

2018-19



Parent **HANDBOOK**



A helpful
guide for
creating a great
youth hockey
experience





“ The ADM and its ladder of development is the best program for every single kid playing the sport, regardless of ability level. Coupled with USA Hockey's extraordinary coaching education programs, the sport at the grassroots level has never been better in our country.”

– DAN BYLSMA

2014 U.S. Olympic Men's Hockey Team head coach,
2011 NHL Coach of the Year, hockey dad



Welcome to USA Hockey

Whether it's competing for a gold medal, skating with neighborhood friends or volunteering at the rink, hockey can provide a lifetime of great moments—and fun—for you and your child.

As the national governing body for ice hockey in the United States, [USA Hockey](#) is [here to help you make the most of it.](#)

PARENT HANDBOOK

— 2018-19 —



YOUTH HOCKEY

is our focus.



About USA Hockey

FOUNDED IN 1937, the USA Hockey family now includes more than one million players, coaches, officials and volunteers. We are the official representative to the U.S. Olympic Committee and the International Ice Hockey Federation. In this role, we organize and train men's and women's teams for international competitions, including the IIHF World Championships, the Olympic Games and the Paralympic Games. We also work closely with the National Hockey League and the National Collegiate Athletic Association.

We aim to help every player reach full potential through engaging, safe and fun programs that maximize skill development. We help young people become leaders, even Olympic heroes, and we connect the game at every level, promoting a life-long love of the sport. Our primary emphasis is on the support and development of grassroots hockey programs. Your registration with USA Hockey aligns you and your hockey-playing child with a powerful advocate that is completely dedicated to you and to making hockey a great experience for every player.

Make hockey great for YOUR CHILD

USA HOCKEY LAUNCHED the American Development Model in 2009, providing a detailed blueprint for optimal athlete development.

By giving your child the ADM experience, you're positioning them for long-term success. It's proven programming, built on qualitative and quantitative research from leading hockey nations, sport scientists, coaches and educators. In 2015, USA Hockey granted rights to the USOC to use the ADM name and logo as part of its effort to improve the well-being of future generations and help every American athlete reach full potential.

The ADM builds players well-suited for the highly skilled, creative, fast-paced game of today.

The ADM is fun. USA Hockey believes in letting kids be kids. We believe that kids and their families should get the most out of hockey, without feeling undue performance or financial pressure. We believe in community-based youth hockey. We believe in keeping kids engaged, moving and smiling. We believe in making optimal use of ice time. We believe in creating great athletes, not just hockey players. The ADM encourages children to play multiple sports.



As the basis for youth hockey in the U.S., the ADM provides:

- Age-specific, age-appropriate skill development.
- An opportunity to efficiently learn and refine essential skills without an over-emphasis on winning games at the younger age classifications.
- A sensible practice-to-game ratio that encourages efficient skill development.
- High-performance practice and game programming that emphasizes skill development, competition, engagement and FUN.
- Structured training programs for coaches and qualified adult leadership.
- A philosophy that reduces burnout and disenchantment.



CREATING A SAFE ENVIRONMENT

The safety of its players is USA Hockey's top priority. This includes not only on-ice safety, but also off-ice safety. USA Hockey works with leading organizations, including the USOC, to develop policies and programs that protect our participants and create an environment safe from misconduct.

ON THE ICE

USA Hockey has a strict standard of rules enforcement, allowing for improved skill development and a positive environment for all participants. This standard results in an emphasis on skating, puck possession and the proper use of body contact. This standard is diligently reviewed and also includes equipment policies.

USA Hockey has long been a leader in the effort to enhance player safety, spearheading numerous initiatives aimed at providing the safest possible environment. Those initiatives include the Heads-Up, Don't Duck campaign, which educates participants on techniques for reducing neck and spinal injuries, and an extensive concussion education program developed in partnership with leading doctors and medical experts.

OFF THE ICE

USA Hockey has zero tolerance for misconduct and abuse. Our off-ice safety efforts are included within the SafeSport Program, which includes strict policies aimed at protecting participants from all types of misconduct. The SafeSport Program also includes a streamlined and neutral process for reporting alleged inappropriate behavior.



About SafeSport:

SafeSport includes policies prohibiting sexual, physical and emotional abuse, hazing, bullying and threats. These policies also specifically address areas such as locker rooms, online and social media, team travel and host families.

