



# RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

RECRUITMENT



## IIHF RECRUITMENT PROGRAM

The IIHF Recruitment Program has been developed to offer National Associations a total program they can use to begin recruitment players into the game and will enable to educate their clubs in operating the program.

The program is 2-sided with the:

1. "Ice Hockey is for Me" Campaign that will promote hockey and assist nations to recruit players from all levels worldwide
2. Educational program to teach the nations, from the National Associations down to their clubs, how to organise and operate recruitment projects

Both sides have been produced to work together offering support and in-depth information about benefits of ice hockey.

### "Ice Hockey is for Me"

#### Featuring

- i. Posters – 2 to 6 different designs, that nations can personalize
- ii. Leaflets - 1 sheet: 2-sided: 6 pages explaining the benefits of ice hockey
- iii. Banners – 2 to 4 different designs, that's nations can produce
- iv. Stickers and Pucks
- v. Female version of the material
- vi. Parents Manual - "Welcome to Ice Hockey" can be downloaded from [IIHF.com](http://IIHF.com)

### **Educational Program**

The goal of this side of the program will be to develop a material and information that will education the National Association's how to implement the recruitment program and also how to educate their clubs how to use it. must work hand-in-hand with the campaign to support it with further in-depth information about benefits of ice hockey.



- Recruitment Manual – details Strategy and Planning to use every opportunity to promote hockey and to do it well.
- Operations Manuals – Guide describing how to operation recruitment projects
- Recruitment Seminar - education to explain the manuals
- Support Program - Power Point Presentation explaining Recruitment Program and the Campaign equipment ; promotional items ; promo hardware

### **Operations Manuals**

- Try Hockey Days
- Ice Sessions
- On-ice demonstrations
- Beginners camp

### **Ice Hockey is for Me Recruitment Campaign**

- Program has been designed to create a connection with the biggest possible audience of Parents of 4 to 8 year olds
- Get the Parent to the Rink with their youngster
- Remember we have the best Product; it will do the rest
- In order to achieve the OBJECTIVE we need to Create a Magnet

## **RECRUITMENT**

Why do children choose to play ice hockey?

Nowadays children have a large choice of how they will fill their spare time and what activities they can do. This includes sports meaning that many associations, clubs and teams around the world now need to be proactive in finding young people to play ice hockey. If handled properly, this can be a great boost to the ice hockey program in a club and National Association.

A study was undertaken to determine why children play ice hockey and why they continue to play. The reasons given can be divided into four categories; in order of importance they are:

### **1. Affiliation**

Children want to develop and maintain close relationships with their teammates and coaches. They want to be accepted as a member of the group, be appreciated by their teammates and have fun. They enjoy:



- making friends and being part of a team
- playing with their teammates
- team meetings and get-togethers

## **2. Sensation**

They enjoy the speed and competitiveness that ice hockey provides, and like the novelty of playing a sport that is different. They like:

- the excitement and speed of a game
- the sensations of playing
- the feeling of wearing the equipment

## **3. Excellence**

They want to excel at playing ice hockey, master the skills of the game and be a good hockey player. They want to:

- improve their ability
- learn new skills
- be the best

## **4. Success**

Children like to receive recognition and admiration for their achievements. They want to receive rewards and be well-known as a hockey player. They like:

- winning
- recognition for being good
- receiving trophies

It has been discovered that until the age of 12 years old parents are the ones in the family that make the decision about what activity a child participates in. In the case of girls playing ice hockey the mother is the parent that will have the final say.

### **Recruitment in a Club Association**

Running an ice hockey club or association is a demanding and challenging experience with recruiting new members being one of the more difficult tasks that administrators are faced with.



The main objective of a recruitment program is to identify and use opportunities to promote your ice hockey program to help increase the number of members in your club or nation.

Experience has shown that there isn't one way that that is the best but there might be one or several that are better for you than others. The ability to experiment with a number of different recruiting strategies will help you to recruit new members.

An important strategy for attracting new members is to have a range of options to choose from, and this is the background to the information provided on the following pages. The strategies listed here are typical of recruitment activities already being used by many Ice Hockey Federations.

### **Goal of Recruitment**

A Club or Association must establish strategy that defines their goal for recruitment. This goal should be decided and committed to by everyone involved. By doing this it focuses the members of the Club or Association to achieving this goal.

