and down the arms to the wrists. Ensure that all straps are utilized and fastened properly. Elbow padding must be properly positioned over the elbow. Arm padding should extend down to the wrist. The body pad should tuck into the pants about 2 inches (5 cm.) below the navel. The arm pads should overlap slightly with the gloves while allowing movement of the wrists and hands.

#### **Maintenance**

Proper air-drying after every session is essential to prolong the life and quality of then padding. Any damaged straps or padding should be repaired at a leather or show repair shop. Do not utilize tape in place of straps as this may restrict movement and blood flow.

### **Goaltender Pants and Athletic Supports**

Goaltenders wear a specially designed athletic support and cup, which has extra padding and protection. The athletic support should be fitted with the same principles as a regular player's equipment, but is specifically designed for a goaltender.

As with regular pants, the goaltender pants are designed to absorb and disperse impact from pucks. Padding is positioned to protect hips, waist, lower back (kidney area), tailbone, thighs and the groin area. The same principles apply for fitting, protective quality and maintenance with goaltender pants as for player's pants except that the goaltender's pants are loose enough around the waist to allow the belly pad to tuck into the pants. The goaltenders pants have several additional protective pieces. Padding is heavier than regular pants and may require suspenders to help the pants from falling out of position.

**Overview:**

- In order to ensure player safety it is critical that proper equipment be used
- Player safety may be jeopardized if equipment does not fit properly
- When considering purchases of equipment, issues of cost versus proper protection need to be weighed
- In order for equipment to remain safe and in good condition, it must be cared for and maintained regularly