SafeSport also encompasses education and awareness training, a screening and background check program, reporting-of-concerns protocol, responses to abuse and other misconduct, and continued monitoring of the SafeSport Program.

All coaches, officials (age 18 and over) and other employees and volunteers who have regular, routine or frequent access to or supervision over minor participants are required to complete SafeSport training and a background screen before their participation.

A USA Hockey member or parent of any member who violates any of the SafeSport policies may be denied eligibility within any USA Hockey program and is subject to appropriate disciplinary action including but not limited to suspension, permanent suspension, and/or referral to law enforcement authorities.



UNEQUALED INSTRUCTION FOR YOUR CHILD

USA Hockey makes an unequalled commitment to coaching education, which means that members of USA Hockey receive unrivaled support and resources for developing young players.

USA Hockey's Coaching Education Program is designed to improve the caliber of coaching in amateur hockey. Five levels of achievement spanning nearly 800 coaching clinics each season combine with six online, age-specific modules to educate each USA Hockey coach, from the beginner to the expert.

The Coaching Education Program is committed to developing effective instructors and role models through a comprehensive education program at all levels of play. The program emphasizes fundamental skills, conceptual

development, sportsmanship and respect for teammates, opponents, coaches, officials, parents and off-ice officials. Coaches trained by USA Hockey receive materials tailored to the age classification they'll instruct, helping create an age-appropriate training environment for every athlete. Additionally, USA Hockey has developed an internationally renowned library of instructional resources for coaches to use throughout the ranks, both on the ice as well as in the classroom.

"THE THING I LIKE ABOUT COACHING IS LOOKING AT IT FROM WHERE THEY STARTED TO WHERE THEY FINISHED. IT ISN'T ABOUT WINS AND LOSSES; IT'S ABOUT HOW THEY DEVELOP. WE TAKE PRIDE IN THAT."

– KEITH TKACHUK

Hockey dad, youth hockey coach, 19-year NHL veteran, four-time U.S. Olympian, first American-born player to lead the NHL in goal scoring

Officials

USA Hockey officials—the men and women in stripes—experience one of the most comprehensive officiating education programs in all of amateur sport. They attend clinics and pass tests annually that become progressively more difficult as they advance through the ranks. Additionally, each district has referee supervisors and mentor programs that help officials reach their fullest potential. If you're looking for a way to get involved and give back to the game, consider becoming a USA Hockey official. It's also a great way for teenage hockey players to make money while learning more about the game.

Enjoying the EXPERIENCE

Above all, remember that hockey is a game, meant to be fun, including at the highest levels. Keep hockey in perspective and help your children do the same. Often the score isn't as important to them as simply gaining the experience of playing and making memories with teammates.

Savor every opportunity to watch your child on the ice. The hockey experience can be a source of great memories and lessons that last a lifetime. Traveling that road together can strengthen family ties.

Here are some ideas for making the experience great:

- Create a scrapbook for your child with photos, news clippings, website postings and tournament programs. Have each teammate sign it.
- Encourage your child to write a journal about his or her hockey experience.
- Turn road trips into true family vacations; see the sights and explore the local culture. Take lots of pictures.
- Take the lead in coordinating public service opportunities for the team, such as hosting a food or toy drive.
- Join or create a hockey parent social club for your child's team; use social media to keep the conversations and friendships flowing.

"PLAY IS OFTEN TALKED ABOUT AS IF IT WERE A RELIEF FROM SERIOUS LEARNING. BUT FOR CHILDREN, PLAY IS SERIOUS LEARNING. PLAY IS REALLY THE WORK OF CHILDHOOD."

– FRED (MISTER) ROGERS



Getting Involved

Joining your local hockey association as a volunteer committee member, a coach or a helper of any sort can be a rewarding experience. It also strengthens your association.

Everyone has different strengths and skills that they can bring to a local hockey association, and every contribution helps, since associations are almost entirely powered by the extraordinary efforts of volunteers.

Even parents who never played hockey can make huge contributions as volunteers, so don't be reluctant. There's strength in numbers. Ask your local association about volunteer opportunities today. And if you have ideas for new ways you could help your association, don't hesitate. Jump in and join the team!