There are a number of reasons to recruit and some examples are:

- More Players
- More Volunteers
- More Money
- Better Hockey

### **Recruitment Coordinator**

From the beginning the Club or Association needs to have a person who takes responsibility for the program; a Recruiting Coordinator. They will be the person who co-ordinates all the details between the club, the National Association and the parents. If the club doesn't have one, keep looking! It is necessary to have a person people can contact and ask questions of. The main characteristics for this person are to be active, aware and responsible for their actions.

To assist this person in their role they should be able to put together a recruiting team of 3- 4 people key members to share the duties. They may have to find additional volunteers to do the work necessary.

### **Roles & Responsibilities**



The following lists the Roles and Responsibilities that the Recruiting Coordinator and their team are directly responsible for or must organise to for the activity to take place.

1. Promote Ice Hockey
  - Recruit new players all year round, allow for try ice hockey days all season long
  - Provide better hockey awareness and publicity with in the community as wells grow the association hockey player numbers
  - Recruiting (e.g. Intro to hockey programs, recruiting flyers, etc.)
2. Produce Leaflets and Materials that Promote Ice Hockey
  - Distribute at schools during the first week of classes
  - Set-up a table to handout during local Professional or senior ice hockey game
  - Also hand out at public skating sessions, other sporting events, malls, supermarket, etc
  - Stress in your flyers that these age levels are inexpensive (dispels the concerns of the high cost of the sport)
  - Also focus on fun and safety
3. Try Ice Hockey Programs for Minimal Cost
  - This is the single biggest success factor for associations that have seen large growth in hockey
  - Allow new potential players to try it without having to commit large sums of money for gear or commit to a full season.
  - Without this option many children don't even try.
  - Clinic can be as simple as one day, to multiple sessions
  - Ice Hockey Days and Girl
4. Promote as "Mainstream" Sport for Children
  - It is surprising but some families aren't aware that ice hockey exists in there town, city or country
  - They think of it as a minority sport
  - Get as much positive hockey stories into the community through newspapers, the internet..
  - A positive story showing children having fun while learning is appealing and works well to reinforce the efforts of all involved
  - Have players participate in parades, fairs, social events etc.
5. Players Getting Friends to Sign-up
  - Especially effective when children are signed up for the first time.



- Offer reduction in registration as incentive in bringing a friend to play hockey.
6. Jersey Days
- Pick a Friday during the school year and have all players (or entire association) wear their jerseys to school.
  - This will provides great visibility for playing ice hockey and will hopefully create additional new interest.
7. Word of Mouth
- Challenge every parent to be a hockey recruiter.
  - This is typically the best way to get the word out
8. Keep a list of children/parents that express interest in playing hockey
- All hockey coordinators should have a comprehensive list of hockey players in their association.
  - During/after registration, confirm that all have reregistered.
  - Those that have not follow-up with them to find out why.
  - Some just weren't aware of registration, some for financial reasons, some moved.
  - Those quitting for bad experiences, use those reasons for improving the program

#### Other Recruitment Ideas

- Multiple shorter seasons, instead of one long commitment
- Incentivize your current participating families to bring friends
- Partner with Off-Season Sports
- Work with local scout troops for badges
- Circulate program emails through association parents
- Connect with the local adult league
- Community Festivals
- Bring a Friend (or two) Coupons
- Distribute Valentine's Day Card with a Free Skate coupon



## TRY HOCKEY

Once a youngster has become interested in hockey, it is very important to give them the opportunity to try the sport. This means giving them a chance to play, practice, shoot pucks and enjoy the game. Making it easy for them to get on the ice and experiencing hockey is a must.

Making available equipment for the players to use in the beginning makes participation safe for the players and inexpensive for their parents

- Puck shoots (anywhere)
- Street / Floor hockey (especially at schools)
- Beginning Ice Hockey / Learn to skate Camps
- Learn to Play programs

An established Entry Level/Learn to Play program gives a club a ready made program to start beginners.

### Operating an Entry-Level Program

A club or association must make the commitment to operate a Entry-Level/Learn to Play Program and then be prepared to support it. This program offered should be designed with learning being emphasized as opposed to competition. This is because the program has to be designed for the children and the way they learn best.

This program will also be very inviting to new players to continue play ice hockey.

