

Hockey Gear Cheat Sheet

Skates



- **Stiffness**
 - Softer for beginners, stiffer for intermediate / advanced skaters.
- **Size**
 - All skates are 1-1.5 sizes down from shoe size.
 - Take out the insole and have the child step on it.
 - No more than a thumbnail extra space.
 - Toes should not be curled or touching the end of the toe cap.
- **Style**
 - Taper = heel lock with more movement around the ankle.
 - Bauer Vapor or CCM Jetspeed
 - Ensure the depth is proper - with foot in skate, and tongue pulled back, top eyelets should be easily accessible. If not, try an anatomical skate style.
 - If the skater is pronating at all, try anatomical or stiffer skates.
 - Anatomical = ankle lock with more support through the ankle.
 - Bauer Supreme or CCM Tacks
 - Ensure the depth is proper - with foot in skate, and tongue pulled back, top eyelets should be easily accessible.
- **Steel** (sharp vs dull, stone/re-edger, fingernail test)
 - Fingernail test for sharp vs dull.
 - Look at edges to ensure minimal knicks or “rolled” edges.
 - Buy a hand stone for maintenance in-between sharpenings.
 - Sharpen skates every 12 sessions or so (on average). If harder on edges, do it sooner. If not hard on edges, it may last longer.
- **Sharpening Measurements**
 - *1/2” is standard - equal glide, equal bite.*
 - Higher numbers (more shallow) will provide more glide.
 - Lower numbers (deeper) will provide more bite.
 - Increase/ decrease no more than 1/8” at a time to see a difference.
 - Lighter kids or agile hockey style may require a deeper cut = 3/8”
 - Heavier players or straightaway speedsters may require a more shallow cut - 5/8”
 - Always try a new hollow at practice before trying it in a game
- **Laces** (waxed vs unwaxed)
 - Waxed laces hold knots better and tighter, but sometimes at the expense of “too tight” or lace bite (painful calluses that form from pressure of the tongue).
 - Unwaxed laces are more forgiving and easier to tie. Better for beginner skaters or those that do not like their skates too tight.
 - All skaters 10+ years old should be tying their own skates. Oftentimes, parents will over tighten skates, leading to discomfort or lace bite.
- **Other considerations**
 - Lace bite - this is irritation or callous on the front of the ankle area caused by laces digging into the foot. This can be solved by lacing skates differently, loosening the skates, or using unwaxed laces. Gel pads are sold to help with this issue.
 - Bauer bump - notorious bump on the heels caused by skates rubbing too much or padding being worn down. Changing skates or using gel pads helps treat this issue.

- Arch pain - this happens when a player has a high or low arch (or flat feet) that does not agree with the skates they are wearing. Superfeet makes hockey specific insoles to help with this.
- Powerfeet - foam pads placed in the toe cap of the skate to help players push their toes into the bottom of skates when striding.
- Types of steel - there are a number of different options for types of steel.
 - Taller steel - improves blade angle in turns on the ice
 - Black steel - harder than typical steel, retains edges longer and provides more bite without hindering glide abilities
 - Mirrored steel - improves glide without softening the edges of the steel

Sticks



● Flex

- Flex is a measurement of the amount of pounds of force needed to bend a stick at the kick point exactly one inch.
- Sticks' most efficient transfer of energy will come when sticks bend one inch. Any more and you risk breaking the stick (or compromising its integrity); any less and you are not using the full potential of the stick.
- *Flex rating recommendation: half the player's weight + or - 10.*
- Stick length is much more important than flex, especially for newer players who are not quite flexing the stick anyway.
- When cutting a stick, you will increase the flex 5 pounds per inch.
- When extending a stick, you will decrease the flex 5 pounds per inch.

