

New Skater Information **Try Hockey for Free** **Jr. Spartans (Mite Program)**

Try Hockey for Free:

Somerset Youth Hockey Association Try Hockey for Free & Jr. Spartan programs offer age appropriate hockey training for skaters between 4- and 8-years-old. Age is determined by calendar year, so any child born 2013 and after is eligible as a skater at these levels. Here are our different skill levels:

Try Hockey For Free/Mini Spartans (Hockey Skating Skills)

Jr. Spartans level 1 and 2 (Fundamentals of Hockey)

Jr. Spartans level 3 and 4 (Advancing in Skating & Hockey Skills)

SYHA strives to keep costs low for families. Try Hockey For Free runs for 8 weeks, beginning in the late fall through mid-December, and is completely free. This is a great opportunity for any child interested in hockey to learn to skate and learn some basic hockey skills. Skaters can continue to develop their skills during an additional 8-week Mini Spartan program.

Equipment:

All equipment, with the exception of a stick, will be provided to Try Hockey for Free participants (with deposit), or is available for rent for skaters at any level, subject to availability. We hold two equipment nights at the rink before the season starts, where we will help outfit your skater with everything they need! A deposit for all equipment is required, and a rental fee is assessed to skaters at the Jr. Spartans level and up.

Equipment rental available for skaters at any level, and is a cost-effective, practical way to outfit your young skater as they grow. You can also choose to purchase equipment for your skater.

Required: Hockey helmet/mask, hockey skates, hockey stick, shin pads, elbow pads and hockey gloves.



Does my child need hockey socks and a jersey? SYHA provides a practice jersey as part of the registration fee. You will receive the jersey sometime in the first week that practices begin. Hockey socks are not required for over the shin pad use at this practice level. Many skaters simply put sweat pants on to hold the shin pads on; we encourage sweatpants at the Try Hockey for Free level, as they are usually a better fit than socks for these skaters, and easier to get on. If desired, youth sized hockey socks can be purchased. You may also choose to purchase jock/jill shorts with velcro that will help keep the hockey socks up.

New Skater Information:

What to expect as a first year skater

- Allow 15-30 minutes prior to taking the ice for dressing players
- Expect 10-15 minutes after practice to return to street clothes
- Kids will be sweaty – bring a hat and dry change of clothes

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ)

Does my child need to know how to skate? No prior skating ability is needed to start hockey. Try Hockey For Free is made for such skaters. SYHA has been teaching young kids how to skate for many years. We also offer a free Learn to Skate program in September/October.

Do boys and girls play on the same team? Yes. Boys and girls train together at the U8 level, which is Jr. Spartans and Try Hockey For Free.

When does the 2021/2022 season start? How long is the season? Try Hockey For Free runs on Wednesdays from November 3 - December 22nd. Your skater can then choose to keep skating with the Mini-Spartans for the 2nd half of the season on Wednesdays in January and February. There is a \$35 registration fee for Mini-Spartans. The Jr. Spartans season runs mid October through the end of February, with a break around the holidays.

When are the practice times? Try Hockey For Free practices Wednesdays. Jr. Spartans levels 1-4 practice Mondays and Wednesdays. Please note there may be some variations throughout the season. During the season, you will receive a weekly email from your team manager with the schedule for the week.

Where do they practice? All practices are held at the Somerset Ice Arena.

What do I do on the first night of practice? There can be a lot of anxiety the first night of practice for skaters and parents. We do our best to host you well on the first night and give you needed direction. Please come with your skater to the registration/welcome table that first night.

Do you travel for games? There is the option to travel to local jamborees. SYHA hosts two home jamborees in December & January. Jamborees are mini, typically one-day, tournaments that offer cross-ice 3 on 3 style of play. There is no scoring during the games, nor do they play full-ice games. The goal is to have multiple games on the ice at the same time. This maximizes the number of skaters on the ice, which increases the amount your skater is on the ice and touching the puck. This celebrates the hard work put in throughout the year. It is also a time to invite family to watch the young skaters.

Websites Below are links to websites for those who are just learning the game as parents and young players.

[MN Hockey: Resources for New Parents](#)

[USA Hockey: Information for New Parents](#)