



Waconia Hockey Association

New Player Information



Welcome to Wildcat Hockey!

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Preparation for Hockey!

Encourage your Child

Encourage your child to do their best and have fun! Don't be discouraged if your child struggles with their first few times on the ice. We certainly don't mind and neither should you. Many hockey players started out struggling to learn the basics of skating and hockey. Our main goal is to get them to continue to want to play hockey. Get them on the ice, smile and say "Have Fun"!

Behavior on the ice

Talk to your child about behavior while on the hockey rink, some basics are:

- Do your best
- Have FUN!
- When the coach blows the whistle, stop what you are doing and listen.
- When the Zamboni is on the ice, ABSOLUTELY no kids should be on the ice.
When the Zamboni doors are open, you can't be on the ice. Wait for a coach to tell you when to step on the ice.

Player Presentation

We suggest arriving in plenty of time to get your child ready to hit the ice. Arrive at least 25 minutes prior to your ice time will allow sufficient time to be ready and hit the ice when your session starts. Many parents find it easier to get their player partially dressed

at home and arriving at the rink to lace up the skates, putting on the helmet and gloves. We have locker rooms assigned for each of our teams/levels. These are listed on the scrolling screens at the Waconia Ice Arena. Please use the locker rooms assigned and avoid using the lobby area to get ready.

Below includes good process for putting on your child's equipment:

1. Athletic Supporter (with cup protector for boys and pelvic protector for girls)
2. Hockey Garter Belt (if not already built into the Athletic Supporter)
3. Shin Pads
4. Hockey Socks (or sweat pants)
 - a. Pull the hockey socks (or sweat pants) over the shin pads
5. Breezers/Hockey Pants (Suspenders if needed to hold up the breezers/hockey pants)
6. Shoulder Pads
7. Elbow Pads
8. Jersey
9. Neck Guard
10. Skates
11. Hockey Helmet with face mask (mouth guard with strap- attached to face mask)
12. Hockey Gloves
13. Hockey Stick – Wood or composite (No plastic street hockey sticks or plastic blades)

After Ice Session

After your ice session and before leaving the rink, it is always a good thing to double check your hockey bag to make sure you remembered everything. Teach your child responsibility for their hockey equipment. Encourage your child to carry some of their equipment to and from the rink. If they are old enough, it's a great idea to have them put

as much equipment on as they can on their own. The earlier you teach them to help with the equipment process the sooner they'll be doing it on their own.

Mom and dad will STILL need to do the skate tightening!



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Equipment

Getting properly fitted for your equipment is important; either used or new equipment should always fit properly. Equipment that is properly fit reduces the chance of injury and allows your child to enjoy the great sport of hockey even more!

What to do with your equipment when not using it? It's always a good thing to take your equipment out of your bag and air out the equipment.

Equipment Overview

Skates

What is the proper fit for Skates?

Skates normally fit 1 to 1 ½ sizes smaller than your street shoes. While wearing socks that will be worn when skating, slip your foot into the skate, pressing the ends of the toes against the front of the skate. In this position, you should be able to place one finger between the inside of the boot and the heel of your foot. Walk 10-15 minutes in the skates checking for comfort. An ideal fit for an adult would have the heel at the rear of boot and have the big or second toe lightly “feather” the toe cap while standing.

For a player that is still growing, have the large or second toe “feather” the toe cap. Look behind the heel for any room. No more than ½“ should be allowed.



How can I break in my skates faster?

A good way to break in skates is to lace them up at home. If you do this for a few hours it should help your feet feel better when you first skate. This is also a good way for young skaters to strengthen their ankles!

It's also important to wipe down the blades after skating, this helps reduce potential rust and pitting of the skate blade.

Skate Sharpening – Rule of thumb is every 4-6 skates on indoor ice, more frequently on outdoor ice. To see if skates are sharp enough, hold the blade up and gently rub one of your fingernails at an angle over the edge of the blade. If they are not sharp at all, nothing will rub off your fingernail.

NOTE: Walking on cement or metal is NOT good for skates. Teach your child to walk on rubber flooring!

Helmet

The areas to consider when choosing a helmet are protection, comfort and fit. You should always look for equipment that feels comfortable. Although most helmets are lined with protective foam, some do feel better than others. The helmet should be adjusted to fit snug to prevent any shifting and maximize protection. Make sure the chinstrap is adjusted so it gently makes contact under the chin when fastened. It is recommended that the player wear CSA and HECC certified helmets. All CSA and HECC certified helmets have a sticker indicating their certification.

Gloves

The main concern with the fit of gloves is making sure the gap between the glove and the elbow pad is minimal. The tightness or looseness of a glove is an individual preference. The tip of the fingers should not go completely to the end of the glove.

Shoulder Pads

It is very important that the center of the player's shoulder lines up directly with the center of the shoulder caps. Good shoulder pads will provide protection for the collar bone, chest, ribs, back and upper arms.