What to expect as a HOCKEY PARENT



Your child's hockey experience will be influenced by many factors, but nothing will influence that experience more than you. As a parent, you are the most influential figure in your child's development, both as a hockey player and as a person. Embrace that opportunity.



AS A PARENT, YOU
ARE THE MOST
INFLUENTIAL FIGURE
IN YOUR CHILD'S
DEVELOPMENT

Remember:

- **Let kids be kids.** Fun should be paramount.
- **Be supportive.**
- **Be disciplined.** Manage your emotions and set a good example that teaches your child to do the same.
- **Be positive,** and when adversity comes, be constructive not destructive. If you must be critical, don't get personal. Direct your comments at the action, not the person.
- **Be proactive.** Getting involved as a volunteer or coach in your association can give you an even greater influence on your child's hockey experience. And as a parent, being a proactive communicator with coaches

and administrators can help avoid frustration and conflict.

- **Your child's coach** is likely a volunteer, and often also a parent, donating their time to help your child. While criticism might be appropriate, it should be done constructively and through appropriate channels.
- **Be respectful,** especially in situations of disagreement or conflict.
- **Don't bully or harass.** Speak out if you see bullying or harassing behavior from others.
- **Focus on the process,** not the outcome, and teach your child to do the same.

- **Kids learn** best by doing.
- **Praise your child's effort** more often than their performance. Studies show it helps them better develop the confidence to meet new challenges and overcome obstacles.
- **Keep hockey** in perspective. Maintain a healthy balance of hockey and non-hockey activities. Encourage your child to be well-rounded.
- **Enjoy the youth** hockey experience with your child. Life moves fast and time passes quickly. Soon your child will be grown and you'll wish you could return to these days, if just for a moment. So savor these seasons, don't rush them. Make the experience one that you'll remember fondly together years from now.



"PARENTAL EXPECTATIONS AND DISAPPOINTMENTS, AND COACHING THAT VALUES WINNING OVER HEALTHY CHILDHOOD PLAY EXPERIENCES, PLACE CHILDREN AT BOTH PHYSICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL RISK."

– MARGARET PUCKETT & JANET BLACK The Young Child

Ask Questions:

- | | | |
|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The youth hockey environment should be open and transparent. As a parent, you have the right to be involved and aware. Please don't hesitate to ask questions like these: • What role can I play in my child's hockey development? What roles are available to me within the association? • How will the coaches and administrators communicate with me? | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What educational resources are available to parents, prospective coaches and/or volunteers? • I am experiencing financial hardship? • What resources and options are available to help me provide the hockey experience for my child? • When should I speak out about questionable behavior exhibited by a player, coach, parent, | <p>administrator or anyone else in my child's hockey environment? To whom should I report that behavior? What is the process for reporting that behavior?</p> <p>• How can I help my child be safe on and off the ice?</p> |
|--|--|--|



PRO TIP:

NEITHER THE SKATES NOR THE STICK MAKE THE PLAYER, ESPECIALLY AT YOUNGER AGES, but proper fit matters. Put your children in equipment that is safe, comfortable and adequate, but resist the temptation to outfit them lavishly. If you have questions regarding when a big-ticket splurge might be appropriate, ask your association or coaches. Regarding sticks, remember that proper stick length is crucial. A good rule of thumb is that an upright stick with the toe of the blade on the ground shouldn't rise above the player's chin if standing in shoes. In skates, an upright stick with the toe on the ice shouldn't rise much above the collarbone.

BUDGETING *Tips*

All youth sports require some financial investment, and costs to participate in hockey can be substantially reduced with planning and common sense. Additionally, both USA Hockey and many local associations offer a number of options to help make hockey a game everyone can play and enjoy.

ABOVE ALL, don't buy into the myth that only kids from wealthy families can excel in hockey. Many of the game's greatest players came from modest financial backgrounds.

YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION is the first place you should turn if you have questions or concerns. Local hockey associations have a wealth of knowledge, experience and connections that can help you minimize costs. Additionally, a high-quality youth hockey association will also make efficient use of ice time by putting multiple teams on the ice for practice sessions,

reducing costs while also increasing skill development opportunities.

REMEMBER, used or hand-me-down equipment can be a great way to reduce costs, especially at the younger ages. Young children don't put as much wear-and-tear on equipment; its effectiveness usually far exceeds one or two players' use. Just be sure to inspect it carefully to ensure that all used items are still safe and fit properly. Resist the temptation to put your kids in oversized equipment. It will hurt their performance, making it difficult for them to perform and have fun.