● Length

- Sticks come in Youth, Junior, Intermediate, Senior
 - Youth - shortest stick intended for beginners, smallest circumference for tiny hands (usually rounded), flex rating <30.
 - Junior - slightly longer than a youth stick intended for beginner, competitive hockey, flex rating 25-45.
 - Intermediate - mid length stick intended for taller, intermediate players, circumference of stick equal to senior shafts for larger hands (rounded or squared), flex rating 50-70.
 - Senior - tallest stick offering for experienced, usually teenagers and above players, offering all varieties of shaft and kick points, flex 70+
- *Offensive players' ideal length should be between the throat and lower lip when standing in skates with the toe of the stick touching the ground.*
- *Defensive players' ideal length should be between lower lip and tip of nose when standing in skates with the toe of the stick touching the ground.*
- *Check used tape on the blade for a good indicator of length. Too much wear on the toe indicates board play or too short of a stick. Too much wear on the heel indicates too long of a stick.*

● Brand

- Bauer, CCM, True, and Warrior are established "trusted" brands of sticks.
- Each manufacturer makes every "type" of stick, therefore they all have equivalents to one another.
- Each make and model of stick has several price points.
 - The cheapest is typically heavier and made of fiberglass & composite mixture. These tend to be more durable but less emphasis on performance and puck feel.
 - Mid price points are usually the sweet spot between durability, weight, and performance.

- The top line pro model put a heavy emphasis on being lightweight and completely focused on performance. Less durable than lower price points.
- Buying “last year’s model” is typically a good approach to getting more performance and a better value. Manufacturers release updated models every 18 months with new technology and marketing. They really are not that different.

● **Curves**

- Most popular curves: P29, P28, P88.
- *Recommend: P29 - most balanced blade pattern.*

		POSITION	MID	BENEFITS	TAVARES - P90TM
		SIZE	BIG	BEST OF BOTH WORLDS, THE NEW P90TM BLENDS THE P28 AND P29 WITH A MAX HEIGHT FEATURE	
		OPENESS	OPENED		
		POSITION	MID/TOE	BENEFITS	MCDAVID - P28 (186-2) <small>(BAUER P28 / WARRIOR W28 / EASTON E28 / TRUE TC3)</small>
		SIZE	BIG	GREAT FOR TOE DRAGS AND HITTING THE TOP SHELF.	
		OPENESS	OPENED		
		POSITION	MID	BENEFITS	CROSBY - P29 (203-2) <small>(BAUER P42 / WARRIOR W03 / TRUE TC2 / EASTON E/P3 / SHERWOOD PP28)</small>
		SIZE	BIG	THE ALL-IN-ONE. ACCURATE PASSING, GOOD CONTROL AND A HARD SHOT.	
		OPENESS	OPENED		
		POSITION	MID	BENEFITS	PANARIN - P30 (198-1) <small>(BAUER P60, WARRIOR W08, EASTON E30, TRUE MC)</small>
		SIZE	MEDIUM	SLIGHT HOOK AT THE TOE IS GREAT FOR STICKHANDLING WHILE THE CLOSED FACE PROVIDES GREAT CONTROL ON SHOTS.	
		OPENESS	CLOSED		
		POSITION	MID	BENEFITS	MACKINNON - P40 (184-1)
		SIZE	MEDIUM	GOOD FOR STICKHANDLING AND CONTROLLING SHOTS.	
		OPENESS	CLOSED		
		POSITION	MID	BENEFITS	OVECHKIN - P88 (184-1) <small>(BAUER P88, WARRIOR W88, EASTON E88, TRUE MC)</small>
		SIZE	MEDIUM	GOOD FOR STICKHANDLING AND CONTROLLING SHOTS.	
		OPENESS	CLOSED		

● **Kickpoint**

- Different sticks have different kick points to emphasize specific types of shots or game style.
- Low-Kick (Bauer Vapor, CCM Trigger, True Hazardous, Warrior Covert)
 - Quick release shots
 - Stiff blade for quick release
 - Wrist shots, quick snap shots
 - Shots from in-tight to the goalie
- Mid-Kick (Bauer Supreme, CCM Tacks, True Catalyst, Warrior Novium)
 - Power shots
 - Softer blade for better puck feel
 - Snap shots, Slap shots, One-timers
 - Shots from farther away
- Hybrid-Kick (Bauer Nexus, CCM Jetspeed)

