



# HOW TO RUN A SUCCESSFUL ICE HOCKEY DAY



# RECRUITMENT



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## HOW TO GET STARTED

### Things to be considered before the event

#### 1. The club says YES!

The very first step to start a recruitment drive is to have an agreement from the club or association to start it. The chairman and Head Coach must play the main role in organizing this event. They need to stand behind it and support the event. If this doesn't happen it usually means it won't be a success. Hockey is nowadays seen more and more as a family sport, which gives children and their parents a positive view of ice hockey.

#### 2. Appoint a Recruitment Coordinator

From the beginning the club needs to have a person who takes responsibility for the program. They will be the person who co-ordinates all the details with the club, the national association and the parents. If the club doesn't have a Coordinator, they must keep looking! It is necessary to have a person that everyone can contact and ask questions of. The main characteristics for this person are to be active, aware and responsible for their actions.

#### 3. Recruit the players

In the beginning you usually start without any players; from point zero. The coordinator needs to make a concerted effort start recruiting new children for the hockey day events. Players already playing in the club should be asked to bring friends and local schools should be approached.

#### 4. The first Try Ice Hockey Event

You are now ready to start to arrange an Ice Hockey Day-event. It will need some work to get everything organised but it is definitely worthwhile. The payback is the happy, smiling faces and who knows maybe a life-long hobby, might start with your hard work. Remember to keep your goals small and realistic in the beginning to avoid frustration. You may need to run a couple of events before this program becomes established but you might also make a good impact with the first event and recruit many new players.

Once you get started, make an Ice Hockey Day "a yearly habit". Repeat it every year in the fall. Remember to keep it interesting and fun. It's like building your own business: get new clients every year to keep it fresh and interesting for yourself too. By doing things over and over again you will learn new things every time, and in couple of years you'll be able to pass on your knowledge to an assistant to take over!



## 5. The target of the event

The target for the ice hockey day event is to approach all people (boys and girls, men and women too) that are interested in ice hockey. We recommend that at least the first 3 events will be free of charge. You can always run an event to attract players at a certain age, but always remember that by doing this you might be excluding someone that really wants to play. This is what you need to think before you start marketing the event.

## 6. Recruit enough staff members

Below you will find list of people that will help you in running the event:

- Director, person who is in charge of the event
- Registration person (will be the first one people will meet at the rink door, make sure that they are friendly and helpful!)
- Equipment manager (sharpens the skates, fills in the water bottles and is there to hold the icepack if somebody gets hurt on the ice)
- Instructors (work on and off ice; help with the equipment before the practice. If possible, get those that are familiar with children)
- Star guests (national team players or some other well known player/-s from the club)
- Club representative (Head Coach or Chairman to answer questions that parents might ask and prepare them to for the questions they can face)
- National Association representative (gives the club and the parents an impact of being involved in something “bigger” that has a meaning for the association too)

## 7. Date of event – make reservations

To run a successful event you need to choose the best possible date and a good timeslot for the ice. The ice practice doesn't have to last longer than 45- 60 minutes. Before making the reservation check that there is no other sport event or a vacation time. Make sure that you have enough space in the rink to operate a parent's information session.

## 8. Target group

Before you start marketing you need to know what age group you are approaching. Do you need children of a certain age group to make a whole team for the season or do we want to welcome everybody in, or do we need both?

It seems that most children make a decision of coming to play hockey themselves from the age of 12 upwards. Before this it's usually a parent's choice and the mother has the large impact on what sport or hobby their children play. Friends are also very important and have a big influence.

## 9. Marketing and advertising



One of the most important things to make an Ice Hockey Day successful is the marketing and advertising. Think carefully what age groups you want to attract, then how and where to inform them. You need enough time and people to make the promotion of the event success. See the timeline on the last page.

Good ways to promote the event

- Players already playing in the club
- Local newspapers
- Local radio stations
- Internet
- Schools (you need to have a permission to advertise there. Leaflets are useful here)
- Other places that are free (sporthalls, malls, shops etc.)