COMPARISON SHOP. There are a myriad of online and local outlets offering new and used hockey equipment. Look for the best deals.

REMEMBER that hockey equipment can be a great birthday or holiday gift.

Given the choice, most kids who are truly passionate about playing the game would prefer foregoing other types of gifts if it meant they could continue playing hockey.

BE PROACTIVE. Ask your local associations to explain what is included in exchange for your registration fees. Ask how the money is allocated toward ice time, administration, officials and travel. Also make sure these topics are covered during preliminary parent meetings so you clearly understand your financial commitment for the season.

AVOID SPENDING money on impulse purchases at concession stands and during road trips. Pack lunches. Stay in hotels with complimentary breakfasts. Reduce travel. Frequently traveling to far-flung tournaments isn't a necessary component of skill development. Development happens at your local rink. Road trips can be fun, but they aren't where you get the most bang for your hockey buck.



Try Hockey For Free

While you're already part of the sport, if you have friends whose children would like to try youth hockey, USA Hockey hosts Try Hockey For Free events each year that give children who haven't had that opportunity to play hockey a chance to try it for free.

TRYHOCKEYFORFREE.COM

LADDER OF PLAYER DEVELOPMENT

HOCKEY FOR LIFE

TRAINING TO WIN

19+ (Pro Hockey, Olympics)

TRAINING TO COMPETE

Junior, NCAA

LEARNING TO COMPETE

18-and-under

TRAINING TO TRAIN

16-and-under, 14-and-under

LEARNING TO TRAIN

12-and-under, 10-and-under

FUNDAMENTALS

8-and-under, 6-and-under

ACTIVE START

6-and-under



1 AGES 0-6 ACTIVE START

This early development period is essential for acquiring fundamental movement skills (running, gliding, jumping, kicking, catching, striking, etc.) that form the foundation for more complex movements, thereby preparing children for a physically active lifestyle. USA Hockey encourages activity that incorporates fundamental movement skills in the four environments that lead to physical literacy: in the water (swimming), on the ground (athletics), in the air (gymnastics), on ice and snow (sliding and skating). Kids should start with a learn-to-skate program and then a learn-to-play program as their initial steps into hockey.



2 AGES 6-8 (FEMALE) AGES 6-9 (MALE) FUNDAMENTALS

The objective of this stage is to refine fundamental movement skills and begin acquiring basic sport skills through fun-focused methods. This is the time when a foundation is set for future acquisition of more advanced skills. In this stage, the focus is on the development of physical literacy. Fundamental movement skills should be mastered and motor development emphasized, while participation in multiple sports and activities is encouraged. For optimal skill acquisition, the basic hockey skills of skating and puck control are introduced. Fun competitions are also introduced in a team environment.



AGES 8-11 (FEMALE)
AGES 9-12 (MALE)

3 LEARN TO TRAIN

This is the period during which accelerated learning of coordination and fine motor control occurs. It is the critical stage for the acquisition of hockey skills. What is learned or not learned in this stage will have a very significant effect on the level of play that is ultimately achieved in the athlete's future. Players in this development stage should begin transferring skills and concepts from practice to games. Group interaction, team building and social activities should be emphasized. A wise ratio of practices and games (3 to 1) will promote efficient development and mastery of hockey skills.



AGES 11-15 (FEMALE)
AGES 12-16 (MALE)

4 TRAIN TO TRAIN

The focus of this stage is to further develop sports-specific skills, begin to introduce competition, and start emphasizing support training to continue development of speed, strength and stamina while maintaining flexibility. Players should consolidate sports-specific technical skills with an increased emphasis on hockey and a reduction in the number of other sports played. A continued emphasis is also placed on the development of individual and group tactics. Social and emotional considerations are addressed by placing an emphasis on team-building, group interactions and social activities.



AGES 15-18 (FEMALE)
AGES 16-18 (MALE)

5 LEARN TO COMPETE

This is the time to prepare athletes for the competitive environment, continue to refine technical and ancillary skills, and develop the physical attributes. The focus is on optimizing fitness preparation and beginning to specialize in hockey. Training should be individualized to the athlete's particular needs in skill development, mental preparation, fitness and recovery. During this stage, training volume and intensity increases. Competitions become more important and the focus shifts to performance. Training emphasizes the development of position-specific technical and tactical skills under competitive conditions. Mental skills that contribute to performance are also emphasized.