- Mix between quickness and puck feel
 - Good for all shots, not intended to amplify any one type
 - Optimal stickhandling and passing
- **Tape**
 - Much of taping a stick is pure preference.
 - Some speculate that white tape blends in with the ice, black tape conceals the puck better.
 - Tape as much or as little of the blade as you'd like
 - Wax could be used to protect the tape and limit snow build-up on the blade
 - Taping a knob is preference as well; avoid using black tape at the top as it contain a tar like substance that will wear palms of gloves quicker
 - Mark your stick using a sharpie for fun or identification purposes
 - The more tape you use, the more weight you add to the stick

PROTECTIVE

Shins



- **Sizing**
 - Try on shins with skates on.
 - Knee should fall into circle padding comfortably.
 - Shin guards over tongue or in tongue will affect sizing.
 - Shin guards should never overlap with the top eyelet.
 - Size is measured from ankle to mid-knee.
 - YTH <10", JR <13", SR >14"
- **Clear tape & reusable straps**
 - All players should be using clear tape. This prevents the shin guard from turning when a player falls to his/her knees.
 - You may also use a sleeve or laces for reusability.
 - Straps are often not enough to keep them in place.
- **Other considerations**
 - Price points are dictated by materials used and amount of protection
 - Sometimes, more is not better. Keep range of motion and mobility in mind.
 - Buy proper shin guards for the player's level of play - rec, competitive, advanced.
 - Some models (Bauer Vapor, CCM Jetspeed, Warrior Covert) are more tapered, whereas others allow for a looser fit throughout the leg. This is simply preference.
 - Look for features like: removable liners, softer, "stretch" straps, and anti-microbial linings.
 - Some shells are made of composite over plastic - this does not enhance protection, it simply reduces the weight of the shin guards.

Pants



- Pants sizes are typically determined by a combination of height and waist size.
- *When these two measurements do not align, prioritize height.*
- When a player tries on pants, they should be able to do a full lunge without range of motion being inhibited by the pants. Further, the pants should still come to the thigh area without too much "ride up."
- Always reduce gaps in padding on the front of the body, but do not allow overlap.
- Some pants have zippers that will make them adjustable an extra inch in length and/or leg diameter.

- Different manufacturer's make women's specific pants that have a slimmer waist and more room through the hip area.



Shoulder pads

- *Look for shoulder pads that have an emphasis on collar bone protection.* There is no open-ice hitting in girls' hockey, so bulky shoulder pads just inhibit players' ability to turn their head with a cage on.
- Different manufacturers make women's/girls shoulder pads. These increase protection to outside their breasts. This should not inhibit range of motion, especially across the body.
- If buying non-women specific gear, tapered usually works best for girls'/women's frames (Bauer Vapor, CCM Jetspeed).
- When fitted properly, shoulder pads will likely leave a small gap between chest pad and pants as well as bicep pad and elbow pad. This is normal. Usually this gap closes when the player is in a crouched or striding motion. Again, gear should not overlap when standing in a relaxed posture.



Elbow pads

- Elbow pads typically come with hard padding on the outside of the elbow bone and some type of comfort padding inside.
- Ensure that elbow pads are snug and not able to move freely. They should not cut off circulation, but you do not want them to rotate if the player falls to the ice.
- There should be a small gap between elbow pads and gloves / shoulder pads. This is normal to preserve range of motion.
- Avoid getting elbow pads that are too bulky as they can inhibit stick handling motions.



Gloves

- There are two main types of gloves: tapered and anatomical.
 - Tapered (Bauer Vapor, CCM Jetspeed, Warrior Covert) will have a more snug fit through the hand and a wider cuff for wrist roll movement.
 - Anatomical (Bauer Supreme, CCM Tacks, Warrior Alpha) will have a more uniform straight fit through the hand and wrist, providing a slightly looser feel.
 - *Girls with smaller hands tend to prefer tapered gloves.*
- Price points for gloves have a lot to do with the types of foams used, the material of the palm, and the amount of protection.
 - High impact foam on the back side of the hand will allow the glove to remain lightweight while providing enhanced protection.
 - Nash or leather palms improve puck feel and durability of the palms.
 - More expensive gloves have additional padding and separates the finger into 3 pieces (vs 2) for more dexterity and less break in time.
 - Buy gloves based on the competition level of the player.
- Sizing
 - Youth <9", JR 9-12", SR 13"+
 - Complete the "finger test." Have the player try on the gloves and see how much space is remaining at the end of the finger. Their fingers should not be going through the end of the

finger area, but there also should not be a lot of extra space. Further, you should not be able to see your palm with a properly fitting glove.