#### **10. Use the Recruitment Program material**

The IIHF offers free marketing material for National Associations and clubs to use. The “Ice Hockey is for Me” logo is made for the concept, and is free for the clubs to use too. Make an order of the posters and the leaflets at least 4 weeks before your event. Then there is also a web-banner for the clubs to use on their front page for free.

#### **11. Sponsors**

Money is always an issue in the starting point. To make the event special for the children, you should have something to give to them. It can be anything that makes them want to come back later: hockey stick, t-shirt, puck, cap, sticker, leaflet, card etc. Local sponsors can be interested in being involved in youth hockey and special events. Some companies may be willing to help when it comes to provide something to the children too. You could always organize a hockey day for the people in the company if they pay for the costs of the event.

Hockey jerseys are useful later when the team starts to play games. You get started easily with the practice jerseys if you print the numbers to the back side.



### 12. Timeline

From past experience it's better to be even realistic with the timeline you will use to plan and organise this event. You should take rather more than less time. Good and thorough planning increases the chances of success.

### 13. Insurance

Make sure you have everything clear and planned before the event starts. If somebody gets hurt, you need to have an action plan on it. When you have enough people working the event, it's a lot safer place to the children. In all circumstances, you need to make certain that everyone understands the rules about how to act on the ice. This might be somebody's first time at the ice rink.



## Things to think about during the event

### 1. Registration

The players should register when they arrive at the arena. A registration station/table needs to be located near the main door of the arena. Make sure the first person they meet is friendly and helpful. It gives a good first impression for the parents and the person can assist everyone in where to go and what to do. Some children may be a little frightened by the noises that come from inside the rink.

The registration station you should have a list of all the participants with information that is needed. Collect the name of the participant, date of birth, and contact information for the parents (name, postal address, phone numbers and email). This will make it easy to send a message with the picture of all of the participants and inform them about the next stages.

### 2. A Tool Kit for the event

For the ice practice you need: pucks (also the lighter pucks), drinking bottles, jerseys / vests, soccer- and tennis balls, cones, sticks and extra helmets. The clubs usually have them already so remember to ask from them before buying new ones.

### 3. What to do before the ice session

Before going to the ice every participant needs to have their equipment checked to ensure they have been fitted and worn correctly. Everyone should wear helmet, gloves, skates and stick as the minimum amount of equipment. The cycling helmet works well for the beginners too, but make sure this complies with the laws in your nation

### 4. Action on the ice

Check out the On Ice-manual to find easy drills, games and practices to use during the ice session that are great for the children. It has to be safe and fun.

### 5. Team photos on the ice

We recommend the club to take a picture of all the participants on the ice. It's a nice memory of the event and can be used afterwards in many purposes, including follow-ups and advertising.

### 6. The 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.

### **7. Players and Parents Information session**

If you have someone representing the National Association or the club attending the Ice Hockey Day it is important for them to host a short information session for the children and their parents after the ice session.

This session should explain a little bit more about ice hockey in the nation and can give some facts where the club sits in the bigger picture. Then it's very important to explain the next thing the children need to do to become involved in the club and also have a schedule of the next practices to be able to show how it continues from there on.

This meeting can also be run during the on ice session but you have to take into account that the parents may probably prefer to watch their children.

## **Things to be considered after the event**

### **1. Club Registration**

Make sure all new players register correctly with the National Association to be able to participate. This might include a licence and insurance so they can start.