Body Checking: A Key Skill

USA Hockey provides resources for teaching body contact in a progressive, age-appropriate manner beginning with 7-year-olds and continuing through every age classification. By teaching this key skill throughout a player's developmental years, coaches help athletes develop the skill and confidence necessary to give and receive legal body contact.



True to its skill development and safety commitment, USA Hockey was the first governing body in North America to modify the allowable age for body checking.

As a result, USA Hockey does not permit body checking in girls hockey or at the 8U, 10U and 12U levels. USA Hockey first permits body checking in games at the 14U level. This decision was based on extensive medical, physiological and sport science research, including the fact that 9 to 12 years of age is a young athlete's

optimal window for skill development. As a reminder, the purpose of a body check is to separate the opponent from the puck, not punish the opponent physically. A player cannot legally contact an opponent in the head, face or neck. The onus is on the player delivering the check to avoid making contact with the head, face or neck. Only the trunk (hips to shoulders) shall be used to deliver a body check, and the delivery of a check must come from the front or side of an opponent.

The USA Hockey body-checking standard is designed to improve the

checking or contact at all levels of play and will not remove the physical component of the game. A hard body check (in body checking-approved age classifications) should not be penalized as long as it is performed within the rules.

**THE PURPOSE
OF A BODY
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OPPONENT
FROM THE
PUCK, NOT
PUNISH THE
OPPONENT
PHYSICALLY.**

AGES 19-21 (FEMALE)
AGES 19-23 (MALE)

6 TRAIN TO COMPETE

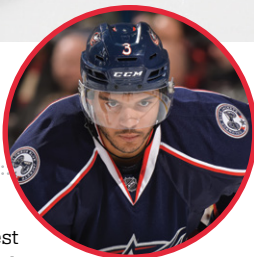
The objective of this stage is to transfer from the training environment to a competitive environment. Athletes must consolidate technical skills and maintain ancillary skills and underlying physical capabilities. Training volume remains high while intensity increases with the importance of competitions. Training is usually 10+ months of the year, disciplined and hockey-specific. Athletes will usually be required to move away from home for training and competition environments that fit this stage of development.



7 TRAIN TO WIN

AGES 19+

The focus of this stage is the stabilization of performance-on-demand characteristics and achieving excellence at the highest levels of performance, e.g., professional hockey, the Olympics, the World Championship. Only a very small percentage will achieve this stage. It is important to build a winning strategy with these athletes and to individualize training and recovery to prevent over-training.



Photos by HHOF-IIHF IMAGES/GETTY IMAGES

8

ALL AGES

HOCKEY FOR LIFE

Players can enter this stage at any age, as "Hockey for Life" can provide quality recreational opportunities for all ages. Whether as a "rink-rat" at a local outdoor rink, as an intramural/club hockey player at a college or university, or in adult recreational leagues, USA Hockey believe that the opportunity to play and have fun should be available to all players with various levels of commitment. Even later in life, USA Hockey hopes that everyone leads a physically active, healthy lifestyle that includes the great game of hockey. Experiments have shown that physical exercise can double the rate at which the brain creates new brain cells. It makes an old brain act more like a young one in its ability to generate neurons needed for learning and remembering new things. So, in effect, exercise helps the brain stay youthful.



YOUTH/GIRLS/JUNIOR AGE CLASSIFICATIONS

AGE CATEGORY	CLASSIFICATION
8 years & under	8U
9-10 years	10U
11-12 years	12U
13-14 years	14U
15-year-olds	15 Only
15-16 years	16U
17-18 years	18U
17-18-19 years	19U (girls only)
16-20 years	Junior



The HOCKEY PATH



Youngsters

Young players typically enter the game through learn-to-skate and learn-to-play programs, advancing into 8U hockey. The emphasis should be on constant activity, fun and skill development.

Pre-Teens

As players move beyond the beginner stage, they enter 10U hockey and then advance to 12U hockey. This is when sport-specific skill development begins ramping up, along with the transfer of skills and concepts from practice to games.