- Players should be able to roll their wrists in all four directions with little resistance.
- Have them hold a stick with the gloves on for comfort and mobility purposes.



Helmets

- Round vs Narrow helmet styles - typically can use a fabric measuring tape to determine which style is best.
- When possible, get the toolless adjustable helmet for ease of use. There is some overlap in sizing. Logic dictates that a size medium closed all the way is better than a size small opened all the way to allow space for growth.
- Every hockey helmet has HECC certification. USA hockey requires that this sticker NOT BE REMOVED and is not expired.
- Always try helmets on and know how to adjust them. Some helmets will adjust front to back, others will adjust front to back and expand to become wider.
- Helmets should fit snug without pressure points. Have your player shake his/her head. If the helmet is moving freely, it's too big. If it is not moving at all, it is too small. There should be just a small wiggle for absorbing contact.
- Higher level and more expensive helmets typically come with high impact foams and/or custom-ability. Lower level helmets have simple foam padding. Look for something in between that aligns with the players' level of play. Full check hockey would probably need a higher level helmet.



Cages

- Cages and face shields are highly a matter of preference.
- Ensure they are adjusted to rest on the players chin - not push or hang freely.
- Face shields can fog up - prevent this by spraying with pledge or anti-fog spray (rain-x or hockey specific product).
- Cages come in sizes corresponding to helmet size.
- Bauer and CCM branded cages and face shields are interchangeable, but Warrior is brand specific.
- If a player wants a specific cage (larger or smaller, white or black, etc), it is more economical to buy just the helmet (rather than the combo), then buy the cage of choice.



Mouthguards

- Mouthguards can prevent concussions associated with contact to the jaw area.
- Mouthguards are required of all players.
- Most mouthguards are moldable. *If your player complains it is rubbing the back of their mouth, simply cut off ½" or more to prevent discomfort or gagging.*
- Manufacturers make all types of mouthguards - I would recommend a mouthguard that allows the player to breathe and talk without restriction.



Neck Guards

- “Neck laceration protection” is required of all USA Hockey players.
- These can be stand alone neck guards or the ones built into undershirts, whichever the player prefers.
- Cut protection is also offered in wrist guards and socks. *Please note: these products are “cut resistant” not “cut proof.” They will help, but not prevent ALL injuries.*



Gear Care

- *Players of all ages should be carrying their own gear and packing their own bag.*
- Gear can become gross after a period of time. Some gear is made with antimicrobial material, but not all.
- It is important to keep gear as fresh and dry as possible.
- Gear should be aired out after every on-ice session.
- Gear should be sprayed with anti-bacterial or odor-neutralizing sprays regularly.
- Try to avoid using chemicals such as lysol on gear that directly touches skin.
- Skates
 - Insoles should be pulled out of skates to ensure they dry properly (and no mold gets between insole and bottom of skate).
 - Dry skate blades with soakers or a towel to prevent rust, being careful to only touch the flat sides of the steel.
- Gear should be soaked and deep cleaned at least every 6 months. Fill your bathtub with hot water and a little bit of laundry detergent and let protective gear soak for a day. Rinse thoroughly. Repeat this process until the water is relatively clear.
- *Homemade antibacterial spray (Coach Ashley’s recipe):*
 - *4-parts water, 1-part white vinegar (or water-witch hazel)*
 - *Add 5-10 drops Tea Tree essential oil per 8 oz fluid*
 - *Add 5 drops of Eucalyptus or Lavender for scent purposes*