Elbow Pads

The players elbow should fit comfortable into the center of the elbow pad cup. Also, a good elbow pad will provide forearm protection which extends down to the cuff of the players hockey glove.

Shin Pads

A player's kneecap should fit directly into the center of the kneecap of the shin pad. The shin pad should then extend down the full length of the lower leg. It's important to make sure the shin pad isn't too long. If so, the skate would push it up out of position.

Sticks

A good way to measure your stick is to stand, without skates in your stocking feet, on a flat surface. Place the toe of your stick on the ground between your feet. Lean the stick straight up and down so the handle of the stick touches the tip of your nose. A general rule is to mark and cut the handle of the stick where it touches the tip of your nose.

Then when standing on your skates, the stick should come up to your chin or just below it.

Shooting – Try to let your child choose which way they shoot. Just because your child throws or writes with their right hand, does not necessarily mean they will shoot right handed in hockey. Typically, the players dominate hand is at the top of the hockey sticks, thus, if you write with your right hand, on a hockey stick your right hand would be at the top of the stick and would indicate shooting left handed with a hockey stick.

Remember to tape your stick with hockey tape. Tape the top of the sticks with a small knob, this makes the stick easier to hold and easier to pick up. Tap the blade of the stick too; this makes it much easier to handle the puck.



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Topics: Additional Skating, Coaches/Volunteers and Registration

Additional Skating

Other ways to get your child on their skates: Open Skating! The Waconia Ice Arena offers Open Skating (Check lobby or website for designated times), Skating lessons. The best place of all is the great outdoors! Outdoor rinks and ponds are great ways to improve and enjoy hockey. More than anything, to build confidence, kids just need time on their skates!

On- Ice Volunteers and Coaches

Although there will always be a Lead Coach/Instructor present at all scheduled ice time; we rely on on-ice volunteers to help make the Mite program run smoothly. If you have hockey experience and are interested in helping out, speak to one of the coaches on the ice before or after practice.

How to Register

1. Complete the USA Hockey Registration (if you haven't completed this previously)

USA Hockey Registration is with the USA Hockey Association and not connected to Waconia Hockey's Association. To register your player(s), visit www.usahockey.com. Be sure to print and save the confirmation codes provided by USA Hockey during the registration process. Remember to register EACH of your players separately through USA Hockey. Each player will have their own personal USA Hockey Confirmation number. **Please note** – there is a \$56 payment requirement for players that are born before 2014. 2015 and later there is no fee.

2. Complete the WHA Hockey Player Registration

You will need your players USA Hockey confirmation code # to register! The registration process will allow you to register for your players appropriate level, download necessary forms and submit your payment. To complete the registration through our secure site, please have your Visa, Mastercard, Discover or your bank's checking account information readily available. Registration can be accessed through the waconiahockey.org website.

3. 2022-2023 Guidebook

The Waconia Hockey Association updates its Guidebook each year to reflect its mission, policies, programs and overall operation. It is suggested all families read this to understand the ins and outs of our Association! This can be found on the WHA website www.waconiahockey.org.

The Waconia Hockey Association hopes that you and your child enjoy Waconia Hockey!

For more great information visit www.waconiahockey.org and the Mite Program tab.

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Frequently Asked Questions

What is the Waconia Hockey Association (WHA)?

The Waconia Hockey Association (WHA) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to providing a fun and educational ice hockey experience for girls and boys residing in Waconia and surrounding communities. Our programs are planned, promoted, and administrated by unpaid volunteers. Our curriculum stresses basic skills and encourages team play and sportsmanship. Formed in 1994, the WHA has experienced tremendous growth and we now have over 200 families and 333 hockey players in our program. The WHA is led by a member elected Board of Directors.

The WHA home rink is the Waconia Ice Arena. The Waconia Ice Arena is owned by the City of Waconia and Managed by Rink Management. The WHA contracts for ice time with Rink Management. The WHA hockey season generally runs from September through March, with clinics and tryouts in September and October, league games in November through February, and tournaments in March.

The mission of the WHA is to promote and develop youth ice hockey within the communities of Waconia, St. Bonifacius, Cologne, New Germany and Norwood Young America by providing a high quality, safe, and FUN hockey program for all participants.

How is WHA affiliated with other hockey associations?

The WHA is under the jurisdiction of USA Hockey, Inc. and Minnesota Hockey Inc. Minnesota Hockey establishes several districts within the state for the purpose of regular season league and post season tournament play. The WHA is currently a

member of Minnesota Hockey's District 6, along with several other hockey associations in the southwest metro area.

What is involved in being a member of the WHA?

Membership:

You become a member of the WHA, Minnesota Hockey and USA Hockey when you register your son or daughter within the WHA to play hockey for the upcoming season.

Fees:

The area nominal membership fees associated with Minnesota Hockey and USA Hockey, and player fees administrated by WHA. All fees paid through the registration process. Player fees can vary somewhat year to year depending on association expenses and are based on your skater's age.