Early Teens

At this age, players begin placing a heightened focus on hockey. While the emphasis on individual skill development remains high, increased attention is also given to group tactics. More games begin appearing on the schedule, and in the boys' game, body-checking begins.

Later Teens

At 16 years of age, players are typically competing for their high school teams or club teams. Boys also become eligible to compete in junior hockey (there is no junior hockey classification for girls, who instead continue to compete for their schools and/or with 16U club teams, or later, with 19U club teams). As a result, this is when the hockey path begins branching into multiple paths.

Many players continue their development locally; some boys will play with USA Hockey's National Team Development Program or other teams in the USHL (America's top junior league). Still others play in the Tier II NAHL or Tier III leagues.

College-Aged

Beginning, typically, at 18 years of age, players have many great options. They can continue their junior hockey experience, finish their high school careers or move into college hockey. Within the college hockey ranks, the highest-level players usually compete in the NCAA structure, while the ACHA provides collegiate club hockey opportunities for thousands of other players each season. Additionally, the collegiate intramural hockey circuit is a great way to continue competing with friends while pursuing a degree.

Adult

Professional players aren't the only ones who get to keep playing after college. Hockey is a great game for life. It's low-impact, invigorating and fun. Cities all across America offer adult hockey leagues, lunch leagues and drop-in opportunities for men and women. In many parts of the country, there's also a vibrant outdoor hockey scene. Plus, USA Hockey hosts several adult championship tournaments to keep the competitiveness and camaraderie flowing.

THE STRUCTURE OF USA HOCKEY



The 8U experience recommended by USA Hockey includes no full-time goalies, 12 or fewer players per team, station-based practices and cross-ice games to maximize fun, puck touches and skill development for every player.

Multiple teams should be on the ice for each session, making the most efficient use of ice time and maximizing skill-development opportunities.

At the 10U level, USA Hockey recommends one goalie per team along with 10-12 skaters on the ice for 95-100 sessions. These sessions should include 75-80 quality practices and 20-25 game days. The 12U experience is similar to 10U but with an optimal goal of 12 skaters per team, two goalies and an increase in ice sessions. Smaller rosters ensure more playing time and more skill development for all.

"WHAT'S REALLY GOOD FOR KIDS IS TO GIVE THEM A VARIETY OF SPORTS; TO HAVE THEM TRAIN TO BE ATHLETES, NOT NECESSARILY TRAIN TO BE GOOD IN ONE SPORT. LET KIDS BE KIDS. LET THEM HAVE FUN."

– PETER LAVIOLETTE

Stanley Cup-winning head coach,
U.S. Olympian

DISTRICTS/AFFILIATES

USA Hockey is divided into 12 geographical districts throughout the United States. Districts are organized with USA Hockey volunteer personnel to administer registration, risk management and coaching and officiating education programs. These programs include registration and training of coaches and officials. Districts volunteers also facilitate learn-to-play programs for youth players and their parents. Within those 12 districts, a total of 34 affiliates provide the governance.

YOUR LOCAL ASSOCIATION

Your local youth hockey association, which is the heartbeat of hockey in your community, builds on this foundation. USA Hockey supports these associations with tools and resources to help them excel.

Local associations pour heart, soul, time and resources into creating a great hockey experience for youth players and their parents. Volunteers are the backbone of these associations, administering schedules, registration, fund-raising and overall management. They are at your service, donating time, energy and talent for the love of the game and community. They are your first point-of-contact for any questions and concerns.

HOW THE GAME IS PLAYED

Your local associations schedule and manage ice time, including practices, games, jamborees, tournaments, etc. Structure and philosophy varies from association to association, but USA Hockey provides age- and developmentally appropriate guidelines, based on ADM principles, at every step on the development ladder.

At the 8U level, those guidelines include 50-60 ice sessions per season. The emphasis is on fun, fundamental skill development and practice, not winning or losing. Playing multiple sports is encouraged.

USA Hockey's recommended 14U and 16U experience includes an increase to 160 ice sessions, 16 skaters and two goalies per team, 120-130 quality practices and 40-50 games. At this stage, players should shift to a nine-month training calendar that also includes age-appropriate off-ice training.

For 18U males and 19U females, USA Hockey recommends 200 ice sessions mixed with developmentally appropriate off-ice training over a 10-month training calendar. As these players continue to advance, they will move toward a training calendar that equally supports training and competition.