### **2. Contact the girls and their parents**

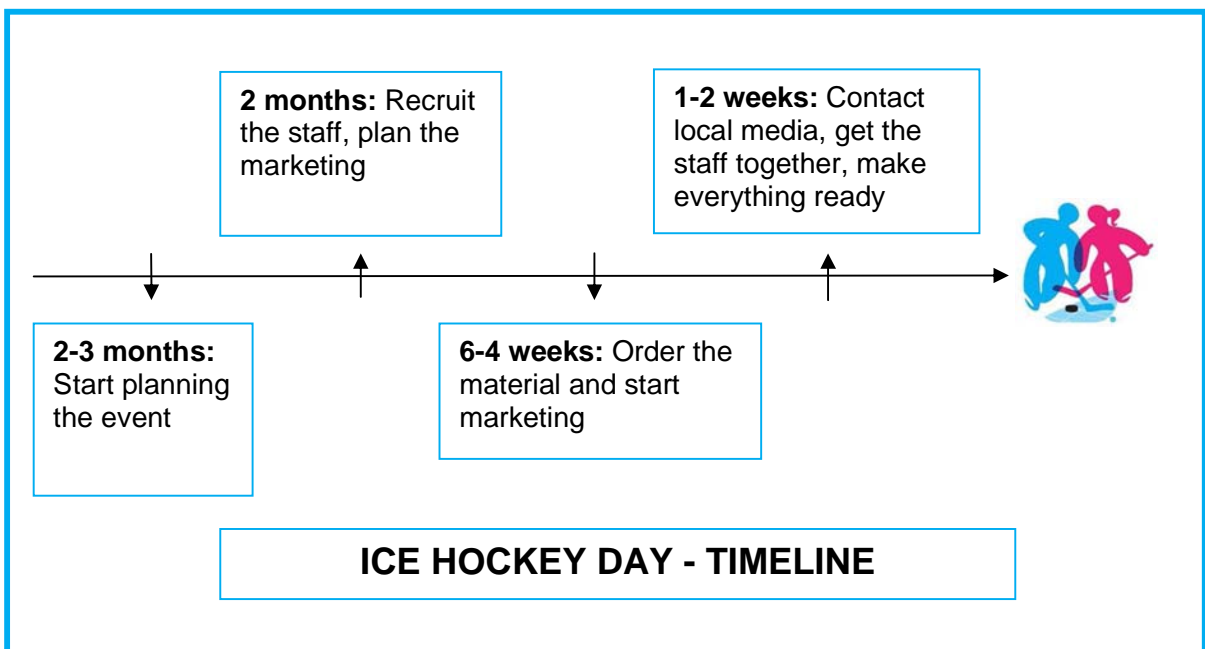
When you have convinced the family at the event and they are all excited about hockey, they are waiting for you to contact as soon as possible. You should remember to email them and thank them for coming to take part in the event. Emailing is easy and cheap, it's also the best way to remind them about future events and provide them with further information. Then you can start to get some of the parents involved in the club when you get to know them.

Remember, they don't have a chance to say yes if you don't ask... 😊



**CHECKLIST OF THE IMPORTANT THINGS** (make a mark when it's done!)

- Make reservations from the rink and the club
- Advertise in the local newspaper
- Advertise in the local radio station
- Order posters and leaflets for the school
- Distribute the posters for the sport halls, shops and malls
- Add the banner to the clubs website, in the front page
- Find sponsorship
- Collect a tool kit: [ ] Pucks [ ] Bottles [ ] Jerseys/vests  
[ ] Sticks [ ] Extra helmets
- Staff Recruit: [ ] Equipment manager [ ] Instructors [ ] Visitor/-s  
[ ] Club representative [ ] Association representative
- Licenses, insurance
- Others





## A FINAL WORD

Women's Ice Hockey is one of the fastest growing Team sports in the World and in 2007 the Finnish Ice Hockey Association has developed a strategy to increase the number of female ice hockey players from 2600 to 4500 by 2010. The clubs want more girls and women into their action nowadays, as well as men and boys.

This manual was originally produced for the Finnish ice hockey clubs to organise the Girls' Hockey Day or Try hockey events. It soon became clear that this format can be used both to recruit boys and girls' to play ice hockey. The main purpose of this program is to help the clubs to increase the number of players playing in their hockey programs by using the most important things listed in a manual. It offers ideas of how to organize a successful event and how to continue from that point onwards. By using your own experiences and ideas, this program can be adjusted to successfully deal with the situation and circumstances in your nation.

In Finland the Girls' Hockey Day started after Torino Olympics. Since then we have helped clubs operate over 40 events, every season. Thanks to this concept, the Finnish Ice Hockey Association's goal increase the number of female players was passed when we reached 4700 players at the end of 2009-2010 season.

Ice Hockey Days are fantastic!

Johanna Pelkonen  
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Girls' Hockey Development Coordinator



**HAVE FUN! ENJOY HOCKEY!**



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