

Baraboo Youth Hockey Equipment Guide

ADVICE, ANSWERS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

LOCAL RETAILERS

MC Sports

Hockey Giant

Players Bench

Total Hockey

ONLINE RETAILERS

Hockeymonkey.com

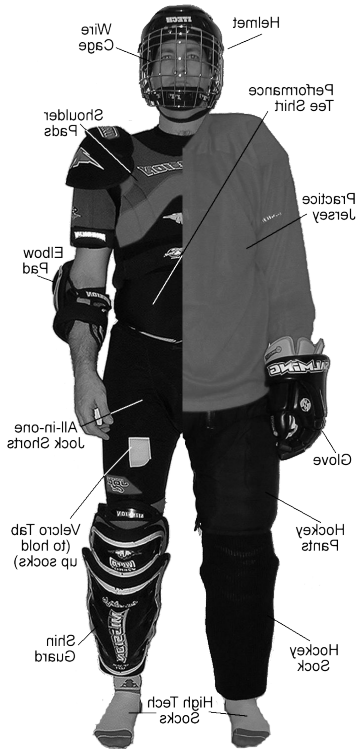
Hockeytron.com

Hockeygiant.com

Hockeyworld.com

OVERVIEW

It's hard to have a discussion about youth ice hockey without including equipment in some way. It is often referenced as being the expensive part of the sport and at the same time one of the reasons why the sport is "cool". There are many misconceptions and often we see parents and skaters intimidated by the decisions related to equipment. The purpose of this guide is to explain each piece of equipment, it's purpose and offer advice which will help you decide how to acquire it for your skater. If you still have questions after reading this document, please do not hesitate to contact your coach or our equipment manager, Bob Meeker for assistance. We are here to help!



SHOULD I PURCHASE NEW OR USED?

There are obvious financial benefits to purchasing used or utilizing donated equipment. Today there are more options than ever to do that through retailers such as Play It Again Sports and web based marketplaces. In many cases the used equipment is perfectly fine and will suit your growing child's needs (and your budget) very well. However, it is important to note that there have been significant advancements in hockey equipment in recent years which has resulted in safer, lighter weight and more comfortable equipment. With some products, specifically helmets, there are actually recommended expiration dates printed on the product itself since the materials degrade over time and may not provide the appropriate protection after that date. A good rule of thumb is that if the equipment looks worn out, damaged, or 10 years old or more, it probably is not up to current standards and may not provide the best level of protection or comfort for your child.

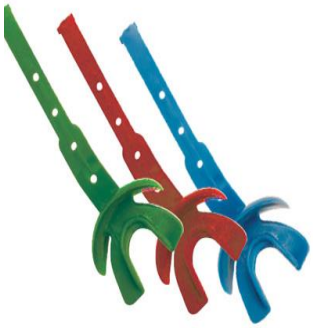
HELMET AND CAGE



A player's helmet-cage combo is the most important piece of protective hockey equipment that they wear. It protects the head, face and mouth, against minor abrasions and more powerful impacts. There is always the potential for concussions in the sport of hockey and a quality helmet is the only way to protect your skater from an injury of this type. Helmets have been around since the 1960's and today they utilize modern foams and plastics to protect better than ever. On the back of a modern helmet there should be a HECC sticker which has an expiration date. If this date has not passed, the helmet should be safe to wear. If it does not have a sticker, or the date has passed, it still may be safe, but we recommend that you acquire a helmet which is within it's recommended use period. It is important to note that the most expensive helmets are often made of lighter weight materials, and may not offer a higher level of protection. It is important to purchase the correct size helmet and have it adjusted to fit the skaters head snugly, but not so tight that it is causing discomfort. Most helmets are a two piece design and can be easily adjusted using a screwdriver. BYHA coaches and equipment manager can assist with the adjustments if needed. There are also different sizes and types of cages. These should fit in a manner that the chin rests in or just above the padded chin cup. Plastic "J" clips are required to be located on the side of the helmet and the cage should socket into these clips when closed. If your child is a goalie, please contact our equipment manager to discuss the different options available.



MOUTH GUARD



Wearing a mouth guard protects, the teeth, gums, tongue, and head in the case of an impact. Although some players may not have their permanent teeth when they begin playing hockey, we still recommend a mouth guard to protect against damage to other parts of the mouth and to help reduce the chance of a concussion. This is a relatively inexpensive piece of equipment ($2-$20) and the more expensive mouth guards are typically made of a softer gel substance for comfort. Nearly all types are designed to be formed to the players teeth through a boiling and biting procedure. Although there are famous players in the NHL who are often seen with their mouth guard hanging out of their mouth, this is not an appropriate way to wear it, and can actually result in a team penalty during a youth game.

NECK GUARD



A neck guard serves one purpose in ice hockey and that is to protect against a laceration (cut) to the neck or throat. This is a very rare, but potentially fatal injury which can occur if a skate blade were to come into contact with a players neck. By placing a cut resistant covering around a players neck, the chances of this injury are greatly reduced. These are typically available in three sizes, Youth, Intermediate, and Adult. Now required for all league game play, it is highly recommended to require your skater to wear one at practice and during games, and may be required for certain programs.