GAIN AN EDGE:

NUTRITION, HYDRATION

...and Sleep

Nutrition is a key contributor to performance, but it's often overlooked. Introduce good nutrition habits to your young athlete early and you'll not only help them maximize their performance, you'll set them up for a healthier lifestyle, too. Here are some tips from USA Hockey.

Nutrition Tips:

EATING WELL-BALANCED MEALS, with foods from each of the essential food groups (vegetables, fruit, lean meat, dairy, healthy fats), is still the best advice.

HIGH-QUALITY FORMS of these foods are packaged with high-quality nutrients, instead of bad nutrients.

THINK OF FOOD AS THE FUEL and building blocks for everything your young athlete does. Carbohydrates (e.g., oatmeal brown rice, whole-grain bread, fruit/vegetables, beans), proteins (e.g., chicken breast, eggs, fish, lean beef, beans, nuts/seeds, milk), and fats (e.g., olive oil, fish, nuts/seeds, avocado) provide the energy their body needs for both school and athletic performance.

WHEN EATING ON THE ROAD, research restaurant menus online in advance to determine if they have balanced

meal options. Also, consider visiting a grocery store instead of a restaurant. Healthy foods from a grocery store (e.g., whole-grain bread, lean meats, spinach, fruits, nuts, cheese sticks) often have more high-quality nutrients, fewer unhealthy nutrients and lower costs.

AVOID EXCESSIVE SAUCES or dressings, which can be packed with empty calories. Ask for them on the side to control portions and choose olive oil-based as a healthier option.

AVOID FRIED FOODS. Grilled and steamed foods are healthier choices.

DRINK MORE WATER. Studies show that people suffer a five percent decrease in cognitive function for every one percent of dehydration.

URINE COLOR is a good indicator of hydration level. Clear to pale yellow is good; darker yellow is bad.

AS A RECOVERY DRINK after exertion, fat-free chocolate milk can be an excellent choice. According to WebMD, it "beat out carbohydrate sports drinks at helping to rebuild and refuel muscles after exercise." It's often less expensive than carbohydrate sports drinks, too.

MINIMIZE OR ELIMINATE soda pop and sport drinks, especially outside of performance or training time.

Sleep Tips:

LIFESTYLES HAVE BECOME increasingly busy, but for children and athletes in particular, foregoing proper sleep is acutely damaging.



ACCORDING TO EXTENSIVE STUDY by doctors and scientists, children between the ages of 3 and 6 should sleep 10-12 hours nightly for optimal health and function. For children between 7 and 12 years of age, the recommendation is 10-11 hours. For 12-to-18-year-olds, the recommendation is 8-9 hours. When people are deprived of adequate sleep, or suffer from inconsistent sleep patterns, "the brain functions at a subpar level, with slower reaction times, impaired judgment and emotional instability." – Michael Sweeney, Brain: The Complete Mind, How It Develops, How It Works, and How to Keep It Sharp.

The FOUR 'R's

Recovery nutrition is one of the areas in which athletes can have the greatest effect on their performance. Athletes should consume something immediately after practices or games. Think of the "4 Rs" when you're planning recovery nutrition: Rehydrate, Replenish, Repair and Reinforce.

Chocolate milk is a great choice, since it not only rehydrates, but also replenishes protein and carbohydrates. But according to recent studies, it takes two or three cups of chocolate milk to fully fuel recovery, so don't skimp.

Boosting the immune system is important, especially in team settings during cold and flu season. Foods that deliver all-natural antioxidants (e.g., dark-colored grapes, blueberries, raspberries, strawberries, spinach) are great choices.



Muscle tissue needs repair and regeneration. Whey protein can be a great tool for this and it's quickly absorbed. Milk, dry milk, yogurt, and kefir are all good sources of whey protein.

The focus here is replenishing glycogen stores, especially in tournament settings. Smoothies can be a great choice, especially those that include natural yogurts and seasonally fresh fruits and vegetables.



ADVANCED

DEVELOPMENT STAGES

As your child advances through the ranks, they made decide to set their sights on the higher levels of play.

Junior hockey provides a valuable development opportunity, offering intense competition for boys between the ages of 16-20 who make every game a best-on-best challenge. Leagues like the USHL and NAHL are heavily scouted by NCAA coaches and NHL scouts, making them an excellent place for players to improve their game and their next-level hockey outlook.