Fun:

In addition to practices and development of our hockey players, depending on your age(s) of your player(s), there is a robust schedule of scrimmages, games, jamborees, and/or tournaments that your player and his or her team will participate in throughout the season. These events serve to develop our hockey players while building strong friendships, camaraderie, and many fond memories.

Volunteering:

Since the WHA is a non-profit all volunteer organization, there are minimum requirements for, and multiple opportunities to contribute your time to the betterment of our Association. Volunteering is a great way to build relationships with other members while contributing to activities critical to the health of WHA. Some opportunities include:

- Coaching or managing a team
- Filing a WHA Board position

- Holding a Key Volunteer position
- Promotional activities and events
- Help with tryout process
- Others

In addition to the above, a particular area of volunteering is fundraising. Fundraising is vital to keeping the association's financial commitments while keeping fees reasonable for our families. Key fundraising activities that involve volunteer opportunities include:

- Concession Stand
- Ice Out (our traditional end of the year celebration event and largest fundraiser)
- Annual golf tournament
- Tournaments
- Other community based events!

Volunteer commitments per family are based on the level of player(s). For more information on this please refer to the Season Guidebook located on the WHA website.

What online resources are available to learn more about hockey in Waconia and overall?

The WHA utilizes its website and email to keep its members informed. Our website is provided by SportsEngine and can be found at www.waconiahockey.org. This site holds a wealth of information on our Association and the Calendar feature is the primary means of scheduling practices and games for all teams. Online registration is done through this website on an annual basis as well. To supplement our website, critical Association communications are also sent to all members via email to ensure timely awareness of information important to all members.

Further information about USA Hockey, Minnesota Hockey and District 6 can be found at the following links:

USA Hockey: www.usahockey.com

Minnesota Hockey: www.minnesotahockey.org

District 6: www.d6hockey.net

Note both USA Hockey and Minnesota Hockey have dedicated pages for players and parents that contain a great deal of information that new hockey families will like find very useful.

Fundraising

One of the largest concerns from families is the rising cost within youth hockey.

Fundraising commitment is structured between the different tiers of players because we understand that players have different allocations of ice time and that should be reflected in their fundraising support commitment.

Why is the fundraising fee a requirement?

All associations are burdened with administrative expenses in addition to funding future initiatives of their respective associations. Fundraising or lack of fundraising has a direct impact on the overall association orchestration and future growth of the association. We are doing everything in our power to keep all of the expenses as low as possible.

Please note, all fundraising revenue is placed in the General Fund and used to reduce the overall expense burden of our hockey players and families. If we didn't have this outlet, we wouldn't be able to grow and expand our hockey program to new heights each year.

Fundraising efforts vary from year to year, more information will be presented at the first parent meeting of the season or through communications.

How are teams structured? What ages are eligible to play?

There are two main classifications of teams- Mite level teams for younger players and competitive level teams for older players. The mite level teams focus heavily on skill development and less on games and tournaments to prepare players for more competitive play in later years.

The Mite Level teams referred to as Mite teams for boys and U8 and U6 teams for girls are generally composed of players in the following ranges:

WHA Mite Levels:

- Mite 1: Boys and Girls in PreK and Kindergarten for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Mite 2: Boys and Girls in 1st grade for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Mite 3: Boys and Girls in 2nd grade for the 2022-2023 school year.
- Mite 4: Boys and Girls in 3rd grade for the 2022-2023 school year.

There may be other fees associated by USA Hockey depending on your child's date of birth and this will be assessed when you register with USA Hockey prior to registering with the Waconia Hockey Association.

Are there Tryouts?

There are no tryouts for Mite Level teams. Competitive levels tryouts are held in the pre-season to place a player on the appropriate team level of play within an age group.

There are no cuts. The competitive level teams are referred to as Squirt, Peewee, and Bantam teams for boys and U10, U12 and U15 teams for girls.

How long is the season? What is the time commitment?

For Mite Level teams, most practices are for one hour and scheduled on weekends with an occasional weekday practice or game. The season typically runs from late October

to early March, and consist of practices, games, and typically an end of the year Jamboree.

For Competitive level teams, a player can typically expect to be on the ice four to six times per week including practices and games and can expect to participate in two to four tournaments. The season typically runs from October through late February and concludes with league playoffs that can extend into March.

My child wants to play hockey, how do I get started?

If you know your child is ready to play hockey you can register him/her online at www.wacoinahockey.org for the upcoming season during open registration (typically August through late September each year).

If you want to explore the sport further prior to signing up for a full season (or want some extra ice time for your child), you may want your child to participate in a Rookie Camp. These camps are offered specifically for younger players (ages 4-3rd grade) interested in playing hockey. They are offered each fall and run by WHA coaches and volunteers. Rookie Camps are a great way to explore whether hockey is right for your child and are free of charge! For more information and other related hockey events contact the Mite Program Director. Contact info is available online at www.waconiahockey.org.