SHOULDER PADS

Shoulder pads serve the purpose to protect the shoulder, upper arms, chest and back from contact with others players, pucks, the goal and the boards. This piece of equipment is required at all levels and becomes much more important as players reach the age where checking is allowed. It is important to make sure that the pads fit in a manner that does not impede the players arm movement and should reach the tops of the elbow pads on the arms and extend down close to the waist on the front and back.



ELBOW PADS

Elbow pads work in conjunction with the shoulder pads to protect the elbow, upper arm, and forearm area of a player. These should be specific for the sport of hockey and not the type designed for skateboarding or other activities. In most cases there will be a left and a right pad. The smallest sizes may not include a hard plastic, elbow cap, but this is an important element as the child gets larger. The elbow pads when sized correctly should cover from just below the shoulder pads to the mid forearm.



HOCKEY PANTS

Hockey pants are really not pants as they do not extend below the knee when properly sized. They contain padding in the thigh, waist, tailbone and sometimes hamstring area and protect the upper legs from contact and falls. The pants should not impede the bending of the knee or touch the ice when kneeling. There is typically a shoelace closure in the front and a belt or suspenders is used to hold up the pants.



GLOVES

Gloves are designed to protect the players hands from contact and the cold. Unlike normal winter gloves, hockey gloves are sized by length and can range from 8”on the small side to 15”on the largest adults. Typically made of leather or durable nylon, the gloves should be somewhat loose fitting and the cuff of the glove should cover the entire wrist area of the player. The first place that a glove will wear out is in the palm, so look at this area if purchasing a used set.



SHIN GUARDS

Shin guards offer protection for the knees and the shins and are made with a hard plastic shell and a soft lining. They should extend from the tongue of the skate to just above the knee and are held in place using the Velcro straps or in some cases hockey tape. There is typically a left and a right, which when worn correctly offers better protection to key areas of the knee.



UNDERGARMENTS & JOCK/JILL SHORTS

What a player wears under their shoulder pads is definitely a personal preference. Snug fitting performance fabrics made by Under Armor and others have become popular in recent years, but some players choose to wear t-shirts, sweatshirts, or nothing at all. On their lower half it is recommended that a protective cup is worn and there are integrated shorts and/or long pants for both boys and girls which contain the cup and have Velcro patches on the legs which hold up the hockey socks. There are also belt systems with sock clips which can be worn for this purpose.



JERSEY

Hockey jerseys (also called sweaters), are often the favorite piece of equipment for any player. Depending on the program you are enrolled in, it may be optional or required to wear a specific jersey or you can wear one of your choice. Originally made of wool or heavy cotton, today jerseys are lightweight and designed to breathe. Fit is a personal preference, but most are typically worn loose and should be sized with the players equipment on to ensure they are large enough.



STICK

Hockey Sticks are available in Youth, Junior, Intermediate, and Adult sizes and should be sized for the player. Most beginner skaters (10 and under) will start with a youth stick which has a smaller shaft and blade. The stick should be cut to a length in which the butt of the stick reaches a players nose when standing in shoes, or their chin when in skates. It is not recommended to cut down an adult or Int. stick for a young player as the blade will be out of proportion and the shaft will be too large for the players hands. For players that do not have an obvious left or right preference, sticks with a straight blade are recommended until a clear preference is seen. Sticks are typically made of wood or sophisticated composite material, and for youth players the less expensive wooden sticks are very appropriate as the benefits of the more expensive composite sticks are not realized.



HOCKEY SOCKS



Hockey socks are worn over the shin guards and keep the legs warm. Typically made of a knit material, they are color coordinated for games, but any color is fine for practice. They can be held up using hockey shorts with Velcro tabs, or a hockey belt with clips. Currently the NHL players wear a thin performance material sock, but these are significantly more expensive and are not common in youth hockey. Hockey sox are for sale in the BYHA concession booth.

SKATES

There are a couple of things to point out before we cover the details of hockey skates:

- Figure skates are not recommended unless the child wears below a size youth 8 and cannot find a hockey skate in their size. The toe-pick and blade shape will force them to have a major adjustment when switching to hockey skates.
- Rental hockey skates, and adjustable size skates, should not be used past the first session of learn to skate or pre-hockey. The combination of poor quality and/or having to use a different pair each week will often lead to slower development of skating ability.



SIZING-Getting the correct sized skates is very important and often also very difficult at the youth level. The combination of not being able to feel the child's toe through the skate and a lack of feedback from the child typically leads to a lot of guess work on the part of the adults purchasing the skates. Add to that, the fact that most skates run 1 to 1.5 sizes larger than US shoe sizes, and you get a lot of kids skating in skates that are way too big. A good rule of thumb is to have them try on a skate that is one size smaller than their shoes and then adjust up or down from there based on how they fit.



BRAND-New youth hockey skates can range in cost from $50 to over $500 and we have youth skaters develop just as well in the former as the latter. We do recommend that you purchase a recognized brand of skates such as CCM, Bauer, RBK, I-tech, or Easton as there are now skates carried at some of the sporting goods stores which look like hockey skates, but are really for recreation and not sport play.

SHARPENING-New skates will typically come with no sharp edges and need to be sharpened before they can be worn on the ice. Sharpening will typically run between $7-$15 and will need to be redone after every 10-15 hrs on the ice. This can be done at most Hockey Shops or at the Baraboo rink.