For some, that next level will be college hockey.

Whether as preparation for professional hockey or as its own end goal, playing college hockey is a great choice, and the options are plentiful.

At the NCAA level, more than 230 teams provide opportunity for young men and women to compete and develop while pursuing their degree. With a development-minded practice-to-game ratio, players are better positioned to reach their full potential in college hockey and enjoy a competitive environment in which every game is meaningful. Additionally, former NCAA players comprise 32 percent of the NHL player pool, and more than 200 former college players currently work in NHL front offices, including 12 general managers and eight head coaches.

Academically, college hockey players also shine. More

than 90 percent of NCAA Division I hockey players graduate with their college degree. In fact, men's and women's ice hockey rank among the very best of any NCAA Division I sports in Graduation Success Rate (GSR) and Academic Progress Rate (APR), which is further proof of the success college hockey players enjoy in the classroom.

But the college hockey options for your son or daughter aren't limited to NCAA play.

Club hockey at the collegiate level has exploded in popularity over the last 25 years. In 1991, the American Collegiate Hockey Association was founded with 15 members, all of which were men's teams. Today, the ACHA spans 49 states with 425 men's teams and 79 women's teams that compete annually for national championships at three levels. USA Hockey and the ACHA also send a select men's and women's national team to the World University Games, where they compete against other nations' elite talent while gaining an amazing life experience in a foreign country and culture.

Another great college hockey option is intramural competition. Countless colleges and universities nationwide offer intramural hockey, in which men and women can compete for championships and bragging rights while pursuing their studies. The camaraderie can't be beat and it's a great way to maintain a fun, physically fit lifestyle while making progress toward a college degree, and ultimately, adulthood.



CODES OF CONDUCT

USA Hockey developed codes of conduct for coaches, parents, players and spectators to help everyone understand the expectations associated with their role in the game.

COACH'S 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 players 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.

PLAYER'S 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.

LEARN THE RULES and play by them. Always be a good sport.

RESPECT YOUR COACH, your teammates, your parents, opponents and officials.

BE ON TIME.

NEVER ARGUE with an official's decision.



PARENT'S Code of Conduct

DO NOT FORCE your children to participate in sports, but support their desires to play their chosen sports. 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.



SPECTATOR'S 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.





I know it was a lot more fun for me growing

up with small-ice hockey. The game's all about skill, creativity and competition. Playing in smaller spaces helps develop all of that."

AUSTON MATTHEWS

Toronto Maple Leafs forward, 2017 Calder Trophy recipient, two-time Team USA gold medalist

"The ADM is just what the doctor ordered for youth hockey. I'm a teacher by trade, and the concept of age-appropriate training is bang on."

FRANK SERRATORE

Air Force Academy head coach

We should always strive to do the right things for kids, and the American Development Model does that."

RON WILSON

2010 U.S. Olympic Men's Hockey Team head coach



The age-specific and age-appropriate training keeps kids excited about coming to the rink, while also developing them and guiding them on a path to achieve their full potential."

MEGHAN DUGGAN

Three-time U.S. Olympian, 2018 Olympic gold medalist

GIVING KIDS MORE OF WHAT'S GOOD



"The ADM has made a huge impact on our young athletes, and by staying committed to the ADM, we'll continue giving them the overall skill development they need."

PHIL HOUSLEY

Buffalo Sabres head coach

"USA Hockey continues to do wonderful things in every aspect of the sport. And for kids, providing the best development programs and the safest possible environment are at the forefront of every decision made."

KATEY STONE

2014 U.S. Olympic Women's Team head coach, winningest coach in NCAA Division I women's ice hockey history



USA Hockey's ADM has really helped kids focus on skill development and, most importantly, having fun. As a parent and former NHL player, it's refreshing to see and I know my child is loving it."

COLIN WHITE

Two-time Stanley Cup champion, 12-year NHL playing career

I'm a big fan of the ADM because of the increased number of reps it provides to developing players. It's an efficient, engaging model for skill development."

BRAD BERRY

University of North Dakota head coach



The ADM has the two things I find most valuable for player development: small-area games and playing cross-ice at 8U. And most importantly, the kids have fun."

MIKE GRIER

14-season NHL playing career, Team USA medalist, NCAA All-American



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