### Operations Manuals

Below are some examples of events that can be used to give children the opportunity to try ice hockey. The Operations Manuals for these programs are included in a separate document attached to this program

### Ice Hockey Days

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

- Free of charge
- Boys and Girls Ages invited to try hockey





- No additional ice time cost to arena/program
- Set convenient time
- Consistent time and location
- Plenty of volunteer help
- Can join club for a reduced cost for the season
- Help them with used equipment

### Beginners Ice Hockey and Beginners Skating

By operating a camp you can give children the chance to learn more about the game of ice hockey by learn how to skate or basics skills of ice hockey. They also get an opportunity to find out more about the equipment and wear it during a training session. For the parents it gives them the chance to discover ice hockey as a sport and see the joy their children have playing it

- One week - half day's
- As a follow-up after a Recruitment Ice Hockey Day
- Both beginner Ice Hockey and Learn to Skate program at the same time
- 2 hours ice time per day
- Age group 6 – 12 year

### COMMIT - REGISTER

This is the step where the player and their family decide if they want to continue to be involved in ice hockey.

Practices should be based on the principles' of learning skills, playing for fun and playful games. Using the Learn to Play Practice Manual will help achieve this and offer the young player enjoyment every time they come to the rink.

A regular time slot for the practices will make it easier for the players and their families to make the commitment of time to be involved in the hockey program.

The cost of playing hockey can be very expensive so for the first time player the amount that needs to be paid should be made as low as possible. The cost of registering should be made affordable for all families as should the amount paid for the weekly practice.

- Keep cost to minimum
- Keep time slot consistent
- Require very minimum equipment



- But equipment is part of our sport and enjoy wearing it - Gladiator feeling
- Keep it short – not Sept. – Mar.
- Be organized and prepared!
- Be very positive
- Give stickers, etc.

#### Flexible Development Program

One way to make your program more attractive is to make your development program flexible. This offers the child and their parents the option of days and times that they can attend practice.

- Offered a flexible option to try hockey
- Program has three different practice sessions a week
- Same practice plan for all three ice sessions
- Participants have the option to attend one or all three
- Maximized participation through breaking up same ice slot with different skill and age levels

#### Parents Lounge

When the players are on the ice having a practice, it's good to have a place for parents, especially first time parents, go to for information and to have a cup of coffee while they follow the practices.

This area can be called the "Parents Lounge" and should offer a welcome atmosphere, free coffee, tea and other drinks and a written plan of the day.

- During all Ice Hockey Days clubs set-up a Parents Lounge in the arena
- Also during normal practice days
- Lounge is an area that visiting or first time parents can go to for information...etc
- Free coffee, tea, programs
- Welcome atmosphere

#### Register

If possible have the Recruitment Coordinator and/or head coach available to answer any questions or concerns during the day. Try to get them registered for the upcoming season during the parents session.

- Explain all the documents and information
- Induce first year players with reduced cost to participate



- Use incentives such as bring a friend who joins and your fee is half price
- Establish a new/used equipment purchase/loaner program.

### **RETENTION - Retain**

Once the player is involved and playing; the challenge now is to have them come back and keep playing season after season. Retention a very important and equal part of the recruitment process of any club, organization or association.

Continuing to make the program fun and interesting will ensure that the player is enjoying themselves and will want to continue to play. This can be done by offering a program that will improve the players progressively through the different levels of development and competition.

The amount and cost of equipment can be a big issue. There should be an attempt to make this easy for the player to participate and not have to have all the equipment. This will depend on the nations legal guidelines for sports participation

A good way to reduce the costs significantly for the parents of players becoming involved in hockey is to organize used equipment to purchase possibly from other players already playing.

Other ways of increasing the enjoyment and retaining players are:

1. Track closely all players that do not sign up from the previous season. Follow-up with them to find-out why they are not signing up.
2. Promote a list of key success factors that teams should be doing to make seasons fun and successful: Making fun a priority, early team building get-togethers, get parents to volunteer for the team, etc.
3. Have girls teams to play in the female league. Most will enjoy it more (social aspect) and develop confidence to participate more quickly.
4. Refrain from Sunday morning practices for Mites and Squirts and avoid Wednesday evenings.
5. 2x2 Challenge: Try to recruit two more players than last year. Then a retain 2 more players this season than you had return last year.



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